

Department of Justice and Attorney-General

State Budget 2011–12

Agency Budget Highlights



Queensland
Government

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Paul Lucas MP
Deputy Premier and
Attorney-General,
Minister for Local
Government and Special
Minister of State

Message from the Deputy Premier and Attorney-General

An open and accessible justice system is the cornerstone of a safe, just and supportive society. Operating from more than 100 locations around Queensland, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General delivers the services that support our justice system.

Through courts and tribunals, legal and advocacy services and a range of policies and community-focused programs, the department delivers fair and accessible justice services to urban, regional and remote communities.

After the devastating natural disasters of late 2010 and early 2011, fair access to legal services is more important than ever. Queensland's billion-dollar justice budget will continue to build on the Queensland Government's commitment to a fair, safe and just society in 2011-12. This will include \$798 million invested in justice services and \$262 million ear-marked for capital works.

The department's services not only focus on the administration of an open and accessible justice system, but also the protection of our most vulnerable citizens.

Legal Aid Queensland will receive \$16.6 million as part of an extra \$61 million committed over four years to provide legal services to vulnerable Queenslanders, while victims of crime will continue to receive the vital support they require.

We continue to rejuvenate our justice infrastructure to ensure Queensland has modern facilities. The centrepiece of this work, the \$570 million Supreme and District Court Building, is rapidly taking shape in the heart of Brisbane's legal precinct.

This modern complex will deliver a new era of justice, with greatly enhanced facilities. The court will be equipped with leading edge technology and provide excellent justice facilities that will serve our community well into the future.

As Queenslanders, we enjoy a vibrant nightlife. Unfortunately, a very small element of our community ruins it for others by engaging in violent or antisocial behaviour.

The Queensland Government remains committed to reducing harm to individuals, families and the general community through liquor and gaming regulatory initiatives.

Through the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation, the department will continue to deliver policies aimed at harm minimisation and reduction of alcohol-related violence.

Responsible for more than 6000 licensed venues across Queensland, the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation supports the liquor and gaming industries while ensuring licensed venues are safe and industry practices are responsible.

The Office of Fair Trading will continue to support a fair and safe marketplace for consumers and business. This is achieved through consumer protection and awareness services, business registration and licensing services, and the registration of not-for-profit organisations.

While the Government focuses on the task of rebuilding our State, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General will continue to respond to these challenges by delivering the legal and justice services that will give our community a bright future.

A fair and accessible justice system is one that remains responsive to the needs of the community. This year's State Budget will enable our justice system to continue its frontline and policy work to serve all Queenslanders and support our recovery efforts.

Paul Lucas MP
Deputy Premier and Attorney-General,
Minister for Local Government and Special
Minister of State



Cameron Dick MP
Minister for Education
and Industrial Relations

Message from the Minister

Every Queensland worker deserves to return home from their workplace safely. This is why the Queensland Government places such high importance on workplace health and safety and industrial relations.

As the Minister responsible for workplace safety and industrial relations, I am pleased to announce that \$123.9 million of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General's budget in 2011-12 is dedicated to providing Queenslanders with a fair and safe work environment.

Tragically, about 100 Queenslanders are killed in the workplace every year. This is a devastating toll.

The Government, through the Office of Fair and Safe Work Queensland, is committed to reducing the number of workplace incidents and promoting a healthy, strong and safer Queensland.

The Office of Fair and Safe Work Queensland leads policy development and delivers services to ensure workplaces are safe, fair and productive.

Among these functions, workplace injury prevention will remain a top priority, with \$71.7 million allocated in 2011-12 to fund compliance and advisory campaigns that raise awareness of workplace health and safety issues and make workplaces safer.

A total of \$1 million has been dedicated to a new phase of the successful *Homecomings* campaign, aimed at bringing every worker home safely.

Work-related injuries and illness are estimated to cost the community more than \$5.2 billion. The *Homecomings* campaign is part of our ongoing effort to promote safe and healthy working environments.

In conjunction with WorkCover, the Office of Fair and Safe Work Queensland will continue working with employers to deliver the Injury Prevention and Management program. This program develops employers' capabilities and willingness to improve their workplace health and safety, as well as return-to-work and rehabilitation outcomes.

A further \$20.2 million will ensure that employees and employers have access to professional industrial relations advice and advocacy on wages and conditions, through education, compliance and enforcement programs.

The Electrical Safety Office will receive \$15.9 million to reduce the number of deaths and accidents involving electricity. The office will continue its education and compliance campaigns to raise awareness of the dangers when working with electricity. This year \$600,000 will be allocated to a *Don't do your own electrical work* safety campaign.

With the Government's focus throughout 2011-12 on rebuilding the State through Operation Queensland, our inspectors will continue to offer expert health and safety advice to those affected by recent disasters. The expertise and experience of Office of Fair and Safe Work Queensland staff will be vital during the rebuilding process.

All Queenslanders benefit from a fair and safe work environment. This year's State Budget delivers the resources to ensure Queenslanders enjoy a fair, strong and safe workplace.

Cameron Dick MP
Minister for Education and Industrial
Relations

Building a modern justice system

Brisbane Supreme and District Court Building

Through important infrastructure projects, the department will continue to deliver modern justice facilities. The department's flagship project, the construction of the new Supreme and District Court Building, will continue with \$244 million allocated this year.

The \$570 million building – due to open in mid 2012 – will feature state-of-the-art technology and create an outstanding legal precinct in Brisbane.

The new courthouse will be unique in Australia, with the co-location of the Supreme Court and District Court providing significant operating efficiencies through the use of shared facilities.

The building will deliver a new era of justice through greatly enhanced facilities for victims of crime, witnesses, jurors, lawyers, judges and members of the public.



Brisbane Supreme and District Court Building.

Protecting vulnerable people

Indigenous justice

The Queensland Government continues its commitment to addressing Indigenous justice issues and the over-representation of Indigenous Queenslanders in our criminal justice system.

This year's Budget allocates \$2 million dollars for operation of the Murri Courts and the Queensland Indigenous Alcohol Diversion Program.

Murri Courts are an important initiative, providing a forum where Indigenous Australians have input into the sentencing process. When an Indigenous person wishes to plead guilty to an offence in a Magistrates Court, the offender may ask to be sentenced in the Murri Court. The Murri Court is presided over by a Magistrate, who is advised by Indigenous Elders, or respected people, on cultural issues.

This financial year will also see continued funding to Community Justice Groups, with a total of \$4.1 million going to 52 groups.

The program allocates funding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to develop strategies within their communities to deal with justice-related issues and also to decrease Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' contact with the justice system. The program gives members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities the opportunity to work co-operatively with magistrates, police, corrective services personnel and staff from other government agencies to provide support to Indigenous people dealing with the justice system.

Providing a helping hand to victims of crime

Victim Assist Queensland will continue its services in 2011-12, with a total budget of \$31.4 million allocated for its vital work.

Victim Assist Queensland focuses on assisting the recovery of victims of violent crime. The one-stop shop provides help to victims, in the form of financial assistance and coordinated support services to aid recovery.

During 2010-11, Victim Assist Queensland approved more than 1800 applications for financial assistance and criminal injury compensation for victims of crime. The Victims LinkUp Information and Referral Service provided assistance to more than 15,000 client contacts.

State Budget 2011–12

Agency Budget Highlights

Department of Justice and Attorney-General

Guardianship services

The Office of the Adult Guardian has received an additional \$5.2 million – part of \$20.3 million over four years – in recognition of the increasing need for guardianship services in our community.

This important service protects the rights and interests of adults with impaired decision-making capacity and investigates claims of exploitation, abuse or neglect.

Enhancing justice services

Boosting legal aid

The Queensland Government continues its support of legal aid services, with the allocation of \$16.6 million, as part of a \$61 million commitment over four years.

These services are provided through Legal Aid Queensland, which helps financially disadvantaged Queenslanders who need advice and assistance on legal matters.

Last financial year Legal Aid Queensland provided free preventative and early intervention services on 190,086 occasions and guided the appearance of 60,045 adults in the Magistrates Courts.

Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions

As part of a four-year \$1.8 million commitment, \$460,000 has been provided to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for additional support for prosecution and legal services in Ipswich, and legal officers in Brisbane, Beenleigh and Cairns.



Fair productive workplaces

National harmonisation

Queensland will continue working with the Commonwealth Government to implement model regulations and harmonised laws. This work includes the creation of a single work, health and safety Act and amendments to the *Electrical Safety Act 2002*.

At present, each state and territory has its own workplace health and safety laws. Harmonising legislation across Australia will deliver consistent levels of safety to all Australian workers.

Work-life balance

Many people recognise the need for work-life balance but actually striking a balance is difficult. The department will continue to deliver work-life balance strategies for the public and private sectors.

Improving community safety

Combating alcohol-related violence

The Queensland Government believes young people have every right to go out at night and have a great time without the risk of encountering alcohol or drug-related violence and other antisocial behaviour.

The Government has implemented a number of hard-hitting measures to combat alcohol-related violence.

A central component of the Government's response to alcohol-related violence was the introduction of a two-year Drink Safe Precinct pilot program in Fortitude Valley, Townsville and Surfers Paradise. These precincts benefit from an increased police presence, more support services and safe zones and increased transport. The pilot is ongoing, and its measures will be evaluated to inform future policy for licensed venues in Queensland.

A new harm minimisation strategy for the liquor industry will also be developed in 2011-12, as a result of the parliamentary inquiry.

The strategy will complement the Queensland drug strategy and focus on creating a more responsible drinking environment by fostering more informed attitudes and behaviours towards drinking, and by protecting Queensland's most vulnerable and at-risk people.

State Budget 2011–12 Agency Budget Highlights

New joint commission

The Queensland Gaming Commission's decision-making responsibilities have been expanded in relation to new hotel licences, nightclubs and extended trading hours. The commission is now responsible for making key liquor licensing decisions that take into account harm minimisation and adverse impacts on the health or safety of members of the public.

Homecomings campaign

The most important reason for good workplace health and safety standards is not at work at all – it is at home.

Work-related injuries and illness cost the community an estimated \$5.2 billion and claim about 100 lives a year. For families affected by such tragedies, life changes forever.

The Office of Fair Safe Work Queensland has committed \$1 million to stage two of the *Homecomings* awareness campaign. The *Homecomings* campaign is part of an ongoing effort to promote fair, safe and healthy working environments.



Don't do your own electrical work

Don't risk it! Use a licensed electrician.

Research indicates more than half of Queenslanders believe it is all right to do their own unlicensed electrical work. This places them and others at risk of injury, death or property damage through fire. The Electrical Safety Office has allocated \$600,000 to develop a *Don't do your own electrical work* awareness campaign.

Mandatory fingerprinting of security providers

A budget allocation of \$233,000 has been provided to the Office of Fair Trading to enhance its commitment to a safe marketplace through the mandatory fingerprinting of security provider licensees.

This follows a decision by the Council of Australian Governments to provide a national approach to the regulation of the security provider industry.

Mandatory finger printing will provide an additional identification procedure to ensure only suitable people operate in the security industry, which plays a critical role in community safety and property protection.

Providing access to information

More online services

After success with community grants and liquor permits, the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation is improving its online capacity for licensees. The office will release a client self-service portal in 2011-12 to enable clients to pay their annual licence fees, update their contact details and access online application forms at the click of a button. A suite of individual licences will be released, and legislative changes are being developed, to allow more liquor and gaming applications to be submitted and paid online. This is targeted at reducing red tape and halving the average licensing processing time.



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State Budget 2011–12

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