

Department of Environment and Science

ANNUAL
REPORT
2020–2021



Queensland
Government

Public availability

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September 2021

About our annual report

The Department of Environment and Science Annual Report 2020–21 is an integral part of our corporate governance framework. It is a key tool for ensuring we are accountable to our partners, the community, stakeholders and the Queensland Parliament about our activities. It highlights the work, achievements, activities and strategic initiatives of our department, and satisfies the requirements of Queensland's *Financial Accountability Act 2009*.

This report details our achievements, performance and financial position for the 2020–21 financial year. It aligns with the *DES Strategic Plan 2020–24 (amended January 2021)*, *2020–21 Service Delivery Statements* and the Queensland Government's objectives for the community.

Other reporting

Other reports published annually by our department are now tabled separately and can be found on our website www.des.qld.gov.au:

- Report on the administration of the *Marine Parks Act 2004*
- Report on the administration of the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*
- Report on the administration of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*
- Annual report from the Board of Trustees of Newstead House
- Regulatory Framework Report

Additional published information

Several annual reporting requirements are met by publishing information on the Queensland Government Open Data website:

- consultancies
- Queensland language services policy

For further information, please visit <https://data.qld.gov.au>.

An overseas travel expenditure report for the 2020–21 reporting year was not required due to overseas travel not being undertaken by any officers of the department.

Contents

Message from the Director-General.....	3
Who we are.....	4
Our purpose.....	4
Our contribution.....	4
Our values.....	5
Our operating environment.....	5
Our leadership team.....	5
Our structure.....	7
Our services.....	8
Our performance.....	10
Lead climate change action.....	10
Protect the Great Barrier Reef.....	12
Conserve Queensland’s protected areas and biodiversity.....	15
Strengthen our partnerships with First Nations peoples.....	19
Protect the health of the environment and our communities.....	22
Strengthen and harness Queensland’s scientific excellence.....	25
Engage with Queensland’s youth.....	27
Service standards.....	29
Cross-government initiatives.....	33
Managing our department.....	34
Summary of financial management.....	34
Corporate governance.....	37
Accountability and risk management.....	41
Our people.....	45
Human rights—respect . protect . promote.....	49
Appendix 1—Queensland Heritage Council.....	50
Glossary.....	54
Compliance checklist.....	57
Financial statements.....	59

23 September 2021

The Honourable Meaghan Scanlon MP
Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef
Minister for Science and Youth Affairs
GPO Box 2454
Brisbane Qld 4001

Dear Minister

I am pleased to submit for presentation to the Queensland Parliament, the Annual Report 2020–21 and financial statements for the Department of Environment and Science.

I certify that this Annual Report complies with:

- prescribed requirements of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019, and
- detailed requirements set out in *Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies*.

This report was prepared as if the department's current administrative arrangements applied for the whole of the 2020–21 financial year. That is, it reflects the structure, operations and performance of the department as it now exists.

A checklist of annual report requirements can be found at page 57 of the annual report.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jamie Merrick', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jamie Merrick
Director-General

Message from the Director-General

I am pleased to present the Department of Environment and Science (DES) annual report for 2020–21.

The past year has been one of challenge and change but also of new opportunities.

The state's response to the COVID–19 pandemic remained a key focus for the department. We have had to manage the profound impacts on our operations but also across the broader community and those industries we regulates. Despite the challenges, the department continued to deliver and improve our core services and functions.

A significant number of staff were mobilised to the Queensland Government's Ready Reserves program to bolster the broader health response and undertake important tasks such as contact tracing and check-in app education. I thank all of those staff for their willingness to take on new and vital roles that are essential to keep Queenslanders safe and the economy functioning.

To assist those industries most affected by the pandemic, the department provided fee relief for commercial tourism operators working on Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service-managed areas and continued to implement flexible operational arrangements for regulated industries.

During 2020-21, the department contributed to the state's economic recovery plan through a range of initiatives designed to: boost job creation in nature-based and cultural tourism; stimulate environmental markets and land restoration employment opportunities; support jobs growth in the waste management and resource recovery industries; strengthen and harness scientific excellence to safeguard community health; and improve the translation of science and research to create jobs.

As a result of machinery-of-government changes in November 2020, the department gained responsibility for the Youth Engagement portfolio. By harnessing the potential of existing DES programs, this brings new opportunities to engage and empower young people in shaping a strong future for Queensland.

In addition to its response activities, the department continued to deliver on a number of our strategic priorities including:

- Queensland Climate Action Plan 2020–2030
- South East Queensland Koala Conservation Strategy 2020–2025
- Queensland Protected Area Strategy 2020–2030
- Ban on the supply of single-use plastic items
- Land Restoration Fund
- Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan and Reef regulations
- The state's first Special Wildlife Reserve
- Ecotourism projects and nature-based recreation opportunities
- Legislative protections for the use of traditional knowledge in biodiscovery
- Expansion of the statewide air quality monitoring network
- Engaging Queenslanders in citizen science
- Safer Schoolies initiative
- Youth Week and Speak Out Series.

I would like to thank the department's staff and the executive leadership team for their unwavering commitment to deliver high quality services. It is this commitment and expertise that is central to delivering environmental and cultural outcomes that make a real difference to Queenslanders.

Jamie Merrick

Who we are

Our purpose

The vision of the Department of Environment and Science (DES) is for the environment, science and voices of our young people to enrich the lives of Queenslanders now and into the future. We work with First Nations peoples, communities, stakeholders and government to achieve a better environmental, economic and social future for Queensland. We do this by:

- safeguarding and managing Queensland's natural, cultural and heritage values
- protecting the environment and reducing the impacts of environmental harm
- promoting the development of, and engagement with, science and heritage
- engaging youth to contribute to Queensland's economic, civic and cultural life.

DES contributes to Queensland's economic prosperity by enabling sustainable development, supporting the science sector, and promoting nature-based tourism. We enrich Queensland's community life by engaging, celebrating and listening to young Queenslanders, protecting significant heritage places and providing opportunities for the community to connect with our stunning natural environment.

The department was established in December 2017 under the *Public Service Act 2008*, Part 2, Division 2 – Administrative Arrangements Order (No. 3) of 12 December 2017.

Machinery-of-government changes

As a result of machinery-of-government changes on 12 November 2020, some functions left the department while Youth Engagement joined the department.

Incoming divisions or functions

The following table outlines those divisions or functions that joined the department due to machinery-of-government changes on 12 November 2020, and the related annual reports where the financial statements can be located for part of the 2020–21 reporting period.

Joined the department	Date of transfer	Related annual report
Youth Engagement	12 November 2020	Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs

**Financial statements for the period 1 July – 12 November 2020 can be found in the related annual report.*

Outgoing divisions or functions

The following table outlines those divisions or functions that left the department due to machinery-of-government changes on 12 November 2020, and the related annual reports where the non-financial performance information and financial statements can be located for part of the 2020–21 reporting period.

Left the department	Date of transfer	Related annual report
Arts Queensland	12 November 2020	Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy
Corporate Administration Agency	12 November 2020	Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy

**Financial statements for the period 12 November 2020 – 30 June 2021 can be found in the related department's annual report.*

Non-financial performance information for the 2020–21 reporting period can be found in the related annual report.

Our contribution

In 2020–21, our work directly contributed to the government's objectives for the community — *Unite and Recover* by:

Protecting the environment

- Reducing Queensland's contribution to climate change with decarbonisation and adaptation programs.
- Improving water quality under the Queensland Reef Water Quality Program and delivering Reef joint field management services with the Australian Government.
- Moving towards a zero-waste society, where waste is avoided, reused and recycled as much as possible.
- Preventing and managing impacts on the environment through strong regulation.
- Leading efforts to conserve Queensland's heritage and biodiversity, including threatened species recovery.
- Maintaining and enhancing our protected areas, informed by the rights, knowledge and experiences of First Nations peoples.

Supporting jobs and growing our regions

- Supporting job creation in the conservation sector and nature-based and cultural tourism including delivering fee waivers for tourism operators on protected areas.
- Stimulating environmental markets and land restoration employment opportunities.
- Promoting activities leading to increased jobs in waste management and resource recycling.
- Improving the translation of science and research into job creation.

Safeguarding our health

- Ensuring clean and healthy air, land and water through effective regulation.
- Supporting science research and technologies that improve public health.
- Improving health and wellbeing by connecting the community with nature.

Investing in skills

- Supporting STEM education in Queensland.
- Enabling Queensland's youth to help shape government policies, programs and services.
- Supporting Queensland's businesses to increase energy and water efficiency and decrease waste disposed to landfill.

Our values

The department's work is underpinned by government-wide values:

	Customers first <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Know your customer• Deliver what matters• Make decisions with empathy
	Ideas into action <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Challenge the norm and suggest solutions• Encourage and embrace new ideas• Walk across boundaries
	Unleash potential <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expect greatness• Lead and set clear expectations• Seek, provide and act on feedback
	Be courageous <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Own your actions, successes and mistakes• Take calculated risks• Act with transparency
	Empower people <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lead, empower and trust• Play to everyone's strengths• Develop yourself and those around you

Our operating environment

The context of the department's activities in 2020–21 was dynamic and without precedent. It included:

- reprioritising people and resources to support the COVID-19 health response and economic recovery
- adjusting the department's strategic direction in response to machinery-of-government changes and the new term of government
- seeking to improve environmental outcomes through the opportunities provided by the Samuels Review of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwth)*
- responding to increased global attention and momentum for action on climate change
- providing flexible regulatory arrangements in response to COVID-19, for efficient and effective service delivery and environmental protection
- developing COVID-safe plans so visitors can safely enjoy Queensland's protected areas
- adapting to more intense and extreme weather events, including longer fire seasons, in order to better protect the community and environmental biodiversity.

Our leadership team

Jamie Merrick
Director-General

Consistent with the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, Jamie is accountable to the Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Youth Affairs for the efficient, effective and financially responsible performance of DES, including delivery of the government's commitments and priorities.

Karen Hussey
Deputy Director-General, Environmental Policy and Programs

Karen leads the development and coordination of policy, strategy and legislation relating to the environment and conservation. Karen oversees the delivery of strategic programs such as protection of the Great Barrier Reef, waste management and resource recovery, and the Land Restoration Fund. Karen also leads policy and programs in areas such as heritage, climate change, environmental offsets, biodiversity, koala conservation and State of Environment reporting.

Rob Lawrence
Deputy Director-General, Environmental Services and Regulation

Rob leads the department's regulatory program and is responsible for administering and enforcing a range of legislation that manages the impact of human activity on the environment. The regulatory program involves assessing and permitting a range of activities, spanning mining to sewage treatment plants and waste management facilities. Rob is also responsible for managing environmental risks through a proactive compliance and enforcement program. This includes 24/7 issues-reporting and incident response, and strong litigation capabilities to prevent and respond to serious environmental harm.

Ben Klaassen
Deputy Director-General, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships

Ben leads the management of Queensland's parks and forests, including partnerships with First Nations peoples to protect cultural values, support sustainable use and provide nature-based recreation and ecotourism opportunities. Ben is responsible for protecting threatened species, managing interactions between people and protected species, managing selected World Heritage sites, and leading the Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program. Ben also has responsibility for the delivery of the Great Barrier Reef Joint Field Management Program, in partnership with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

Mark Jacobs
Deputy Director-General, Science and Technology

Mark leads the provision of scientific and technical advice and services to government agencies on environmental, natural resource and climate matters. This advice underpins agency decision-making and legislative responsibilities. Mark is responsible for managing the department's investment in the science sector in collaboration with the Queensland Chief Scientist.

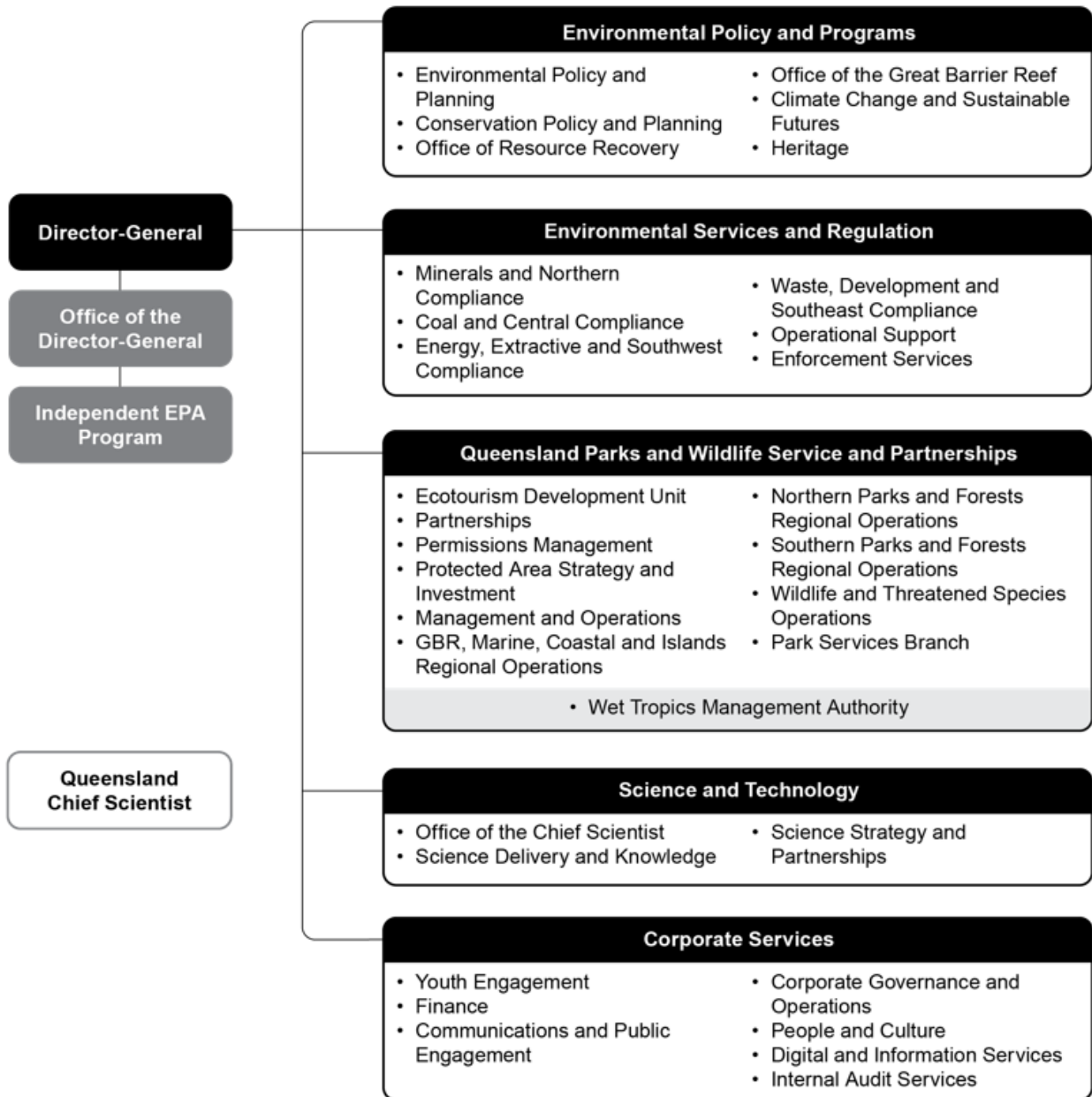
Susan Chrisp
Deputy Director-General, Corporate Services

Susan is responsible for DES' corporate capabilities and governance frameworks that enable the department to meet its strategic objectives. Susan's role develops and implements best practice policies, programs and systems to manage the department's financial, digital, human, information and physical resources. Susan is also responsible for the ongoing delivery of Youth Engagement services.

Hugh Possingham
Queensland Chief Scientist

Hugh leads science policy development and provides strategic advice to the Queensland Government on the role of science, research and innovation in meeting the state's economic challenges. The Queensland Chief Scientist is a whole of government position that advises on maximising opportunities from the government's investment in research and development. Hugh advocates for science across Queensland and works to ensure young Queenslanders are inspired to consider a career in science. As the role of Queensland Chief Scientist is part time, Hugh continues as Professor of Mathematics and Conservation Science at the University of Queensland.

Our structure



Our services

Our department's services are grouped in high level service areas, which are used to communicate the broad types of services delivered by DES. Each service area has a defined objective. Programs and projects carried out within each service area contribute to the achievement of the department's strategic objectives identified in the *DES Strategic Plan 2020–24 (amended January 2021)*. These strategic objectives in turn contribute to the achievement of the Queensland Government's objectives for the community — *Unite and Recover*. Our department delivers its services through five service areas:

Environmental Policy, Programs and Regulation Services

Service area objective: Develop, apply and monitor the strategic direction, standards and regulations that guide the operations and activities of businesses, individuals, and state and local governments. Invest strategically to deliver priority environmental outcomes.

Work carried out under this service area includes preventing and managing impacts to the environment through strong regulation. We are working towards becoming a zero-waste society, where waste is avoided, reused and recycled to the greatest possible extent. We work to stimulate environmental markets and land restoration employment opportunities. This enables our department to support the Queensland Government in achieving its objectives — *Protecting the Environment; Safeguarding our health; Supporting jobs and Growing our Regions*. This service area also contributes to the achievement of the department's strategic objectives — *Conserve Queensland's protected areas and biodiversity, Lead climate change action; Protect the Great Barrier Reef*.

Parks, Wildlife and Conservation Services

Service area objective: Expand, manage and conserve protected areas, marine parks, fish and wildlife habitats, forests and recreation areas. Partner with First Nations peoples to co-steward and manage protected areas. Facilitate sustainable recreational opportunities, nature-based tourism and ecotourism. Strengthen biodiversity and threatened species outcomes.

Work carried out under this service area comprises protecting the diversity and integrity of Queensland's ecosystems, and preserving or enhancing the conservation status of native species. We also manage recreation areas and state forest resources and facilitate sustainable recreational opportunities, nature-based tourism and ecotourism. We are committed to enhancing and maintaining our protected areas together with First Nations partners. These programs support the Queensland Government in achieving its objectives — *Protecting the environment, Supporting jobs, and Growing our regions*. It also supports the Queensland Government's commitments to reframe its relationship with First Nations peoples, and Tracks to Treaty which is the journey to create a new future between First Nations and non-Indigenous Queenslanders. This service area also contributes to the achievement of the department's strategic objectives — *Conserve Queensland's protected areas and biodiversity and Strengthen our partnerships with First Nations peoples*.

Science

Service area objective: Provide data and scientific knowledge, information and advice to protect our natural environment. Support science and research partnerships in Queensland.

Work carried out under this service area supports the Queensland Government objectives — *Protecting the environment; Safeguarding our health; Supporting Jobs; Growing our Regions; and Investing in Skills*. We do this by providing trusted scientific knowledge, information and advice to support government priorities. We inform Queensland's science strategy and promote science in the state, including science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education. This service area also contributes to the achievement of the department's strategic objectives — *Strengthen and harness Queensland's scientific excellence, Conserve Queensland's protected areas and biodiversity, and Engage with Queensland's youth*.

Youth Engagement

Service area objective: Support young Queenslanders to look to the future and see limitless possibilities, thrive, and help shape our future state.

Work carried out under this service area enables Queensland's youth to contribute to shaping government policies, programs and services.

These experiences build skills and experience with our youth and therefore supports the Queensland Government objective – *Investing in skills*. This service area also contributes to the achievement of the department’s strategic objective – *Engage with Queensland’s youth*.

Heritage Protection Services

Service area objective: Protect, promote and ensure Queensland's cultural and built heritage is conserved and enjoyed.

Work carried out under this service area, strives to protect the state’s historical cultural heritage and promote it for present and future generations, in line with the Queensland Heritage Strategy. By leading efforts to conserve Queensland’s heritage, we support the Queensland Government’s objective — *Protecting the Environment*. This service area also contributes to the achievement of the department’s strategic objective — *Conserve Queensland’s protected areas and biodiversity*.

Our performance

This section highlights the department's achievements against the objectives outlined in the *DES Strategic Plan 2020–24 (amended January 2021)*:

- Lead climate change action
- Protect the Great Barrier Reef
- Conserve Queensland's protected areas and biodiversity
- Strengthen our partnerships with First Nations peoples
- Protect the health of the environment and our communities
- Strengthen and harness Queensland's scientific excellence
- Engage with Queensland's youth

Lead climate change action

The Queensland Government is dedicated to strong action on climate change and remains committed to its targets: reducing emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030 and achieving zero net emissions by 2050. Delivering on these targets will make an important contribution to global action on climate change and help attract new investment, industry development and sustainable job creation across the Queensland economy.

In 2020–21, the government committed to delivering a Queensland Climate Action Plan 2020–2030 (QCAP). DES has led collaborative work across the Queensland Government to develop the plan. The QCAP will build on the achievements of the past three years under the Queensland Climate Transition Strategy and Queensland Climate Adaptation Strategy. Both strategies have helped position Queensland's communities, industries and economy to succeed in the global shift to zero net emissions and as the impacts of climate change are felt more deeply.

Outcome indicators

Contribution towards the government's target of:

- 30% reduction in net greenhouse gas emissions by 2030
- zero net emissions by 2050

Key activities in 2020–21

We led development and implementation of whole of government strategies to address the risks and impacts of climate change and ensure the long-term viability of our economy, communities and industries. This year we:

- delivered a draft QCAP, a whole of government strategy to generate clean jobs, reduce emissions and support decision-making in line with a zero net emissions economy
- provided resources and training to local governments to strengthen their knowledge and skills to manage climate change risks through the Queensland Climate Resilient Councils program (QCRC), delivered with the Local Government Association of Queensland
- enhanced the Queensland Future Climate Dashboard with more information to support

climate adaptation by authorities, industries and communities

- continued to deliver the Queensland Climate Ready program with Griffith University to increase climate risk readiness in government departments.

We helped deliver key climate transition strategies to support Queensland farmers and land managers restore and protect our natural environment. This year we:

- contracted 18 carbon farming projects, through the Land Restoration Fund's first investment round, which will deliver almost 1.8 million tonnes of reduced or avoided carbon emissions
- expanded the Drought and Climate Adaptation Program beyond its adaptation focus to help the agriculture sector identify actions that reduce emissions.

We supported collaboration and knowledge sharing across government, business, research and community sectors on climate action. This year we:

- provided grants to local governments through the QCRC program to promote regional engagement on managing climate risk, building local resilience and identifying opportunities in a low carbon economy
- released climate risk management tools to help Queensland households and small businesses plan for climate change
- continued to deliver the highly successful ecoBiz program with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland, helping small to medium businesses reduce their waste, water and energy bills through resource efficiency and sustainability actions
- supported the Barcaldine Renewable Energy and Industrial Hub to commence its stage 2 feasibility study
- delivered climate science information that strengthens decision-making across sectors, including downscaled climate projections on an interactive website, and around 3,000 seasonal condition reports per month for landholders via the FORAGE website
- completed the Decarbonising Great Barrier Reef Islands Program Whole-of-Island Community Pilot project, developed with the Palm Island, Masig Island, Magnetic Island and Great Keppel Island communities.

Protect the Great Barrier Reef

The Great Barrier Reef is an internationally treasured natural wonder and an Australian icon with tourism and recreation values. It also has special significance to First Nations peoples, who have lived within the Reef's catchments for thousands of years and have a continuing connection to land and sea country.

The Reef is facing significant threats, including climate change, and sediment and nutrient run-off. These are taking a measurable toll on the condition of the Reef and the health of its ecosystems.

Queensland is actively tackling these challenges. This includes action to reduce emissions that contribute to global climate change, reducing sediment and nutrient run-off under the Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan, and implementing the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan and Field Management Program with the Australian Government.

Outcome indicators

Contributions towards the government's targets of:

- 60% reduction in anthropogenic end-of-catchment dissolved inorganic nitrogen loads
- 25% reduction in anthropogenic end-of-catchment sediment loads

Key activities in 2020–21

We led work to help achieve the 2025 water quality targets in the Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan 2017–22. This year we:

- supported the development of the Reef Credit Scheme, which offers landholders the opportunity to generate and sell 'reef credits' by reducing nutrient or sediment run-off from their land
- commenced new Reef protection regulations for grazing in the Burdekin and banana growing in the Wet Tropics, and for new cropping and horticulture activities in all Reef catchments to reduce water pollution flowing to the Reef
- released a new FORAGE report on long-term carrying capacity, which provides a guide on the number of livestock an area of land can carry over decades without running down the property's land condition
- developed an Environmentally Relevant Activity standard for new cropping and horticulture activities in the Reef catchments enabling low risk growers to make a simplified application for an environmental authority
- recognised the Freshcare environmental program for banana cultivation as a program that is consistent with the Reef protection regulations
- started an independent review of land management practice targets to better align them with the finer scale water quality targets across catchments
- worked with the agricultural sector to increase voluntary adoption of improved farm

management practices and help landholders reduce pollutant run-off

- installed 32 near-real time nitrate sensors to inform land managers about nitrogen losses occurring from individual storm events
- contracted the planting of over 1,700 hectares of trees in Reef catchments by Land Restoration Fund projects
- formed a specialist Reef Compliance and Regulation team and developed a risk-based compliance and enforcement strategy for implementing Reef protection regulations
- finalised guidance materials to implement the new Reef water quality standard
- published aquaculture model conditions to support sustainable aquaculture development adjacent to the Reef.

We led the implementation of the Queensland Reef Water Quality Program, the government's program of actions to improve the quality of water flowing from Reef catchments into the Reef lagoon. This year we:

- continued funding CANEGROWERS' Smartcane Best Management Practice program with 75 additional cane growing businesses managing over 17,000 hectares becoming accredited—633 businesses managing 142,246 hectares have now been accredited
- supported over 160 graziers managing 1.1 million hectares to develop land management action plans to improve poor or degraded land, through the Grazing

Resilience and Sustainable Solutions (GRASS) program

- continued funding the Australian Banana Growers' Council Best Management Practice program—benchmarked growers now include 22 new growers managing approximately 700 additional hectares
- continued to support sugarcane growers in four regions improve their nutrient management planning—these projects have helped more than 620 growers managing 70,000 hectares reduce their nitrogen use by nearly 800 tonnes
- released the Reef Water Quality Report Card 2019, which showed encouraging progress towards the pollutant reduction targets, particularly at regional and catchment levels
- implemented the Urban Water Stewardship Framework, helping 14 councils in the Reef catchments evaluate their urban water management practices
- completed gully remediation works at Strathalbyn Station, resulting in an average 90% reduction in suspended sediment run-off, or more than 4,600 tonnes of sediment per year
- continued funding Growcom's Hort360 Great Barrier Reef project with 84 additional growers being benchmarked
- engaged 281 banana and sugarcane growers managing 38,513 hectares in the Wet Tropics Major Integrated Project to test tools and approaches to reduce pollution flowing into local waterways
- engaged 91% of large grazing properties covering over one million hectares in the Burdekin Major Integrated Project—*Landholders Driving Change*—22 gullies were remediated with around 6,000 tonnes less sediment per year entering the Reef.

We provided leading edge science that informed government decisions to protect the Reef. This year we:

- continued to monitor sediment, nutrient and pesticide pollutant loads across Reef catchments
- analysed 16,653 water quality, soil, sediment and plant samples from Reef catchments, generating over 62,624 individual tests and analyses
- continued to develop and apply knowledge of gully and streambank management and rehabilitation in Reef catchments
- worked with the Traditional Custodians of East Trinity near Cairns, the Mandingalbay Yidinji people, to transition the East Trinity

Acid Sulfate Soil Remediation site to long-term remote monitoring

- applied digital soil mapping techniques and conventional soil surveys to develop soil erodibility maps of Reef catchments
- supported the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) in Townsville to improve our understanding of marine microbiota and the health of the Reef.

We led the implementation of the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan (Reef 2050 Plan) with the Australian Government, and its five-year review. This year we:

- consulted the public on the draft updated Reef 2050 Plan, receiving 4,939 submissions
- reviewed the governance arrangements that support the Reef 2050 Plan to ensure they remain effective and contribute to the objectives of the plan
- involved experts and other stakeholders in Reef strategic planning, including the Reef 2050 Advisory Committee, Reef 2050 Independent Expert Panel, Reef Water Quality Independent Science Panel and Traditional Owners
- submitted an achievements addendum to the Great Barrier Reef State Party Report for consideration by the World Heritage Committee (in their meeting in mid-2021)
- took delivery of the new 24 metre patrol vessel *Reef Resilience*, expanding the Reef Joint Field Management Program's patrol response capability
- conducted 1,059 dedicated compliance patrols to deter illegal activity in the Reef, resulting in 77 infringement notices, 65 warning notices, 44 caution notices, 679 advisory letters and 75 court prosecutions
- delivered 1,256 Reef Health and Impact Surveys to assess the health of the Reef, including 479 crown-of-thorns starfish surveys
- conducted 273 bird surveys across 174 locations in the Reef to monitor seabird and shorebird populations and inform island management
- agreed with AIMS to work together to develop and deliver autonomous benthic monitoring equipment and methods over the next three years
- continued implementing the Raine Island Recovery Project, a five-year collaboration with BHP, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Wuthathi and Meriam Nation (Ugar, Mer, Erub) Traditional Owners, and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, with positive results for turtle recruitment

- delivered nine priority pest programs across Reef islands, such as mice eradication on North West Island, to enhance ecosystem resilience and protect island-dependent species, such as seabirds and turtles
- delivered a reef rehabilitation trial with tourism partners, Traditional Owners, research organisations and the Mars Foundation to restore around 200m² of reef habitat at Green Island, with 165 reef stars and 200 coral clips installed.

We continue to work with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to streamline the joint marine park permissions management system. Together, this year we:

- developed joint marine park policies and guidelines, for example to assist Reef restoration and adaptation
- reduced 'green tape' for routine low-risk tourism permits and research activities, making it easier and faster for clients to access the marine parks
- developed simpler permit conditions that are easier to implement.

Conserve Queensland's protected areas and biodiversity

The Queensland Government is dedicated to conserving our unique biodiversity and our important natural, heritage and cultural values. We are committed to protecting our ecosystems and values in partnership with First Nations peoples, the stewards of Country for many thousands of years. For First Nations peoples, Country and culture are indivisible.

Much of Queensland's economic strength depends on our natural assets. Our multi-billion-dollar tourism industry relies on our remarkable natural environment. The productivity of our agricultural sector, and much of the culture and heritage of our regional communities are underpinned by healthy ecosystems.

Despite its importance, the strength and resilience of our ecosystems are declining. The Queensland Government is committed to improving the management of biodiversity, threatened species and protected areas, and safeguarding our heritage and cultural values.

Outcome indicators

- Increased percentage of Queensland's land area that is protected
- Key natural, cultural and heritage values are maintained or improved
- Inclusion of culturally significant places in the Queensland Heritage Register

Key activities in 2020–21

We delivered policies and initiatives underpinned by science to protect Queensland's ecosystems and natural, cultural and heritage values. This year we:

- released *Queensland's Protected Area Strategy 2020–2030*, setting the strategic direction for growing and managing the state's terrestrial protected areas, both public and private
- released the *South East Queensland Koala Conservation Strategy 2020–2025*, and commenced implementing the actions in the Strategy including new koala habitat mapping and reforms to the planning framework to better protect koala habitat
- declared Queensland's first special wildlife reserve under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, protecting over 56,000 hectares of habitat for the endangered night parrot
- declared eight new nature refuges under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, adding 624 hectares to Queensland's protected areas
- increased the state's protected area estate by 33,621 hectares through the dedication and declaration of protected areas under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*
- commenced work on a new World Heritage Strategy for Queensland to align the management of Queensland's internationally recognised places with contemporary international approaches and the department's *Gurra Gurra Framework 2020–2026* to increase the involvement of First Nations peoples
- delivered 11 priority environmental projects under the Reef Assist program, creating around 130 regional jobs in the Wet Tropics, Burdekin and Mackay Whitsunday regions, in partnership with local governments, natural resource management organisations and First Nations peoples
- continued the Great Sandy Marine Park Zoning Plan review, commenced the Moreton Bay Marine Park Zoning Plan review and started work to develop a contemporary marine park zoning plan review process
- revised the statutory document —*Accepted development requirements for operational works completely or partly within a declared Fish Habitat Area*
- completed an independent expert scientific panel review of the Fraser Island Dingo Conservation and Risk Management Strategy implementation plan to ensure it continues to include best available science and management techniques
- assessed the extent, severity and impacts of the 2019–20 bushfires in Lamington, Main Range, Mt Barney, Cooloola, Noosa, Bulburin and Oakview National Parks, as part of the department's bushfire recovery program
- assessed the extent, severity and impacts of the 2020 bushfire on K'gari (Fraser Island) and Great Sandy National Park
- added 10 new state heritage places to the Queensland Heritage Register
- finalised the review of the Environmental Offsets Framework and published a

consultation and response report, which outlines 15 reform areas and describes how government will engage stakeholders to help implement these reforms

- registered a further nine Advanced Offsets, totalling 1,044 hectares of land to counterbalance future impacts on Queensland's threatened species and regional ecosystems
- helped landholders participate in offset delivery with a new online form that allows them to express their interest in offset delivery free of charge
- progressed projects to deliver environmental offsets from the Environmental Offsets Account
- contracted 18 projects through the Land Restoration Fund's first investment round that will result in more than 350,000 hectares of vegetation protected or restored and will protect from clearing or restore around 7,500 hectares of unregulated vegetation.

We delivered projects to protect and recover threatened species and their habitats. This year we:

- undertook projects to protect and recover priority fauna species, such as the koala, northern hairy-nosed wombat, greater bilby, bridled nail-tail wallaby and Nangur skink
- continued predator control in Astrebla Downs National Park, with record numbers of endangered greater bilbies and high numbers of vulnerable kowari recorded
- continued predator control, weed management and supplementary feeding to protect the bridled nail-tail wallaby in Taunton National Park (Scientific), with the population size in the core habitat area at least four times that in 2012–13 when the management program and monitoring commenced
- delivered the Bushfire Recovery Project to protect and recover threatened species impacted by 2019–20 bushfires, with support from the Australian Government
- improved the Queensland threatened species list to align with the national list, including introducing standard conservation categories
- continued to implement the Marine Turtle Conservation Strategy including the Nest to Oceans grant program
- partnered with Healthy Land and Water to rehabilitate areas in, and adjacent to, Main Range National Park impacted by the 2019 bushfires
- recorded 333 marine animal strandings, including 11 high priority marine strandings (includes dugongs, Australian snubfin and Australian humpback dolphin) in the Reef, 27 high priority strandings in the Moreton Bay Marine Park, and 20 high priority strandings in the Great Sandy Marine Park
- purchased two coastal properties to protect and restore the most significant loggerhead and flatback turtle nesting and rookery sites in eastern Australia
- completed scientific monitoring and assessment of estuarine crocodile numbers and population trends
- removed 53 problem estuarine crocodiles that posed a danger to people or livestock, while conserving the species in the wild
- conducted applied research of estuarine crocodile population dynamics using DNA samples collected in the field
- analysed cassowary vehicle-strike hotspots with the CSIRO, to inform road and land managers and reduce the rate of vehicle strikes in built-up areas and rescued and rehabilitated six sick, injured or abandoned cassowaries at the Garners Beach Cassowary Rehabilitation Centre. Five were released into the wild and one passed away. Three more birds were subject to in-situ recovery plans
- partnered with the Queensland Trust for Nature to establish seven projects on council and private land under the Koala Habitat Restoration Partnerships Program for the restoration of more than 100 hectares of koala habitat
- partnered with Australia Zoo, RSPCA Qld and Currumbin Wildlife Hospital to treat and rehabilitate sick, injured and orphaned wildlife across South East Queensland
- continued the management of eight properties acquired by the Queensland Government for the restoration of koala habitat in preparation for their transition to long-term conservation tenure
- engaged Griffith University to undertake a comprehensive review of contemporary knowledge and policy related to the use of translocation as a management intervention for wildlife conservation and management in Queensland
- conducted seasonal compliance and educational activities under the Save the Water Program to manage safe separation distances between boats and marine mammals
- effectively regulated the take, use and keep of wildlife through a targeted program of proactive and reactive compliance and education activities
- undertook assessment and compliance activities in relation to activities impacting

koala habitat areas outside koala priority areas against the new state code for Development in South East Queensland Koala Habitat Areas

- completed a major refurbishment of the Moggill Koala Rehabilitation Centre to support its role as a specialised state-of-the-art facility for the rehabilitation of sick, injured and orphaned koalas
- granted approximately 10,300 protected animal and plant authorities to support research, education and sustainable management of wildlife.

We improved the management of protected areas through engaging and collaborating with key stakeholders. This year we:

- delivered 38 capital works projects to enhance visitor access and better manage our parks and forests
- planned the redevelopment of the Castle Rock camping area at Girraween National Park
- increased the use of social media and other digital channels to support visitor safety and compliance during the COVID-19 pandemic
- installed automatic number-plate recognition technology at key entry points to Bribie Island and Cooloola recreation areas to monitor and manage vehicle access
- introduced designated camping zones on Teewah beach in the Cooloola recreation area to better manage environmental risk and assist maintenance
- conducted water compliance patrols in the Great Sandy and Moreton Bay marine parks, with Queensland Boating and Fisheries, First Nations peoples and volunteers, issuing 212 warnings and 88 infringement notices
- removed 147 ghost crab pots from Moreton Bay Marine Park, reducing the risk of marine wildlife entanglements
- increased joint compliance operations in the Great Sandy National Park with Queensland Police Service and Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol, completing 10 patrols
- trained over 120 Queensland police officers to be authorised officers under nature conservation statutes, including the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, *Forestry Act 1959*, *Recreation Areas Management Act 2006* and *Marine Parks Act 2004*.

We protected, celebrated and promoted Queensland's unique and diverse heritage, ensuring our places of state heritage value remain for present and future generations. This year we:

- gazetted the Raine Island National Park (Scientific) management statement, co-designed with the Wuthathi people and Meriam Nation people, to protect the park's natural, cultural and shared history values
- assessed 15 community nominations for places of state-level heritage significance, such as the Eagles Nest Camp in Toowoomba, a depression-era itinerant men's camp, entered in the Queensland Heritage Register in March 2021
- continued work to protect Queensland's identified heritage assets, such as the Broadway Hotel and Lamb House, in partnership with local government
- managed changes to Queensland heritage places through assessment of heritage exemptions and provision of technical advice on development applications
- oversaw early stage works on the Newstead House conservation project
- invested in the delivery of heritage conservation projects across Queensland through Community Sustainability Action grants
- provided advice on the heritage impacts of major infrastructure projects, such as Cross River Rail, new QPAC theatre and Queen's Wharf development
- provided input on planning instruments to ensure the conservation of heritage places.

We supported nature-based tourism and recreational opportunities so visitors can participate in a variety of activities and learn about conservation. This year we:

- issued 295,204 camping permits and 201,375 vehicle access permits for Queensland national parks and forests
- completed more than 250 projects that provided new and upgraded visitor facilities and infrastructure in our national parks
- opened a new ecotourism facility, in partnership with O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat, at the Green Mountain section of Lamington National Park
- completed significant milestones of the Cooloola Great Walk ecotourism project, including referral under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
- partnered with the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport, completing significant

milestones of the Wangetti Trail ecotourism project between Port Douglas and Palm Cove, including construction of the new Mowbray River pedestrian bridge, and engaged contractors for the design and construction of the southern section of the trail

- updated the Ecotourism Best Practice Guidelines and Implementation Framework to align with current legislation, give greater emphasis on Traditional Owner engagement, and add new Queensland and Australian-focussed case studies
- issued 2,415 protected area authorities for a variety of tourism, research organised events, apiary and marine park activities
- supported the tourism industry by providing fee relief to tourism operators as part of the Queensland Government COVID-19 Immediate Industry Recovery Package
- launched a new immersive education room at David Fleay Wildlife Park on the Gold Coast to enhance conservation education programs for school children
- launched upgraded displays and educational messaging at the Daisy Hill Koala Centre to promote the South East Queensland Koala Conservation Strategy and other important wildlife and threatened species programs
- launched a new 'Naturally Queensland' e-newsletter with monthly distribution to over 115,000 subscribers promoting World Heritage Areas, popular parks, hidden gems, park rangers and on-park experiences
- provided inspiring and educational social media content about national parks via Facebook and Instagram, with 2.5 million people reached, 190 published posts and more than 195,000 combined followers
- developed a new Queensland National Parks photography guideline for state and regional tourism organisations to promote visitor safety in social media
- delivered the 'Think Outside' marketing campaign promoting the mental and physical health benefits of spending time in nature, with Queensland Health, National Parks Association of Queensland and Nature Play Qld
- completed upgrades to the Forts Junction Hub on Magnetic Island providing improved pedestrian safety, vehicle parking and bus stops, park information and entry statement, interpretive display and toilets at the entry to the popular Forts Walk.
- commenced work on a reef trails project to improve access to the Great Barrier Reef with new public moorings and anchoring

locations in the Whitsunday and Townsville areas

- completed a multi-use trail network on Curtis Island and significant sections of a new multi-day Ngaro Walking Trail from Tongue Point to Whitehaven Beach on Whitsunday Island.

Strengthen our partnerships with First Nations peoples

Our vision is to walk forward together, from two paths to one, in a partnership founded on respect, trust and First Nations peoples' vision for country and people. This vision also affirms our genuine recognition of and respect for First Nations' knowledge and the significant contribution that this makes to the department's strategic objectives.

We work in genuine partnerships with First Nations peoples to safeguard ecological and cultural values across Queensland. We acknowledge and respect First Nations peoples' lived experiences, knowledge, skills and expertise, and incorporate First Nations' perspectives into the policies, programs and systems that guide land and sea management.

We are committed to ensuring the cultural capability of staff across the department to enable the strengthening of partnerships and conservation outcomes and establishing the department as a better practice agency in its work with First Nations peoples.

The department is committed to progressing self-determination by recognising First Nations' rights and interests. The [Gurra Gurra Framework 2020–2026](#) prioritises and accelerates this commitment.

Outcome indicators

- Increased number of co-stewardship agreements
- Increased employment of First Nations peoples in DES
- Increased procurement from First Nations' owned businesses

Key activities in 2020–21

We partnered with First Nations peoples to hold people and Country at the centre of what we do and the decisions we make in better managing and conserving Queensland's parks, forests and ecosystems. This year we:

- jointly managed 28 national parks with Traditional Owner land trusts encompassing 2.17 million hectares
- commenced recruitment to 50 new ranger positions as part of the commitment to double the number of Indigenous land and sea rangers over the next three years and delivered two Indigenous Ranger Leadership programs for First Nations rangers
- allocated grants to 19 First Nations organisations (representing 24 communities) for more than 100 existing Indigenous land and sea rangers across Queensland
- delivered the 2020 round of Looking After Country grants across 12 First Nations communities
- continued negotiations on three land tenure dealings for the transfer of over 600,000 hectares to Aboriginal ownership and the dedication of national parks and nature refuges, under the Cape York Peninsula Tenure Resolution Program
- delivered workshops and meetings with Traditional Owners as part of various ecotourism projects across the state and executed a 30-year lease with Traditional Owners over part of East Trinity Reserve to support ecocultural tourism
- delivered a variety of successful youth engagement activities by rangers, including classroom presentations with new culturally appropriate resources
- partnered with the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport to execute a cultural heritage management agreement with the Traditional Owners, as part of the Wangetti Trail ecotourism project
- contracted six Land Restoration Fund projects that will deliver co-benefits for First Nations communities, including savanna burning on Country with input from Traditional Owners
- secured the passage of the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation (Indigenous Joint Management – Moreton Island) Amendment Bill 2020 to facilitate formal joint management of Mulgumpin (Moreton Island) by the state and the Quandamooka people
- executed memoranda of understanding with representatives of Traditional Owners to cooperatively manage traditional lands in the department's northern national park estate
- continued negotiations with Traditional Owner groups on an Indigenous land use agreement for Littleton National Park

- worked with First Nations groups across Queensland to manage fire in protected areas, including Cape York Peninsula, Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island) and Mulgumpin (Moreton Island)
- worked with nine First Nations groups to manage sea Country in the Reef under Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements
- delivered island and marine field activities with First Nations groups, including 424 person-days working together onboard Reef joint field management vessels
- developed a management plan for Currawinya National Park in south west Queensland with the Budjiti First Nations people
- held a high-level forum with First Nations peoples whose traditional Country overlaps the Great Sandy Marine Park to discuss aspirations for marine park management
- launched *Respecting Country – a sustainable waste strategy for First Nation communities* to guide the development of regional waste management plans, with a focus on innovation and local job creation
- assessed the impacts of the 2020 bushfire on K’gari (Fraser Island) with the Butchulla Aboriginal Corporation
- assisted Kullilli Bulloo River Aboriginal Corporation to support the Lake Eyre Basin Traditional Owner Alliance as a functioning independent body
- surveyed significant fauna species on Orchid Creek Station, Cape York Peninsula with the Kaanju Traditional Owner Negotiation Committee.

Together with the Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation (QYAC), this year we:

- delivered a management plan for Naree Budjong Djara National Park and Conservation Park, Myora Conservation Park, Main Beach Conservation Park and Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island) Recreation Area
- commenced a review of the Mulgumpin (Moreton Island) Management Plan
- started implementing the Mulgumpin (Moreton Island) Indigenous Management Agreement, including in-principle agreed joint management arrangements over the island’s protected areas
- enacted the name Gheebulum Coonungai (Moreton Island) National Park to reflect the strong cultural significance of the land to Quandamooka people

- supported QYAC to continue leading the development of a World Heritage tentative list submission for Quandamooka Country
- funded QYAC to implement the Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island) Townships Fire Management Strategies
- managed Quandamooka Sea Country in Moreton Bay, delivering on commitments in the memorandum of understanding.

We worked to embed First Nations knowledge and leadership in our policies, programs and systems to enrich conservation of land and sea Country and guide management of protected areas. This year we:

- continued to embed the principles and values of the department’s *Gurra Gurra Framework 2020–2026* for working with First Nations peoples and communities
- developed cultural protocol videos with Kuuku Ya’u Kanthanampu Aboriginal Corporation and Lama Lama Aboriginal Corporation to enhance the cultural awareness of departmental rangers working in sea Country, with more videos in development
- developed a draft Indigenous Partnerships Strategy for the Reef Joint Field Management Program to guide future collaboration opportunities with First Nations groups.

We increased policy and program co-design with First Nations peoples to strengthen partnerships, empower First Nations leadership and work together to define mutual benefits in delivering the department’s business. This year we:

- started to co-design the first world heritage strategy for Queensland with First Nations representatives of the world heritage areas and other experts, to guide engagement with First Nations peoples on world heritage matters
- commenced the co-design and development of an agreement making framework, to guide the drafting of agreements to co-steward the protected area estate with First Nations peoples
- prepared the draft Traditional Knowledge in Biodiscovery Code of Practice and draft Guidelines, working closely with First Nations partners and the Minister’s Traditional Knowledge Roundtable, and invited input on the drafts from all First Nations peoples
- established the Queensland River Management Framework, a collaborative approach to integrating First Nations peoples’

traditional knowledge, science, stories and connection to Country in the department's scientific understanding of managing rivers.

We supported opportunities for First Nations peoples through employment partnerships and improved procurement opportunities for First Nations peoples and businesses. This year we:

- continued implementing the Northern Parks and Forests Indigenous Employment and Development Strategy 2019–2022
- provided 114 days employment for Wuthathi and Meriam Nation (Ugar, Mer, Erub) rangers and cultural advisors working on Country on the Raine Island Recovery Project
- used four fee-for-service agreements with First Nations groups to deliver works on Country in the Reef
- progressed work placement arrangements with Darumbal and Gidarjil Rangers to increase the number and involvement of Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers in the department, with three Gidarjil and two Darumbal Rangers rotating through placements in the Reef Joint Field Management Program.

Protect the health of the environment and our communities

Our department continues to regulate environmentally relevant activities and promote a strategic approach to waste management and resource recovery in Queensland. We deliver consistent and transparent regulations that target industry-specific strategies and facilitate sustainable development in Queensland. We maintain Queensland's high environmental standards by actively monitoring and managing environmental risks, with robust assessment, compliance, investigation and enforcement programs. We also provide timely and comprehensive environmental information to state and local stakeholders and ensure the rehabilitation of environmental impacts.

Outcome indicators

- Increased public access to a wider range of online compliance and enforcement data
- Reduction in overall risk to the environment
- Reduction in waste sent to landfill and increased recycling rates

Key activities in 2020–21

We delivered initiatives under Queensland's *Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy*, progressing towards its 2050 targets for reduced waste and increased resource recovery and recycling. The strategy is a key part of Queensland's transition towards a circular economy and zero-waste society, where generation of waste is avoided and waste materials are seen as resources to be reused.

This year we:

- introduced legislation to ban the supply of single-use plastic items, such as straws, stirrers, plates, bowls and cutlery, and polystyrene takeaway food containers and cups from 1 September 2021
- launched a grants program for food rescue organisations to increase the amount of food they currently divert from landfill
- commenced a trial with three local governments collecting and processing food waste and other organic material
- continued administering Queensland's waste levy, which encourages waste avoidance and recycling, and provides funding for resource recovery initiatives
- commenced work with regional councils to develop regional waste management and infrastructure plans to help identify critical waste infrastructure needs
- launched *Keeping Queensland Clean: the Litter and Illegal Dumping Plan* to reduce the incidence and impact of litter and illegal dumping in Queensland
- started developing action plans for textile waste and e-waste, key elements of Queensland's waste strategy
- continued to implement the Local Government Illegal Dumping Partnership

Program involving 27 councils, with over 9,000 reports made to the councils and over 820 infringement notices issued

- undertook waste management and waste levy compliance activities, with inspections of the top 70% waste levy contributors and over 160 inspections of alleged unlicensed waste operators
- implemented the Local Government Levy Ready Grant Program (Round 2) to assist small landfill sites meet their waste levy obligations
- continued administering the Regional Recycling Transport Assistance Package, helping regional communities divert resources from landfill, increase recycling and reduce the environmental and social impacts of waste.

We worked with industry, communities and stakeholders to manage impacts on the environment, including updated regulatory standards, compliance activities and programs to encourage sustainable behaviours. This year we:

- worked with natural resource management groups, local councils and river improvement trusts to deliver 145 environmental recovery projects funded under the 2019 monsoon trough disaster recovery package, including streambank repair, coastal restoration, and weed and pest management
- incorporated behavioural and social sciences into environmental policy challenges, such as providing insights on food waste collection, redesigning the annual waste survey and helping to develop public interest evaluation guidelines for mining

- supported the Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network (TERN) to update field sensors that monitor the long-term health of various ecosystems, including soil wetness, biodiversity and vegetation cover
- continued to transition existing site-specific mines into the progressive rehabilitation and closure plan framework, with 77 transition notices issued and 130 pre-lodgement engagements in 2020–21
- continued the prosecution against former executive officers of Linc Energy Limited for allegedly failing to ensure the company complied with Queensland’s environmental laws
- continued to engage the community and monitor land impacted by underground coal gasification by-products
- launched the Public Register Portal, making it easier and quicker to access the department’s administration and enforcement activities, part of the Queensland Government’s commitment to transparency and availability of information
- published the department’s Annual Strategic Compliance Priorities 2020–21
- continued to deliver the Odour Abatement Taskforce to tackle odour issues in the Ipswich Area, including the implementation of Envirosuite, a new air flow technology that uses wind data to predict the likely path of odour
- ensured the satisfactory rehabilitation of land on Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island) that is returning to the custody of Traditional Owners
- supported environmental authority holders during COVID-19 with more flexible, risk-based compliance approaches and payment plans offered to companies facing financial hardship.

We delivered an improved regulatory framework to reduce environmental harm, and actively monitored and managed environmental risks. This year we:

- amended the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* to enhance rehabilitation outcomes in the resources industry, including improvements to the residual risk framework
- established a Better Rehabilitation team to conduct precursory works to support the planned appointment of a Rehabilitation Commissioner for the resources industry
- gave full legislative effect to the government’s transshipping policy by clearly prescribing transshipping as a regulated activity and

requiring the refusal of environmental authority applications in parts of the Great Barrier Reef

- finalised waterway environmental values and water quality objectives for the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin and eastern Cape York, to assist consistent planning, development and licencing and support the Basin Plan
- continued developing water quality guidelines for toxicants, with scientific benchmarks for the effects of a range of chemicals on aquatic ecosystems
- expanded the monitoring of smoke impact from bushfires and other sources in Queensland through the installation of particle monitoring equipment at all existing air monitoring stations
- finalised a code of practice for managing algal blooms in the Mareeba-Dimbulah water supply scheme with Sunwater, enabling irrigators to access water while protecting environmental values
- commenced a scientific study, in partnership with industry, of Moreton Bay sands, to inform future regulation of sand resources
- hosted the Minister’s Environment Roundtable in September 2020, and in May 2021 in Cairns, to discuss current activities and emerging issues with representatives of Queensland’s regional conservation groups and other environment organisations.

We prepared for, and managed, bushfire events on estates managed by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service to protect lives and minimise impacts on property and ecosystems. This year we:

- completed 438 prescribed burns totalling 669,330 hectares and undertook bushfire risk reduction treatments totalling 1,753 hectares in Protection Zones
- achieved our annual target of treating more than 22% of protection zones by prescribed burning and other fuel management treatments (including mowing, slashing and mulching)
- bolstered Queensland’s bushfire preparedness and fire management capabilities with the Enhanced Fire Management Project, establishing the state’s first dedicated fire management team in South East Queensland and the roll-out of 30 new light attack vehicles and three medium attack trucks
- responded to a significant bushfire on K’gari (Fraser Island) in 2020 alongside

- Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, the Butchulla people and the community continued the department's commitment to, and involvement in, the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements and review of the K'gari (Fraser Island) bushfire by the Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management.

Strengthen and harness Queensland's scientific excellence

The application of scientific knowledge is the cornerstone of productivity growth, human health, environmental sustainability and the overall wellbeing of Queenslanders. With sustained investment over recent decades, Queensland boasts some of the best scientific research organisations in the world, across universities, medical research institutes and government agencies. During 2020, the Queensland research sector was a key partner in the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue to play an important role in the economic recovery from 2021 onwards.

DES has stewardship of Queensland's science sector, including the development of strategy with the Queensland Chief Scientist, promotion of collaborative opportunities and engagement of the Queensland community in science. The department also hosts one of the state's largest group of environmental and natural resource scientists. Our science programs monitor, inform and report on the implementation of policies and programs in areas such as water resources, water and air quality, landscapes and soils, terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, climate adaptation, and coastal and wetland environments.

Outcome indicators

- Increased national and international science collaboration and partnerships
- Greater participation in citizen science

Key activities in 2020–21

We provided leading-edge, rigorous science to underpin and support government decision-making. This year we:

- initiated the Queensland River Management Framework, including a classification scheme and management guideline, to enhance river management
- developed tools to allow end-users to make informed decisions about the suitability of soils and land for agriculture in Reef catchments
- applied digital soil mapping and conventional soil surveys to develop soil erodibility maps of catchments, including the Logan Albert and Burnett Mary
- supported the Land Restoration Fund by developing co-benefit standards, methods, measures and assessments
- analysed 32,961 samples at the Chemistry Centre, generating over 122,268 individual tests and analyses on water quality, soils, sediments and plants, including 26% for external customers
- funded three water modelling research projects examining climate adaptation of Queensland's inland waterholes, surface water availability and freshwater biodiversity in South East Queensland, and social dimensions in Reef water quality modelling
- led the Queensland Murray Darling Fish Movement Project to better understand fish behaviour in South West Queensland streams to support better decision making
- completed the successful release of rare native fish held in captivity during drought in the upper reach of the Condamine River as part of the Native Fish Recovery Strategy
- provided hydrologic modelling, data and advice on nine water security projects across Queensland to support government decision-making and assist management in the management of water supplies during the recent drought
- sent several high-tech rain gauges to participant land holders, to fill gaps in the Bureau of Meteorology network and test the viability of low-cost, self-built gauges
- completed the development of new SOURCE hydrological models for the Burdekin, Mary, Barron, Pioneer and Whitsundays and commenced the development model development for the South East Queensland, Fitzroy and Burnett catchments to support future water management decisions/Water Plan reviews
- implemented the statewide aerial survey program to monitor the abundance of harvest macropods.

We worked to maximise community engagement in science to increase student participation in STEM subjects and increase science literacy. This year we:

- started revising the *Engaging Queenslanders in Science* strategy to encourage Queenslanders to engage more in science and value its benefits
- delivered virtual and in-person workshops, presentations and events across Queensland as part of the Flying Scientist and the Partner Up Queensland programs
- encouraged Queenslanders to join citizen science projects, with 43 Queensland Citizen Science Grant recipients and the Australian Citizen Science Association
- delivered the Queensland Women in STEM Prize and awarded three outstanding women scientists, with Queensland Museum and the Office for Women
- hosted the Queensland Young Tall Poppy Science Awards to recognise the achievements of Queensland's scientific researchers and communicators
- increased the reach of science events and activities, with previous recipients of Engaging Science Grants
- profiled Queensland scientists online to celebrate National Science Week.

We worked to strengthen the science base in Queensland and improve the translation of research into real-world benefits for Queenslanders. This year we:

- continued to support National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) facilities in Queensland under the Research and Infrastructure Co-investment Fund, for critical partnerships and joint ventures
- supported collaboration with Chinese Academy of Sciences researchers in priority areas, including agricultural biotechnology and food safety, medical research and environmental sciences
- coordinated whole of government input to the national Gene Technology Regulator, keeping Queenslanders safe whilst enabling world-leading genetic research
- commissioned *A New Chapter*, a ground-breaking report from CSIRO's Data61 group, on opportunities for science-based industry growth in Queensland
- supported the establishment of the Queensland Defence Science Alliance, for Queensland scientists to access defence-related funding and partner with industry

- explored a potential joint approach with all Queensland's universities to increase philanthropic investment in local research
- provided details of Queensland's research response to the COVID-19 pandemic on the Queensland Science website <https://science.des.qld.gov.au/research/queensland-research-responses-covid19>
- amended the *Biodiscovery Act 2004* to simplify approvals for research on native biological material with potential commercial outcomes and recognise the contribution of First Nations peoples' traditional knowledge to Queensland science.

We harnessed digital and disruptive technologies to deliver more information and improved services that are more efficient and easier to access. This year we:

- delivered an online strategic visualisation tool to profile the depth of Queensland's research and innovation locally and internationally
- delivered scientific information on priority species to government, industry and the community on the WildNet database, to help manage Queensland's biodiversity—in 2020 WildNet information was accessed more than 26 million times
- delivered over 140,000 maps and reports via the Maps Online service, providing easy access to topographic information for government, industry and the community
- supported and enhanced critical scientific computing infrastructure and applications so that our scientists can collect, store, analyse and deliver scientific information
- released the Queensland Environmental Science Data catalogue, enabling science datasets to be searched, linked and accessed across the agency and published externally.

Engage with Queensland's youth

The Queensland Government wants all young Queenslanders across the state to see limitless possibilities, realise their potential and help shape the future. The government is committed to ensuring young people have access to the services they need, regardless of their circumstances, and are supported to have healthy and active futures. This includes inspiring Queensland's youth to engage in science activities and STEM subjects and building a strong foundation for jobs of the future.

Young people are passionate, informed and invested in the future of this state. The more government can bring young people to the table and listen to their ideas, the stronger the state will be. The government is providing opportunities for young people to be heard and is working to strengthen their leadership skills and capacity to drive change.

Outcome indicators

- Contribute to the improved social, economic and civic participation of young people
- Increased inclusion of youth voices in shaping government policies, programs and services
- Greater promotion of STEM education

Key activities in 2020–21

We celebrated and engaged with young Queenslanders and listened to their voices to help shape government policies, programs and services so that young Queenslanders may reach their full potential. This year we:

- hosted Queensland Youth Week in April 2021, encouraging all Queenslanders to celebrate our state's young people and their achievements, with more than 115 events registered across the state during the week
- delivered three inaugural youth Speak Out events in Mossman, Brisbane and Rockhampton, inviting young people to share their ideas on challenges and opportunities relating to their local community, mental health, consent, youth engagement and the environment
- encouraged departments to extend their commitments to youth engagement and pursue opportunities to engage young Queenslanders by embedding the Queensland Youth Engagement Charter across government
- sought the views of the Queensland Youth Engagement Panel to help shape future government business, such as encouraging youth enrolment with the Queensland Electoral Commission, helping finalise the Youth Engagement Charter, and improving youth data collection with the Queensland Government Statistician.

We promoted safe and responsible behaviour by school leavers and supported Queensland communities over the schoolies holiday period so

young people may celebrate their achievements in a safe way. This year we:

- delivered the Safer Schoolies Gold Coast Response in partnership with Gold Coast City Council to safely manage the influx of thousands of young people on the Gold Coast
- provided the Safer Schoolies grants program, supporting regional responses to the Schoolies holiday period, volunteer support, education and accommodation outreach
- delivered the Safer Schoolies communication strategy, creating awareness about risks, safety, responsible behaviour and expectations.

We delivered initiatives to strengthen youth leadership and other capabilities to help young Queenslanders advocate for a strong future. This year we:

- delivered the 16th annual Queensland Indigenous Youth Leadership Program, supporting young First Nations Queenslanders to come together, develop leadership skills and build capacity to drive change in their local communities
- supported Queensland Parliamentary Services to deliver the Eric Deeral Indigenous Youth Parliament, providing an opportunity for young First Nations Queenslanders to experience Parliamentary debate and learn more about Parliamentary processes
- delivered the 25th annual Queensland Youth Parliament in partnership with YMCA

Brisbane and Queensland Parliamentary Services, providing a unique leadership and educational opportunity for young people to experience Parliament first-hand and participate in the development and passing of Youth Bills on topics of interest to young Queenslanders.

We encouraged participation and enrolment in STEM subjects so young people are equipped with relevant skills for future employment and encouraged to pursue STEM careers. This year we:

- delivered virtual and in-person workshops, presentations and events across Queensland as part of the Flying Scientist and the Partner Up Queensland programs, targeting school students, parents and early-career researchers
- promoted Queensland scientists and their research through awards and events such as National Science Week
- highlighted opportunities for young people to engage in science events and citizen science projects by working with Engaging Science Grant and Queensland Citizen Science Grant recipients.

Service standards

Protect the Great Barrier Reef

SDS service standards	Notes	2020–21 Target/Est	2020–21 Actual	Target met / not met
Service area: Environmental Policy, Programs and Regulation Services				
Great Barrier Reef water quality improvement programs				
Queensland contributes to progress towards 2025 targets of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60 per cent reduction in anthropogenic end-of-catchment dissolved inorganic nitrogen loads 25 per cent reduction in anthropogenic end-of-catchment loads of sediment 	1	≥2% ≥1%	Not yet available	
Percentage of sugarcane producers, within reef catchments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> participating in the SmartCane Best Management Practice (BMP) program achieving accreditation in the SmartCane Best Management Practice (BMP) program 	2	56% 19%	55% 18%	Targets not met
Queensland Reef Water Quality Program funds distribution administration ratio	3	≤\$0.20	\$0.21	Target not met

Notes:

- This service standard is a whole of government measure of Queensland's contribution to the improvement of reef water quality. Performance for this service standard will be reported annually through the [Reef Water Quality Report Card](#). Due to a 12-month time lag, reporting on the load reductions for 2019–20 will be included in the Reef Water Quality Report Card 2020 scheduled for submission to the joint state and federal Environment Ministers in March 2022.
- This service standard measures the effectiveness of the SmartCane BMP as delivered by the Queensland Cane Growers Organisation Ltd (CANEGROWERS). The 2020–21 results are lower than expected due to a peak in re-accreditation demand from growers, who received 5-year accreditation in the early phases of the program, who undertook to have their accreditation renewed in 2021.
- This service standard measures the efficiency by which the Office of the Great Barrier Reef distributes and administers funding to industry, research, natural resource management and other organisations for activities, actions and strategies that contribute to the outcomes of the Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan.

Conserve Queensland's protected areas and biodiversity

SDS service standards	Notes	2020–21 Target/Est	2020–21 Actual	Target met / not met
Service area: Parks, Wildlife and Conservation Services				
National Parks				
Percentage of the scheduled Protection Zone fuel management treatment achieved on Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) managed estate to protect life and property	1	90%	109%	Target met
Area of the QPWS managed estate with fuel loads reduced by planned burning, to reduce fire risk to life and property and protect biodiversity		635,269 ha	669,330 ha	Target met

SDS service standards	Notes	2020–21 Target/Est	2020–21 Actual	Target met / not met
Number of overnight camper stays hosted on national parks and forests	2	1.4 million	1.6 million	Target met
Wildlife				
Median time taken to resolve declared problem crocodiles		≤7 business days	4 business days	Target met
Protecting environments and ecosystems				
Percentage of Queensland's land area that is protected		8.25%	8.26%	Target met
Cost per session for the Queensland wetland information system (<i>WetlandInfo</i>)		<\$1.50	\$0.60	Target met
Service Area: Heritage Protection Services				
Percentage of departmental heritage recommendations, for inclusion in or removal from the Heritage Register, accepted by the Queensland Heritage Council	3	90%	100%	Target met
Average cost per heritage register entry reviewed and updated	4	\$235	\$150	Target met

Notes:

1. Working within the opportunity of a comparatively wetter year, the hazard reduction treatment target for 2020–21 was exceeded. The target is based on completing a 90% fuel reduction treatment to a quarter of the managed estate.
2. Following the reopening of Queensland national parks and forests to campers after COVID-19 related closures, a significant increase in first-time campers was noted, with more people vacationing 'in their backyards'.
3. The Queensland Heritage Council accepted all departmental recommendations for the period.
4. The number of register reviews undertaken during the year was less than anticipated due to a focus on other priority heritage development applications and project delivery, resulting in a lower overall cost per heritage register entry.

Strengthen our partnerships with First Nations peoples

SDS service standard	Notes	2020–21 Target/Est	2020–21 Actual	Target met / not met
Service area: Parks, Wildlife and Conservation Services				
National Parks				
Number of hectares of State land and national parks transferred to Traditional Owners in Cape York Peninsula	1	597,575 ha	0 ha	Target not met

Note:

1. Agreements with Traditional Owners were delayed as a result of the postponement of negotiating committee meetings, due to COVID-19 restrictions, impacting on the capacity to resolve complex tenure issues.

Protect the health of the environment and our communities

SDS service standards	Notes	2020–21 Target/Est	2020–21 Actual	Target met / not met
Service area: Environmental Policy, Programs and Regulation Services				
Monitoring legislative and regulatory compliance relating to the impact of industrial or commercial activity on the environment				
Percentage of identified unlicensed operators who have become licensed or enforcement action taken within 60 days	1	70%	84%	Target met
Average cost per environmental public report resolution as a consequence of effective prioritisation of reports	2	\$2,000	\$1,461	Target met
Identifying, monitoring and taking action in relation to unlawful activity				
Proportion of monitored licensed operators returned to compliance with their environmental obligations	3	70%	82%	Target met
Median cost per formal investigation into serious non-compliance	4	\$3,000	\$1,182	Target met
Controlling and/or allowing actions that will impact on the State's environment				
Average cost per permit/licence assessed	5	\$6,500	\$5,828	Target met
Litigation				
Percentage of matters finalised with a conviction or a successful application	6	85%	94%	Target met
Percentage of briefs of evidence reviewed and decision made on whether charges can be laid, within 12 weeks of receipt	7	90%	100%	Target met

Notes:

1. The 2020–21 target/estimate was exceeded due to an increase in compliance priority given to unlicensed and non-compliance allegations.
2. The 2020–21 results is lower than the target/estimate, reflecting an increase in the number of reports received and ongoing business improvement of the department in service delivery.
3. The 2020–21 target/estimate was exceeded and reflects the ongoing effectiveness of the department in managing instances of non-compliance.
4. The 2020–21 result is lower than the 2020–21 target/estimate as a consequence of reduced travel costs attributed to a reduction in the median cost of formal investigations.
5. The 2020–21 result is lower than the target/estimate due to ongoing business process improvements made by the business centres.
6. The 2020–21 actual is higher than the target/estimate and reflects the ongoing effectiveness of the Litigation Unit's in finalising matters.
7. The 2020–21 actual is higher than the target/estimate reflecting the ongoing effectiveness of the Litigation Unit.

Strengthen and harness Queensland's scientific excellence

SDS service standards	Notes	2020–21 Target/Est	2020–21 Actual	Target met / not met
Service Area: Science				
Percentage of customers from government agencies satisfied with the natural resource and environmental science services and information provided (overall satisfaction)		≥90%	93%	Target met
Percentage of laboratory tests completed and made available within agreed timeframes and quality specifications to support Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan and other government priorities	1	≥89%	82%	Target not met

Note:

- COVID-19 restrictions reduced the number of specialist staff able to work in the laboratory at any one time. In addition, a higher number than average wet season monitoring tests were received and conducted over the year.

Cross-government initiatives

During the reporting period, the department collaborated on the following inter-governmental agreements and whole of government initiatives:

- Bilateral Agreement between the Commonwealth and the State of Queensland relating to environmental assessment under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
- Bushfire species recovery program with the Australian Government
- Local Government Illegal Dumping Hotspot Grants and Local Government Illegal Dumping Partnerships Program, with local governments
- Development of the Australian Litter Measure (AusLM) unit of measure for litter in the environment
- Food organics and gardens organics collection trials, with four local government areas
- Offset land transfer from Powerlink to protect valuable mahogany glider habitat at Girringun National Park
- National waste export bans, with the Australian Government
- National product stewardships schemes for priority waste streams
- Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island) Steering Committee
- National Waste Policy Action Plan
- Nest to Oceans turtle protection program
- Paddock to Reef Integrated Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting Program
- Queensland Reef Water Quality Program
- Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan
- Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan
- National Park expansion after the removal of illegal fishing huts from Halifax Bay Wetlands National Park
- Environmental monitoring and community engagement relating to land impacted by underground coal gasification by-products
- Queensland Eco Trails Program.

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	2020	Variance
	Actual	Actual	
	\$'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	2020	Variance
	Actual	Actual	
	\$'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.

Appendix 1—Queensland Heritage Council

QUEENSLAND HERITAGE COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2020–21

Introduction

Queensland's cultural heritage is preserved for the community and future generations through the provisions of the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992* (the Act). Among other things, the Act establishes the Queensland Heritage Council, a 12-member independent and impartial body with the main functions of:

- deciding places to be entered or removed from the Queensland Heritage Register
- advising the responsible Minister about Queensland's cultural heritage
- advising and making recommendations to relevant Ministers on matters of heritage development proposed by the State Government departments
- encouraging community interest in and understanding of Queensland's cultural heritage
- advising government and community organisations on appropriate management of cultural heritage places, and
- providing other functions delegated to the Heritage Council by the responsible Minister.

The Department of Environment and Science (DES) supports and funds the Heritage Council's operations through its Heritage Branch. Heritage Council members are remunerated in accordance with the *Remuneration of Part-Time Chairs and Members of Government Boards, Committees and Statutory Authorities* as approved by the Governor in Council.

In Queensland, the Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DSDSATSIP) has responsibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage under the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* and the *Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003*. The Heritage Council, in consultation with DES, works with DSDSATSIP on matters of cultural heritage where their respective responsibilities overlap (for example, where a place of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural significance is also listed on the Queensland Heritage Register).

Membership

The Governor in Council appoints the 12 Heritage Council members, with the Act requiring five members to represent specific organisations and seven members appointed for their heritage knowledge and expertise. Terms of appointment are up to three years, with a maximum six years' continuous membership.

At 30 June 2021, Heritage Council members were:

- Ms Debbie Best, Chair and expert representative
- Cr George Seymour, Deputy Chair and expert representative
- Mr Andrew Ladlay, representing the National Trust of Australia (Queensland)
- Ms Judy Peters, representing the Local Government Association of Queensland
- Ms Ann-Marie Allan, representing the Queensland Council of Unions
- Mr Stuart Lummis, representing property owners and managers
- Mr Andrew Barnes, a structural engineer and authority on heritage conservation
- Ms Judy Brien, a barrister with specialised knowledge in heritage and planning and environment law
- Ms Kathy Davis, heritage property owner and advocate
- Ms Alice Hampson, an architect, writer and architectural historian
- Dr Katie McConnel, a historian, writer and academic specialising in local heritage and history
- Vacant – rural industries representative.

On 8 April 2021, Ms Clare Wilkes, representing rural interests, formally resigned from the Heritage Council.

In 2020–21 there have been no new appointments to the Heritage Council.

Key activities

Key Heritage Council activities during 2020–21 included:

- entering 10 new places into the Queensland Heritage Register
- providing heritage advice to the Queensland Government and other relevant agencies on major infrastructure projects including the New Performing Arts Venue at the Queensland Cultural Centre and Brisbane Exhibition Grounds
- providing heritage advice to the Department of Education and associated contractors in relation to upgrades and new additions planned for heritage-listed schools, including the Brisbane Central State School and the Wilston State School
- providing Heritage Council representatives to the:
 - independent expert panel for the New Performing Arts Venue at the Queensland Cultural Centre
 - assessment panel for round five of the Queensland Government's *Community Sustainability Action Grants* for Heritage Conservation
- establishment of the Queensland Heritage Advisory Panel (QHAP) in April 2021 under the auspices of Heritage Council following a formal request from the Honourable Meaghan Scanlon MP, Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs. The key purpose of QHAP is to investigate and report on options to improve protections for Queensland's heritage places. The QHAP is due to provide its findings to the Minister in late 2021.

COVID-19 has impacted the delivery of many heritage events like Open House and National Trust of Australia's (Queensland) Heritage Awards. Heritage Council has not contributed or provided any sponsorship funding in the financial year.

Meetings and business continuity

The Heritage Council met nine times during 2020–21. Meetings in 2020 were held on 31 July, 25 September and 4 December. Meetings in 2021 were held on 29 January, 26 February, 26 March, 30 April, 28 May and 25 June.

Like many government agencies working through the global COVID-19 event, the Heritage Council continued to progress the state's necessary heritage work during this time with Council

members, departmental representatives and relevant stakeholders meeting remotely since February 2020.

As restrictions eased, the Heritage Council has been able to return to normal meeting format, once again with departmental representatives and relevant stakeholders attending. The Heritage Council was not able to undertake regional visits to meet with local government representatives and owners during the year but it is anticipated that these visits can recommence next financial year.

The Queensland Heritage Register

The Queensland Heritage Register is the Heritage Act's main mechanism for protecting Queensland's cultural heritage and a key function of the Heritage Council is to decide on applications to enter places into the Register.

Each application is considered by the Heritage Council to ensure the Register is a representative and comprehensive statewide record of Queensland's cultural heritage. The Register contains a diverse range of places such as community halls, theatres, rural and suburban homes, commercial and government buildings, places of worship, roads, bridges, railways, mining sites, burial places, sites of public recreation, parks and gardens and even specific trees, such as Barcaldine's Tree of Knowledge.

There were 1,794 places on the Queensland Heritage Register as at 30 June 2021, with the Heritage Council deciding to enter 10 new heritage places in 2020–21. Details of decisions made regarding the Heritage Register are below.

Places entered

- Beaudesert Pig & Calf Saleyards
- Downs Club, Toowoomba
- Eagles Nest Camp, Redwood Park, Toowoomba
- Fortitude Valley Air Raid Shelters
- Maryborough Baby Clinic (former)
- The Fort, Oxley
- Ashgrove Methodist Church (former)
- Mareeba Uniting Church (former)
- Reconciliation Rocks
- Ward 13, Dunwich Development Asylum (former)

Places not entered

- Dominion Flour Mill Front Gateway & Fence, Maryborough
- McLean Stand, Ballymore
- Residence (former), 67 Edward Street, Brisbane City
- Residence, 509 Main Road, Wellington Point
- Linden Lea, Toowong

It is essential that the entries of state heritage places remain current. In its statutory role, the Heritage Council considers proposed amendments to Queensland Heritage Register entries with the aim of having accurate information about heritage places and ensuring the evolution of these places over time is correctly recorded.

During 2020–21, the Heritage Council made decisions to update the entries listed below:

Register entries revised through consent of the Heritage Council and place owners

- Mount Morgan Courthouse
- North Pine Presbyterian Church (former)
- Finch Hatton War Memorial

Places entered as additional land to existing entry

- Nil

Places removed

- Nil

Places partly removed (part of the site)

- Cairns Railway, Section from Redlynch to Crooked Creek Bridge
- Cooktown Post and Telegraph Office (former)
- Emerald Railway Station Complex
- Harris Terrace, 68 George Street, Brisbane City
- Inverness, Toogoolawah
- St Andrews Presbyterian Church (former), Esk
- Wolston Park Hospital Complex
- Y Station, 16 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, Townsville
- North Ipswich Railway Workshops Complex

Place removed (as a destroyed place)

- Nil

Notable new entries into the Heritage Register during 2020–21 included:

- Eagles Nest Camp, Redwood Park, Toowoomba is an important archaeological site of a former Great Depression camp for itinerant unemployed men. The camp became self-sufficient with accommodation huts, communal structures, landscaping and vegetable gardens. It became renowned throughout Australia during the Depression as an exemplary camp for unemployed swagmen.
- Fortitude Valley Air Raid Shelters were built during World War II and are important in demonstrating the impact of Japan's entry into the war on Queensland's civilian population, and the urgent Air Raid

Precaution measures undertaken during
1941–42.

- The Fort, Oxley, is a stately timber residence built in 1882 on high ground, overlooking the Brisbane River. It represents the establishment of substantial estates by affluent Queenslanders in the 19th century.

Debbie Best

Debbie Best

Chair, Queensland Heritage Council

Glossary

Term	Definition
70:20:10 model of learning and development	The 70:20:10 model of learning and development incorporates three types of learning: 70% from real-life and workplace experiences, 20% from relationship learning (feedback, mentoring, coaching, networks, and observing and working with role models) and 10% from formal learning and structured programs.
ARC	Audit and Risk Committee
BCP	Business and Corporate Partnership
Best management practice	Methods or techniques found to be the most effective and practical way to achieve an objective, while making best use of the department's resources.
Biodiversity	Life in all its forms—different plants, animals and micro-organisms, the genes they contain and the ecosystems they form.
Catchment	An area of land on which runoff from rainfall is collected and transferred to a waterway.
Circular economy	An economic system aimed at eliminating waste and the continual use of resources.
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
CYPAL	Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal Land
Declared Fish Habitat Area (FHA)	Areas to protect key inshore and estuarine fish habitat areas that are essential to sustaining fisheries. While declared fish habitat areas protect these key fish habitats from physical disturbance associated with coastal development, community access and use such as legal fishing and boating are allowed and encouraged.
Ecosystem	A community of organisms interacting with one another and their environment.
Ecotourism	Ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that foster environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation.
Environmental authority	Authorisation provided by DES, which allows an environmentally relevant activity to be performed.
GRASS	Grazing Resilience and Sustainable Solutions Program
Heritage	Places of cultural and natural significance that we want to keep, respect and pass on to future generations. Heritage places include buildings, structures, cemeteries, archaeological sites, gardens, urban precincts, and natural and landscape features.
Indigenous management agreement	An agreement that establishes how a protected area on Cape York Peninsula or on Minjerrabah (North Stradbroke Island) will be jointly managed between Traditional Owners and the State of Queensland. It describes the parties' respective roles and responsibilities as well as the strategic management directions.
Management plans	Statutory documents that provide clear management direction and priority actions for areas managed by Queensland Parks and Wildlife. Management plans require public consultation and, in the case of national park (CYPAL) or an Indigenous Joint Management Area, must be prepared jointly with relevant First Nations landholders.

Marine park	Large multiple use areas that provide for the conservation of the marine environment. Through a system of zoning, marine parks provide for a range of recreational and commercial pursuits while also supporting conservation initiatives. Marine parks help protect a wide variety of habitats including mangrove wetlands, seagrass beds, mudflats, sandbanks, beaches, rocky outcrops and reefs.
NAIDOC	National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee
National park	A large natural or near natural area set aside to protect large-scale ecological processes, along with the complement of species and ecosystems characteristic of the area, which also provide a foundation for environmentally and culturally compatible spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities. The primary objective of a national park is to permanently protect and preserve natural biodiversity along with its underlying ecological structure and supporting environmental processes, and to promote education and enable recreation consistent with this objective.
National Science Week	An annual celebration of science in Australia.
Nature refuge	An area of private land voluntarily declared and protected for conservation purposes while allowing compatible and sustainable land uses to continue.
NCRIS	National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy
Office of the Great Barrier Reef	A business area within the department that is responsible for implementing and coordinating reef management strategies and programs, including the Queensland Government's actions under the <i>Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan</i> and the <i>Reef 2050 Water Quality Protection Plan</i> .
Protected area	Land and sea areas dedicated as protected areas under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> , State and Commonwealth marine parks acts, and the <i>Fisheries Act 1994</i> .
QAO	Queensland Audit Office
QCAP	Queensland Climate Action Plan
QCRC	Queensland Climate Resilient Councils program
Queensland Heritage Register	A statutory list of places of cultural heritage significance to Queensland.
QPWS&P	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships
Queensland Youth Week	An annual celebration of young people aged 12 to 25 and the positive contributions they make to Queensland communities.
Special Wildlife Reserve	An area of private land voluntarily declared to conserve exceptional natural and cultural values and that is afforded protections similar to that of a national park.
Stakeholders	Individuals, groups or organisations with specific interest in and/or influence on the work of the department.
STEM education	An approach to learning and development that integrates the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
Wetland environments	Areas of permanent or periodic/intermittent inundation, whether natural or artificial, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water which does not exceed six metres depth at low tide.
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VBMF	Values-Based Management Framework

WildNet database	A database that supports Queensland's biodiversity and protected areas by providing important wildlife information that underpins conservation policies, programs and management responses.
World Heritage Areas	These areas are examples of the world's most outstanding natural or cultural heritage that it is agreed should be protected for all humanity. They are identified and listed under an international treaty administered by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

Compliance checklist

Summary of requirement	Basis for requirement	Annual report reference
Letter of compliance	A letter of compliance from the accountable officer or statutory body to the relevant Minister/s	ARRs – section 7 Page 2
Accessibility	Table of contents	ARRs – section 9.1 Page 1
	Glossary	Page 54
	Public availability	ARRs – section 9.2 Inside front cover
	Interpreter service statement	<i>Queensland Government Language Services Policy</i> ARRs – section 9.3 Inside front cover
	Copyright notice	<i>Copyright Act 1968</i> ARRs – section 9.4 Inside front cover
Information Licensing	<i>QGEA – Information Licensing</i> ARRs – section 9.5 Inside front cover	
General information	Introductory Information	ARRs – section 10 Page 4
Non-financial performance	Government's objectives for the community and whole of government plans/specific initiatives	ARRs – section 11.1 Page 4
	Agency objectives and performance indicators	ARRs – section 11.2 Page 10
	Agency service areas	ARRs – section 11.3 Page 8
	Agency service standards	Page 29
Financial performance	Summary of financial performance	ARRs – section 12.1 Page 34
Governance – management and structure	Organisational structure	ARRs – section 13.1 Page 7
	Executive management	ARRs – section 13.2 Page 5
	Government bodies (statutory bodies and other entities)	ARRs – section 13.3 www.des.qld.gov.au
	Public Sector Ethics	<i>Public Sector Ethics Act 1994</i> ARRs – section 13.4 Page 37
	Human Rights	<i>Human Rights Act 2019</i> ARRs – section 13.5 Page 49
	Queensland public service values	ARRs – section 13.6 Page 5
Governance – risk management and accountability	Risk management	ARRs – section 14.1 Page 43
	Audit committee	ARRs – section 14.2 Page 39
	Internal audit	ARRs – section 14.3 Page 41
	External scrutiny	ARRs – section 14.4 Page 41
	Information systems and recordkeeping	ARRs – section 14.5 Page 43
	Information Security attestation	ARRs – section 14.6 Page 44
	Strategic workforce planning and performance	ARRs – section 15.1 Page 45

Summary of requirement	Basis for requirement	Annual report reference	
Governance – human resources	Early retirement, redundancy and retrenchment	Directive No.04/18 <i>Early Retirement, Redundancy and Retrenchment</i> ARRs – section 15.2	Page 48
Open Data	Statement advising publication of information	ARRs – section 16	Inside front cover
	Consultancies	ARRs – section 33.1	https://data.qld.gov.au
	Overseas travel	ARRs – section 33.2	Inside front cover
	Queensland Language Services Policy	ARRs – section 33.3	https://data.qld.gov.au
Financial statements	Certification of financial statements	FAA – section 62 FPMS – sections 38, 39 and 46 ARRs – section 17.1	Provided electronically
	Independent Auditor’s Report	FAA – section 62 FPMS – section 46 ARRs – section 17.2	Provided electronically

FAA	<i>Financial Accountability Act 2009</i>
FPMS	<i>Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019</i>
ARRs	<i>Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies</i>

Financial statements

The 2020–21 financial statements are provided electronically.

ANNUAL REPORT 2020–2021

Department of Environment and Science

www.des.qld.gov.au