



**Queensland**  
Government

## **Electoral Commission of Queensland**

# Departmental overview

The Electoral Commission of Queensland (ECQ) contributes to the implementation of *Queensland's Economic Recovery Plan* and is working to protect Queenslanders and save lives, to Unite & Recover for Queensland jobs. The ECQ delivers COVID-safe elections that ensure all eligible Queenslanders can safely exercise their right to participate in public life and provides employment opportunities for Queenslanders and businesses to deliver elections.

The ECQ, an independent statutory authority established under the *Electoral Act 1992*, delivers state and local government elections and ensures compliance with electoral funding and disclosure requirements. The ECQ also undertakes periodic redistributions of Queensland's electoral districts through the Queensland Redistribution Commission, and assesses proposals referred by the Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning for changes to local government boundaries through the Local Government Change Commission.

The ECQ's vision is to deliver electoral excellence with integrity for Queensland.

In 2020-21, the ECQ is working towards its objectives to:

- deliver fair and transparent Queensland elections
- increase electoral awareness and participation
- continual improvement in electoral services
- ensure compliance with electoral funding and disclosure laws.

The ECQ will deliver the following services in 2020-21:

- Electoral Services – deliver fair, accessible and transparent Queensland elections through maximising voter participation and ensuring adherence to electoral law.

# Service Performance

## Electoral Services

### Service Area Highlights

In 2020-21 the service area will support government and departmental commitments and priorities by:

- efficiently and effectively delivering the 2020 state general election
- completing public reports on the ECQ's delivery of the 2020 local government elections and the 2020 state general election, including evaluations of the ECQ's delivery of the elections
- deploying the new Election Management System to support delivery of the 2020 state general election and transition of the system into the ECQ's core business functions
- implementing legislative amendments passed by the Queensland Parliament in the *Electoral and Other Legislation (Accountability, Integrity and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2020*.

Electoral Services	2019-20 Target/Est	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Target/Est
<b>Service standards</b>			
<i>Effectiveness measure</i>			
Level of informal voting - State general election <sup>1</sup>			5%
Level of informal voting - Local government quadrennial elections (Mayoral) <sup>2</sup>	5%	4.76%	
Level of stakeholder satisfaction with the voting experience – State general election <sup>3</sup>			85%
Level of stakeholder satisfaction with the voting experience – Local government quadrennial elections <sup>4</sup>	85%	75%	
Proportion of disclosure returns audited that are deemed compliant with electoral law <sup>5</sup>	New Measure	New Measure	70%
<i>Efficiency measure</i>			
Cost of State general election per elector <sup>6</sup>			\$13.21
Cost of local government quadrennial elections per elector <sup>7</sup>	\$8.63	\$9.25	

Notes:

1. The 2020-21 Target/Estimate for informal voting is based on the actual level of informality in the 2017 State general election (4.34%) and the level of informal voting in Queensland for the House of Representatives in the 2019 Federal election (4.95%).
2. This measure is calculated by dividing the total number of informal votes cast by the total number of votes cast for every mayoral election in Queensland.
3. The 2020-21 Target/Estimate is based on the 2017-18 State general election Target/Estimate of 85 per cent, with an actual level of satisfaction being 84% in the *2017-18 Service Delivery Statements*.
4. In 2020, the ECQ altered its methodology for measuring voter satisfaction, which impacted its comparability to previous benchmarks. The ECQ also notes that the COVID-19 global pandemic had a significant impact on the voter experience at the 2020 local government elections.
5. This new service standard measures how effective ECQ's stakeholder education and outreach activities are in assisting regulated entities comply with legislative obligations. Audited disclosure returns that are found to have minor or inconsequential errors will also be counted as being compliant.

6. The 2020-21 Target/Estimate is based on the full budget for delivering the 2020 State general election divided by the number of electors on the electoral roll. At first close of rolls for the 2020 State general election there were 3,377,476 electors on the electoral roll. Key costs for delivering the election include Returning Officer and temporary election staff expenses, office and polling location leases, advertising and community education, computer, consumables and communications, election materials, and distribution of Voter Information Cards to all electors. Costs have increased significantly to manage the risks of COVID-19 and implement additional safety measures for voters and polling officers such as engagement of queue controllers to promote and maintain social distancing at polling places, purchase and distribution of hand sanitiser and cleaning products, expansion of early voting locations and hours, and planning for a substantial increase in demand for postal voting and electronically assisted voting.
7. The costs included in the calculation methodology for this measure are Returning Officer and temporary election staff expenses, office and polling location leases, advertising and community education, computer, consumables and communications, election materials, and Voter Information Cards. At first close of rolls for the 2020 local government elections there were 3,292,980 electors on the electoral roll. The ECQ delivered the 2020 local government elections when COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic. In response to COVID-19, the ECQ provided additional safety measures for voters and polling officers such as engagement of queue controllers to promote and maintain social distancing at polling places, hand sanitiser and cleaning products. The ECQ also extend early voting hours and experienced an increase in demand for postal voting and electronically assisted voting. The total financial impact of COVID-19 on the delivery of the local government elections is estimated to be \$2.702 million. Figures differ to those reported in the 2019-20 ECQ Annual Report due to late invoices from suppliers for services rendered.

## Capital purchases

The table below shows the capital purchases by the agency in the respective years.

<b>Electoral Commission of Queensland</b>	<b>2019-20 Actual \$'000</b>	<b>2020-21 Budget \$'000</b>
Total capital purchases	8,028	3,553

## Staffing

The table below shows the Full Time Equivalentents (FTEs) as at the 30 June in the respective years.

<b>2019-20 Actual</b>	<b>2020-21 Budget</b>
76	76

# Budgeted financial statement

## Departmental income statement

Increases in expenditure for the 2020-21 financial year is due to necessary adjustments to the State general election service delivery model to conduct the election in a manner that delivers appropriate public health measures based on the advice from health authorities. The ECQ's objectives are to maximise voter and candidate participation, and provide for efficient and effective delivery of election services in a COVID environment.

Measures to deliver a COVID-safe election include:

- procuring additional ballot materials to ensure ECQ could quickly adapt to a greater than expected demand for postal voting and/or the ability to provide predominantly postal voting in some or all districts if necessary
- opening applications for postal votes early and expanding the application period
- expanding the number of early voting centres and their operating hours, including on Saturday 24 October
- expanding eligibility for electronically assisted voting (telephone voting) to more classes of electors and increasing capacity for this service
- employing additional staff to perform queue control and ensure social distancing at polling places, and
- implementing a range of personal hygiene measures at polling places including supplying hand sanitisers and undertaking additional cleaning throughout the election period.

# Controlled income statement

Electoral Commission of Queensland	2019-20 Actual \$'000	2020-21 Budget \$'000
<b>INCOME</b>		
Appropriation revenue	65,374	96,065
Taxes	..	..
User charges and fees	97	30
Royalties and land rents	..	..
Grants and other contributions	48	..
Interest and distributions from managed funds	..	..
Other revenue	93	..
Gains on sale/revaluation of assets	7	..
<b>Total income</b>	<b>65,619</b>	<b>96,095</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Employee expenses	23,412	28,914
Supplies and services	40,089	66,259
Grants and subsidies	..	..
Depreciation and amortisation	1,619	1,143
Finance/borrowing costs	18	(316)
Other expenses	71	95
Losses on sale/revaluation of assets	165	..
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>65,374</b>	<b>96,095</b>
<b>OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>..</b>

# Administered income statement

Electoral Commission of Queensland	2019-20 Actual \$'000	2020-21 Budget \$'000
<b>INCOME</b>		
Appropriation revenue	..	..
Taxes	..	..
User charges and fees	24,058	7,482
Royalties and land rents	..	..
Grants and other contributions	..	..
Interest and distributions from managed funds	..	..
Other revenue	72	660
Gains on sale/revaluation of assets	..	..
<b>Total income</b>	<b>24,130</b>	<b>8,142</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Employee expenses	..	..
Supplies and services	..	..
Grants and subsidies	..	..
Depreciation and amortisation	..	..
Finance/borrowing costs	..	..
Other expenses	..	..
Losses on sale/revaluation of assets	188	..
Transfers of Administered Revenue to Government	23,942	8,142
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>24,130</b>	<b>8,142</b>
<b>OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>..</b>



# Departmental cash appropriation

The table below shows the annual cash appropriation that is available in 2020-21 for the delivery of departmental objectives.

Electoral Commission of Queensland	2019-20 Actual \$'000	2020-21 Budget \$'000
<b>CONTROLLED</b>		
Departmental services	66,714	92,812
Equity adjustments	9,283	(37)
<b>TOTAL CONTROLLED</b>	<b>75,997</b>	<b>92,775</b>
<b>ADMINISTERED</b>		
Administered items	..	..
Equity adjustments	..	..
<b>TOTAL ADMINISTERED</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>..</b>
<b>TOTAL VOTE</b>	<b>75,997</b>	<b>92,775</b>