



# Strategic Audit Plan 2019–22

---

# Contents

---

<b>1.</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Audit program 2019–22</b>	<b>3</b>
	Summary of the three-year audit program	3
<b>3.</b>	<b>Audit details</b>	<b>5</b>
	Planned 2019–20 performance audits	5
	Proposed 2020–21 performance audit topics	11
	Proposed 2021–22 performance audits	16

# 1. Background

---

## About the plan

Our legislation—the *Auditor-General Act 2009*—requires us to prepare a strategic audit plan of the performance audits we propose to conduct over the coming three years.

We have moved to publishing the information for our rolling three plan directly on our website: [www.qao.qld.gov.au/audit-program](http://www.qao.qld.gov.au/audit-program)

The purpose of this document is to make it easy for readers who wish to see, and download, a summary of the topics on the plan and descriptions in one document.

All the information contained within this document is also available online on our website.

## Our planning process

A fact sheet explaining our strategic audit planning process, including who we consult and how we prioritise topics for inclusion in the plan, is on our website ([Strategic audit planning fact sheet](#)).

## What is a performance audit?

The *Auditor-General Act 2009* authorises the Auditor-General to conduct a performance audit of all, or any activities of a public sector entity. In conducting a performance audit, we aim to establish whether the public sector entity is achieving its objectives economically, efficiently and effectively, and in compliance with relevant laws.

Performance audits provide parliament and the public with assurance that the delivery of public sector services and the spending of public monies is accountable, transparent, and appropriate. A fact sheet with further detail on performance audits can be found on our website ([Performance audit fact sheet](#)).



## 2. Audit program 2019–22

### Summary of the three-year audit program

#### Performance audits by committee and planned year for tabling in parliament

	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
	Audits	Audit	Audit
Economics and Governance Committee	Managing the cost of local government services*	Asset management in local government	Maintaining ecologically sustainable communities
	Effectiveness of audit committees in state government entities	Collecting state revenue	Managing conflicts of interest in local government
	Managing the State Penalties Enforcement Registry ICT project*	Local government development applications and approvals	
Education, Employment and Small Business Committee	Investing in vocational education and training*	Educating for the digital future	Managing teacher supply
Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee		Managing tourism and sustainability of Queensland's World Heritage sites	Managing oil and chemical spills
			Commonwealth Games legacy

Note 1: \* denotes audits which had commenced at the time of publishing the plan in May 2019, but which will table in the 2019–20 financial year.

Note 2: Performance audits take an average of nine months to complete before being tabled in the parliament. As a result, some audits will start up to nine months prior to the financial year they are listed in.



### Performance audits by committee and planned year for tabling in parliament—continued

	2019–20 Audits	2020–21 Audits	2021–22 Audits
Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee	Queensland family support and child protection system*	Health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	Healthcare pathways (waitlist management)
	Planning for sustainable health services in Queensland*	Delivering guardianship services	Preventing childhood obesity
			Preventing and responding to domestic and family violence
Transport and Public Works Committee	Delivering social housing and housing services	Digital government (digital first strategy)	
	Regulating builder registration		
Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee		Diverting young offenders from crime	Deploying police resources
State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry	Evaluating major infrastructure projects*	Monitoring and managing dam safety	Capital asset management and planning
	Addressing mine dust lung disease*		Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry
	Managing coal seam gas activities*		

Note 1: \* denotes audits which had commenced at the time of publishing the plan in May 2019, but which will table in the 2019–20 financial year.

Note 2: Performance audits take an average of nine months to complete before being tabled in parliament. As a result, some audits will start up to nine months prior to the financial year they are listed in.



# 3. Audit details

---

In this section we outline our proposed program of performance audits for the next three financial years.

These audits are detailed below and on our website. We invite the public to contribute by making a submission [www.qao.qld.gov.au](http://www.qao.qld.gov.au).

## Planned 2019–20 performance audits

---

In 2019–20 we plan to table 11 performance audit reports in the Queensland Parliament.

### Managing the cost of local government services

The objective of the audit is to assess whether councils plan and deliver their services to support long-term financial sustainability.

Sustainability is a key factor in determining the longevity of councils all around Australia. Limited federal funding has challenged councils to review their services and ensure their resources are used effectively to get better outcomes for their respective communities.

In managing financial sustainability, it is important that councils are aware of what services they provide, the cost of these services, and how they can improve delivery to achieve cost-efficiency.

#### Who we are auditing:

- Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs
- Local councils.

### Effectiveness of audit committees in state government entities

This audit will assess the effectiveness of audit committees in state government entities.

Audit committees are an important part of the governance framework of public sector entities. They are mandatory for all government departments and are encouraged for other public sector entities.

Audit committees provide independent assurance and advice to accountable officers and boards. To provide assurance they require:

- a documented charter that identifies the committee's responsibilities
- individuals with the right combination of skills and experience
- a sound working relationship with the accountable office or board and the entity.

Audit committees are also responsible for monitoring the implementation of recommendations made by audits and other review activities and ensure the coverage of audits is aligned with the entity's risks.

#### Who we might audit:

- A selection of state government departments and statutory bodies.



## Managing the State Penalties Enforcement Registry ICT project

This audit will assess whether the State Penalties Enforcement Registry (SPER) ICT project has been governed effectively.

In March 2019, the Queensland Under Treasurer referred concerns to the Auditor-General about the delivery of the SPER ICT project. This project forms part of a broader transformation program of work—the SPER Business Transformation Program.

Under a new SPER business model, SPER will be an in-house debt collection agency that pursues outstanding debt and enables hardship debtors to better discharge their penalty debt. SPER's new business processes require the support of a new ICT system. In March 2016, SPER entered into a contract with a vendor to provide the ICT services and system implementation.

The Auditor-General has agreed to conduct a performance audit focused on the effectiveness of the governance of the SPER ICT project delivery.

### Who we are auditing:

- Queensland Treasury.

## Investing in vocational education and training

This audit will examine whether the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training is achieving successful learning and employment outcomes through its public and private providers.

Vocational education and training (VET) provides education and training in job-related and technical skills.

In 2018–19, the Queensland Government committed \$777.9 million to VET through the 2018–19 Annual VET Investment Plan. The plan aims to support demand-driven funding arrangements by subsidising some VET qualifications delivered by public and private registered training organisations. It also provides support to disadvantaged learners, and provides grants to public providers of VET to ensure they can meet the Queensland Government's expectations.

The Department of Employment, Small Business and Training administers the publicly funded, contestable, demand-driven training market. The contestable market opens government funding to both public and private providers, with the aim of stimulating the efficient use of public funds. The department is essentially the state training purchaser, contracting out and funding VET programs, which is subject to the market forces of supply and demand.

The main objectives of government investment in VET is to provide vocational pathways that lead to job and career outcomes for students, and to address the skills needs of industry and employers—both large and small.

TAFE Queensland is the state's largest of the five public providers of vocational education and training. It was established on 1 July 2013 as an independent statutory body under the *TAFE Queensland Act 2013*.

### Who we are auditing:

- Department of Employment, Small Business and Training
- TAFE Queensland
- Central Queensland University
- Five private VET providers who receive state subsidies
- Four community-based organisations who receive funding under the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative.

## Queensland family support and child protection system

This audit will assess how effectively Queensland government agencies work together for the safety and wellbeing of Queensland children.

In recent years, recommendations about Queensland's family support and child protection system have been made following various system reviews and inquiries including the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry, and the recent Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Queensland government agencies are continuing to work to implement the many recommendations from these review and inquiries. The Queensland Government is implementing a new child and family support system over the next 10 years. It is intended to have a greater focus on supporting families in providing a safe and secure home for their children.

The Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women has a statutory obligation to protect children and young people who have been harmed or are at risk of harm, and whose parents are unable or unwilling to protect them. But caring for children and keeping them safe is a responsibility shared across government and the broader community. Government, non-government agencies, communities, businesses and industry need to work together to deliver the right services families need to raise children who are safe, well, healthy and supported.

The Queensland Government will invest \$406 million over five years from 2014–15 to 2018–19 to better support the state's most vulnerable families and children.

### Who we are auditing:

- Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women
- Queensland Family and Child Commission
- Queensland Police Service
- Department of Education
- Department of Health
- Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- Office of the Public Guardian.

## Planning for sustainable health services in Queensland

This audit will assess the effectiveness of the Department of Health and the Hospital and Health Services in planning for sustainable health services.

Health service planning aims to improve health service delivery to better meet the health needs of the population. It is future orientated and usually adopts short (3–5 year) and medium- to long-term (10–15 years) perspectives. Good planning helps to make the best use of current and future health resources (funding, staff and infrastructure).

Delivery of health services occurs in an increasingly dynamic environment with ever-changing community expectations, government priorities and technological advances. Health budgets are constrained, yet there are ever-increasing pressures and demands on the public health system.

The Department of Health is responsible under the *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011* for statewide planning for the public health system. Hospital and Health Services must contribute to and implement statewide service plans that apply to them. They must also undertake further service planning that aligns with the statewide plans.





Queensland Health’s strategy—*Your health, Queensland’s future: Advancing health 2026*—identifies ‘sustainability’ as one of five underpinning principles. This includes ensuring available resources are used efficiently and effectively for current and future generations.

**Who we are auditing:**

- Department of Health
- Selected Hospital and Health Services.

## Delivering social housing and housing services

This audit will assess whether social housing programs are effectively and efficiently meeting the needs of vulnerable Queenslanders.

Improving housing affordability, reducing homelessness, and assisting Queenslanders to access the private housing market remain key priorities of the Queensland Government. In June 2017, the government published its 10-year housing strategy (2017–2027). Through its new strategy, the government aims to transform how it delivers housing services, providing for every Queenslander to have access to safe, secure and affordable housing that meets their needs and allows them to participate in society.

The Department of Housing and Public Works is changing the way it does business with organisations funded to deliver social housing and ancillary housing services. The department’s initiatives include bond loans, rental grants, RentConnect, the Home Assist Secure program, and the National Rental Affordability Scheme. These are all aimed at helping low income earners to access and keep housing in the private rental market.

**Who we might audit:**

- Department of Housing and Public Works.

## Regulating builder registration

This audit will assess how effectively the Queensland Building and Construction Commission regulates builder registration.

Queensland’s building and construction industry contributes significantly to Queensland’s economy. The industry’s reputation and its ongoing growth relies upon licensees complying with their legislated obligations. Unlicensed builders, non-conforming building products and defective building work is detrimental to both the industry and Queensland’s property owners.

The Queensland Building and Construction Commission is a regulatory body that provides support to the state’s building industry. It does this by upholding proper building standards and by investigating defective building work.

The commission provides four main services for Queensland home owners and contractors:

- licensing services
- dispute prevention and resolution services
- home warranty insurance
- information and education.

**Who we might audit:**

- Queensland Building and Construction Commission.



## Evaluating major infrastructure projects

This audit will examine whether Building Queensland is effectively and efficiently leading and/or assisting agencies to deliver robust business cases for major infrastructure projects and providing agencies with expert advice about infrastructure.

The quality of infrastructure investment decisions correlates with how successful a project is and how it will have the desired economic and social impact on the state. It is critical for the state government to effectively assess investment decisions to ensure they are sound, will achieve economic benefits and value-for-money, and will ultimately deliver a positive outcome.

Building Queensland was established as an independent statutory body on 3 December 2015 under the *Building Queensland Act 2015*. Building Queensland's role is to lead and assist with developing robust business cases and provide infrastructure advisory to government. These functions are critical components of the government's plans to improve infrastructure planning and the assessment of major infrastructure proposals.

Building Queensland has developed a Business Case Development Framework to assist government agencies with the development of major infrastructure proposals. The guidance supplements the Project Assessment Framework and provides detailed advice on how to develop a robust business case.

### Who we are auditing:

- Building Queensland
- Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning
- Department of Transport and Main Roads
- Department of Education
- Cross River Rail Authority
- Queensland Corrective Services.

## Addressing mine dust lung disease

This audit will assess how effectively public sector entities have implemented recommendations aimed at reducing the risk and occurrence of mine dust lung disease.

Mine workers are at risk of developing a range of occupational mine dust lung diseases. Disease is caused by long-term exposure to high concentrations of respirable dust, generated during mining and quarrying activities. They include a range of occupational lung conditions including:

- Coal workers' pneumoconiosis
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Silicosis
- Asbestosis.

Coal workers' pneumoconiosis is a commonly known form of mine dust lung disease. It is commonly referred to as 'black lung disease'. Coal workers' pneumoconiosis was thought to have been eradicated in Queensland.

The first case of the disease reported to the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy was in May 2015, despite a diagnosed case in 2006 (there was no reporting requirements in 2006 for diagnosed cases). Between May 2015 and 31 December 2018, 33 confirmed cases of coal workers' pneumoconiosis were reported to the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy.



Following the Queensland Government's acknowledgement of coal workers' pneumoconiosis in 2015, there have been two parliamentary inquiries and an independent review into the re-identification of the disease. Issues such as non-compliant administration management of coal worker medical records, failure to monitor compliance activities in mines and insufficient medical testing were identified as some of the reasons why there was a 30-year gap in identified cases.

In total, 91 recommendations across the three reviews were made to improve the health of coal mine workers and examine end-to-end production of coal. With international research and continued cases of mine dust lung disease, an increase in public awareness and understanding is needed.

**Who we are auditing:**

- Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy
- Office of Industrial Relations
- Department of Education
- Department of Health
- Department of Environment and Science
- Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning.

## Managing coal seam gas activities

This audit will assess how well entities regulate and manage Queensland's coal seam gas activities and environmental obligations, to ensure a safe, efficient and viable industry.

Coal seam gas (CSG) is an important resource in Queensland with over 90 per cent of Australia's CSG reserves in the Bowen and Surat basins. In Queensland, \$63 billion has been invested to produce liquefied natural gas. Other jurisdictions are reliant on Queensland's CSG to satisfy their energy demands.

CSG activities are subject to approval processes and regulations to minimise their environmental impact and ensure the safety of their activities. The Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and the Department of Environment and Science are responsible for approving, monitoring and regulating CSG activities in accordance with relevant legislation. The GasFields Commission is responsible for managing and improving the sustainable co-existence of landholders, regional communities and the onshore petroleum and gas industry in Queensland.

There were 1 127 CSG wells operating in Queensland at June 2012, which grew to 5 324 by June 2017. Proactive risk management is required to:

- protect local water supplies and farming land
- manage the impact of CSG activities on areas of regional interest
- provide fair conditions for landholders
- ensure the health and safety for all personnel.

**Who we are auditing:**

- Department of Environment and Science
- Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy
- Gasfields Commission Queensland.



## Proposed 2020–21 performance audit topics

---

In 2020–21 we propose to table 10 performance audit reports in the Queensland Parliament.

### Asset management in local government

This audit will assess if councils are effectively managing their infrastructure assets to maximise their service potential while minimising their total cost of ownership.

Asset management is critical to the long-term financial sustainability of the local government sector. Without full knowledge of the type, performance, cost, and age of their assets, councils are limited in their ability to make fully informed decisions about their asset renewal, maintenance, and replacement.

As at 30 June 2017, councils were responsible for \$87 billion worth of infrastructure assets, including roads and bridges, buildings, water supply and sewerage networks, and stormwater drainage. At this time, only 43 per cent of Queensland councils had up-to-date asset management plans.

During 2016–17, the local government sector spent \$1.4 billion on the renewal of infrastructure assets. To provide the best level of service to their communities, it is important that councils implement and practise sound asset management principles.

#### Who we might audit:

- Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs
- Local councils
- Selected water entities.

### Collecting state revenue

This audit will assess how efficiently and effectively the Queensland Government collects taxes and royalties.

Responsibility for the management of taxation and royalties within Queensland Treasury rests with the Office of State Revenue. For the 2017–18 financial year, Queensland Treasury recognised revenue of \$10.8 billion from taxation and \$4.3 billion from royalties.

Revenue from taxation and royalties represents approximately 30 per cent of total revenue for the general government sector and 25 per cent of total revenue for the total state sector (which includes the general government sector). Amounts collected from taxation and royalties can vary from year to year due to external factors that the government cannot directly control.

Taxation revenue includes transfer duties, payroll tax, land tax, and gaming taxes. Royalties are charges for natural resources such as coal, petroleum, and liquefied natural gas extracted and sold by the private sector.

To collect state revenue, the Office of State Revenue uses the principles of behavioural economics to determine the best way to help people comply with their state tax obligations.

#### Who we might audit:

- Queensland Treasury and Trade.



## Local government development applications and approvals

This audit will assess whether local governments' processes for development applications and approvals are timely, efficient, and effective, and comply with relevant regulatory requirements.

Over the past few years, there have been several changes to the legislative framework that underpins the development application and approval process.

These changes can contribute to increased risk and complexity in how applications are processed. Further complexity arises from other factors including changing regulatory instruments, local versus state government requirements, and the nature of the application itself.

Depending on the development, the application may be assessed by either the local government or the state government.

Queensland has reviewed and updated its planning legislation, with the revised *State Planning Policy* taking effect from 3 July 2017.

### Who we might audit:

- Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning
- Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs
- Selected local councils.

## Educating for the digital future

This audit will examine whether the Department of Education is achieving its objectives in implementing a smart classroom and digital strategy to support learning in a digital world.

In 2008, the Australian Government promoted teaching and learning with the use of technologies through its Digital Education Revolution national partnership agreement. This partnership agreement provided a total of over \$2 billion in funding to the Australian states and territories to provide computers and software to all students in school years 9 to 12, deliver digital learning resources, and provide professional development in information and communication technology (ICT) for teachers.

In Queensland, the Department of Education implemented initiatives to support learning with technology. These included 'bring your own digital device' to school for learning purposes, computers for teachers, access to ICT courses for students and teachers, digital practice guides, and the creation of 'the learning place' (the department's secure eLearning environment).

### Who we might audit:

- Department of Education.



## Managing tourism and sustainability of Queensland's World Heritage sites

This audit will assess how effectively the state's tourism and environmental agencies are managing tourism and environmental priorities for Queensland's World Heritage listed sites.

Queensland is the fortunate custodian of five World Heritage listed sites: the Great Barrier Reef, Fraser Island, the Wet Tropics, Goondwana Rainforests, and the Riversleigh World Heritage site. These sites are not only unique and naturally beautiful but also environmentally sensitive.

Queensland is Australia's second largest tourism market after New South Wales, accounting for 24.6 per cent of the national tourism output and employing around 130 900 people. Our World Heritage sites are a cornerstone of the tourism industry, some attracting increasing numbers of visitors.

Sustainably managing the tourism and environmental priorities of these sites presents significant challenges for the responsible public sector agencies. While considerable national and international attention has been given to the management of and risks to the Great Barrier Reef, considerably less public attention has been given to our four other World Heritage sites.

The Department of Environment and Science is responsible for the protection of these sites. Its Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service is responsible for the day-to-day management of the sites while promoting tourism is managed by a range of public sector agencies. In 2016, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (then a unit in the former Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing) released the Government's Ecotourism Plan 2016–20.

### Who we might audit:

- Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy
- Department of Environment and Science
- Department of Innovation, Tourism Industry Development and the Commonwealth Games
- Tourism Queensland
- Local councils.

## Health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

This audit will assess whether Queensland Health is reducing the gap in health and wellbeing outcomes for Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population faces considerable disadvantage in health and wellbeing compared to the non-Indigenous population. The Productivity Commission estimates \$1.67 billion was spent on indigenous health services in Queensland in 2015–16.

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) committed to closing the gap in indigenous life expectancy by 2033 and halving the gap in mortality rates for indigenous children under five by 2018.



To improve indigenous health care, Queensland Health developed the *Making Tracks Investment Strategy 2015–2018* and is now implementing the *Making Tracks Investment Strategy 2018–2021*. These strategies outline the various initiatives intended to reduce the health gap and focuses on:

- a healthy and safe start to life
- reducing risk factors
- improving living environments
- earlier diagnosis and treatment
- cultural competence
- the community-controlled health sector
- research, accountability and evaluation.

**Who we might audit:**

- Department of Health
- Selected Hospital and Health Services
- Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships.

## Delivering guardianship services

This audit will assess the effectiveness of Queensland’s guardianship system and its processes for supporting adults with a decision-making incapacity.

The Queensland guardianship system protects the rights and interests of individuals who do not have the capacity to make decisions for themselves. It aims to provide adequate and appropriate support for individuals to make decisions, with as much autonomy as possible. The law assumes an adult has the capacity to make a decision, unless evidence proves otherwise. Capacity is defined as an individual’s ability to:

- understand the nature and effect of decisions
- freely and voluntarily make decisions
- communicate those decisions in some way.

It is important to assess the level of capacity in the context of the decision that the individual is making. While an individual’s decision-making capacity may be impaired, they may still be able to make some decisions for themselves. Therefore, depending on the level of impairment in the situation, the individual may require someone to make the decision on their behalf, or may only require support to make the decision themselves.

The Office of the Public Guardian, the Office of the Public Trustee and the Office of the Public Advocate are responsible for providing an effective and integrated service that supports and promotes the rights of adults with impaired decision-making capacity.

**Who we might audit:**

- Office of the Public Guardian
- Office of the Public Trustee
- Office of the Public Advocate.



## Digital government (digital first strategy)

This audit will assess how effective agencies are in delivering the Queensland Government Digital Strategy 2017–21.

The Queensland Government's *Digital 1st Advancing Our Digital Future 2017–21* strategy commits the government to designing, developing and delivering digital services that:

- 'truly meet people's needs'
- foster better collaboration and connectivity
- build trust in government services.

The government's stated aim is to position Queensland as a leader in digital government now and in the future. The strategy identifies a range of government programs and initiatives intended to deliver on this commitment.

This audit will assess the design and implementation of the strategy to determine whether it is delivering on the government's commitment.

### Who we might audit:

- Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- Department of Transport and Main Roads
- Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning
- Department of Housing and Public Works.

## Diverting young offenders from crime

This audit will examine the effectiveness of youth justice diversion and rehabilitation initiatives to support young people in better connecting with the community and reducing their risk of reoffending.

Offending by young people can stem from a range of complex social problems such as family dysfunction, poor educational outcomes, unemployment, and substance abuse. Addressing the root causes of offending can help young people better connect with their communities and reduce the risk of them committing future crimes.

The Queensland Government has committed to reduce young offender recidivism by five per cent by 2020–21. This commitment is part of its *Keeping Communities Safe* priority in its *Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities* plan.

The Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women is responsible for youth justice. It, the Queensland Police Service and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General have a range of programs and initiatives intended to divert young offenders from the justice system and help them to avoid the risk of reoffending.

### Who we might audit:

- Queensland Police Service
- Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women
- Department of Justice and Attorney-General.





## Monitoring and managing dam safety

This audit will assess whether the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy is effectively regulating Queensland's dams.

The owner of a dam is responsible for its safety. Having a dam safety management program in place can minimise the risk of its failure, and the potential impact on human life and property.

Under the provisions of the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*, the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy is responsible for the regulation of dams that are referable. (Referable dams are those that dam owners have assessed as putting people at risk in the event of failure.)

Around half of the referable dams in Queensland are owned by Seqwater (26 dams) and Sunwater (23 dams). All referable dam owners must have an approved emergency action plan in place.

The Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy may put safety conditions on referable dams. These safety conditions may require dam owners to develop standard operating procedures and undertake works to improve the dam's integrity.

### Who we might audit:

- Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy
- Seqwater
- Sunwater.

## Proposed 2021–22 performance audits

---

In 2021–22 we propose to table 11 performance audit topics in the Queensland Parliament.

## Maintaining ecologically sustainable communities

This audit will assess the effectiveness and economy of local council's social and environmental sustainability strategies.

The ongoing prosperity of Queensland communities requires careful planning and management. Sustainable practices that enable economic growth without compromising the state's natural environment is necessary.

Local councils are responsible for managing land, energy and water resources while also ensuring social and economic vitality. Sustainably managing these resources, amidst population growth, resource limitations and climate change, is a significant challenge for councils.

Councils require long-term social and environmental strategies to respond to these challenges and build positive outcomes to sustain Queensland communities.

### Who we might audit:

- Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs
- Selected local councils.

## Managing conflicts of interest in local government

This audit will assess how effectively councils manage and respond to conflicts of interest.

A conflict of interest may occur when there is a real or perceived conflict between private interests and public duty. Undeclared conflicts of interest present a significant fraud risk within local government. Mismanagement of conflicts of interest can damage a council's reputation and ability to deliver services.

In 2016–17 the Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC) examined how 13 councils had dealt with allegations of conflicts of interest and the adequacy of their conflict of interest systems.

In October 2017, the CCC released its report about 'Managing and responding to conflicts of interest involving council employees'. It recommended 10 councils implement an overarching framework to enable them to apply a coordinated approach to identify, manage and monitor conflicts of interest.

### Who we might audit:

- Local councils.

## Managing teacher supply

This audit will assess whether the Department of Education is effectively managing the supply of specialist teachers in Queensland.

Employment in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) related industries has grown more than twice as fast as the general labour market in the last decade.

An adequate supply of specialist qualified teachers is needed for Queensland to remain competitive and to provide students with opportunities to participate in a broad-based strong economy.

The supply of specialist subject teachers, including teachers of STEM subjects, continues to be a concern. Long-term planning and initiatives are necessary to ensure an adequate supply of these teachers.

### Who we might audit:

- Department of Education.

## Managing oil and chemical spills

This audit will assess whether the Department of Environment and Science and Maritime Safety Queensland have effective processes to manage land and water-based oil and chemical spills.

Oil and chemical spill incidents can have devastating effects on the environment. Water-based spills can result in major biological issues, physical contamination, and disruption to industries that rely heavily on waterways for their operations. There can also be an impact on recreational activities when water-based spills encroach on beaches and local waterways.

Although land-based spills tend to move more slowly and affect smaller areas, they are still hazardous to people and the environment.



State and federal agencies work together to respond to land and water-based spills. Maritime Safety Queensland (a branch of the Department of Transport and Main Roads) is the lead agency in Queensland for responding to maritime spills, and the Department of Environment and Science provides it with assistance where it affects wildlife. The Department of Environment and Science is the lead agency for responding to land-based spills.

**Who we might audit:**

- Department of Environment and Science
- Department of Transport and Main Roads
- Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
- Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy.

## Commonwealth Games legacy

This audit will assess whether the intended legacy benefits from the Commonwealth Games have been realised by the state.

The Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games will be the fifth time Australia has hosted the Commonwealth Games. The 11-day sporting and cultural event involves athletes and officials from 70 different nations and territories.

With a budget of approximately \$2 billion, the Commonwealth Games relies on significant public and private investment.

Beyond the 11-day sporting event, the Commonwealth Games has the potential to provide long-term economic, industry, social and community benefits to Queensland.

In December 2014, in our report *2018 Commonwealth Games: Progress*, we recommended that the Office of the Commonwealth Games Coordination complete its legacy evaluation framework, including measures and targets to evaluate realisation of legacy benefits.

The Queensland Government subsequently finalised and implemented the 'Embracing 2018 Legacy Program'. The programs legacy benefits include:

- delivering GC2018: The Inspiring Games
- enduring jobs and powering economic growth
- accelerating the Gold Coast to a world-class boutique city
- building active, engaged and inclusive communities.

**Who we might audit:**

- Department of Innovation, Tourism Industry Development and the Commonwealth Games
- Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning
- Local councils.



## Healthcare pathways (waitlist management)

This audit will assess the effectiveness of strategies employed to ensure patients receive the most appropriate treatment within the recommended time.

Public patients are referred to specialists from emergency departments or their general practitioner. Hospital and Health Services develop guidelines which help the referring doctors decide to whom they will refer patients and ensure the doctors provide appropriate information.

Long waiting times and inappropriate referrals to specialist medical appointments can contribute to sub-optimal outcomes for patients. As at 1 April 2019, the Department of Health reported 219 158 patients were waiting for a specialist outpatient appointment. Patients waiting longer than clinically recommended periods of time varied between 10 and 50 per cent depending on the specialty.

The Department of Health establishes outpatient waiting times as an important performance measure in their service agreements with the Hospital and Health Services and assigns funding for this initiative. The Queensland health sector has several strategies to address specialist outpatient waiting times including the Specialist Outpatient Strategy and the Clinical Prioritisation Criteria program (currently being developed).

### Who we might audit:

- Department of Health
- Selected Hospital and Health Services.

## Preventing childhood obesity

This audit will assess if the Department of Health's and the Department of Education's strategies are effectively reducing childhood obesity.

The *Health of Queenslanders 2016* report states that 19 per cent of children in Queensland are overweight and a further seven per cent are obese. This rate has not changed since 2007–08. The rate of childhood obesity 30 years ago was two per cent.

Childhood obesity can have a range of adverse consequences including social discrimination, poor self-esteem, depression, and childhood type 2 diabetes. In the longer term, obese children have a higher likelihood of adult health problems such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, some forms of cancer, and joint problems. These consequences can cause significant individual morbidity and mortality, lost productivity, and increased direct health care costs.

*Your health, Queensland's future: Advancing health 2026* is a 10-year vision and strategy for the Queensland health system. It was released in 2016. One headline measure of success in this strategy is to reduce childhood obesity by 10 per cent by 2026.

There are important links between health and education. Those with higher educational attainment tend to have better health generally. In addition, schools can deliver specific education initiatives to ensure children and families are aware of how to eat healthily and are aware of the importance of nutrition and weight in the context of overall health.

### Who we might audit:

- Department of Health
- Department of Education.



## Preventing and responding to domestic and family violence

This audit will examine how effective Queensland government initiatives have been in preventing and responding to domestic violence.

On 10 September 2014, the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland was established. In February 2015, the taskforce finalised its report, *Not now, Not ever: Putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland*.

The taskforce reported that domestic violence in Queensland has continued to increase over the period to 2015, costing the state's economy between \$2.7 and \$3.2 billion annually. In its subsequent budgets, the Queensland Government committed \$328.9 million to respond to the issues and recommendations in the *Not now, Not ever: Putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland* report.

The government's response to the *Not Now Not Ever* report has included a broad range of activities and initiatives, including legislative changes, policy directives, additional funding for programs and services and system changes (for example, improvements to information sharing).

### Who we might audit:

- Queensland Police Service
- Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women
- Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors
- Department of Justice and Attorney-General
- Selected public sector entities.

## Deploying police resources

This audit will examine how efficiently and effectively the Queensland Police Service deploys its resources to maximise public safety.

The Queensland Police Service has over 13 000 operational staff and 14 000 total staff. It is responsible for providing policing services to more than 4.9 million Queenslanders, who are spread over more than 1.7 million square kilometres.

Deploying police resources efficiently and effectively means using the most appropriate types and number of resources in the right place at the right time to maximise public safety outcomes.

Two objectives that the Queensland Police Service commits to in its 2017–21 Strategic Plan are to make the community safer and equip its workforce for the future.

### Who we might audit:

- Queensland Police Service.



## Capital asset management and planning

This audit will assess how efficiently and effectively the Queensland Government estimates and delivers its capital programs.

The annual budget cycle of the Queensland Government includes a Capital Statement. This statement presents an overview of proposed capital outlays by each Queensland Government department each year, as well as a summary of the government's approach to infrastructure provision. Capital outlays are broken down into capital purchases (including acquisitions under finance leases) and capital grants.

The level of capital expenditure over the 2017–18 forward estimates is forecast to exceed \$42 billion, with growth largely attributable to additional infrastructure investment associated with the state infrastructure fund.

Historically, Queensland Government agencies have been unable to spend the approved capital funds in the budget period. This increases the risk that government assets are unable to effectively support the delivery of key social services, or to support the state's development, the needs of local communities, and local employment opportunities.

The state's budget sector has underspent its capital program by more than \$7.7 billion (14 per cent) over the last five financial years.

### Who we might audit:

- Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning
- Selected public sector entities.

## Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry

This audit will assess whether Queensland is better able to prevent and prepare for floods following the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry.

Although floods are a natural phenomenon, they can have devastating impacts. The 2010–11 flood events in Queensland resulted in 35 people losing their lives. The estimated cost of the flooding events was in excess of \$5 billion.

In response to the disaster, the Queensland government established the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry on 17 January 2011. The inquiry looked at the:

- preparation, planning and response to the floods
- performance of private insurers
- measures taken to manage the supply of essential services
- adequacy of forecasts and early warnings systems
- implementation of operational plans for dams
- land use planning.

On 16 March 2012, the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry released its final report into the 2010–11 floods. The inquiry made 177 recommendations, directed both to state and local governments. The Queensland government supported all the recommendations.

### Who we might audit:

- Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy
- Department of Environment and Science
- Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning
- Queensland Reconstruction Authority
- Local councils.



## Copyright



© The State of Queensland (Queensland Audit Office) 2019.

The Queensland Government supports and encourages the dissemination of its information. The copyright in this publication is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-No Derivatives (CC BY-NC-ND) 3.0 Australia licence.



To view this licence visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/au/>

Under this licence you are free, without having to seek permission from QAO, to use this publication in accordance with the licence terms. For permissions beyond the scope of this licence contact [copyright@gao.qld.gov.au](mailto:copyright@gao.qld.gov.au)

Content from this work should be attributed as: The State of Queensland (Queensland Audit Office) *Strategic Audit Plan 2019–22*, available under [CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 Australia](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/au/)

Front cover image is a stock photograph, purchased by QAO.

ISSN 1834-1128.



[qao.qld.gov.au/audits/program](http://qao.qld.gov.au/audits/program)



Suggest a performance audit topic

Contribute to a performance audit in progress

Subscribe to news

Connect with QAO on LinkedIn

T: (07) 3149 6000  
M: [qao@qao.qld.gov.au](mailto:qao@qao.qld.gov.au)  
W: [qao.qld.gov.au](http://qao.qld.gov.au)  
53 Albert Street, Brisbane Qld 4000  
PO Box 15396, City East Qld 4002

