HOW WE OPERATE

Our resources
We have an approved permanent establishment of 37.1 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff.
As at 30 June 2019, we:

• had 43.28 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff.¹
• received grant funding from the Queensland Government provided through the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. Our 2018-19 total appropriation was $7.130M.

¹ All figures are taken from FE 21 June 2019, being the last full pay period of the financial year. Our FTE incorporates active and paid employees including 2.05 FTE on paid parental leave. The paid FTE is extraordinarily inflated by 3.3 FTE due to backfilling of employees on leave. The exception is the separation rate, which is as at 30 June 2019 and includes an employee’s resignation which took effect in late June 2019.

Our people
Seventy-eight percent of our active and paid employees are permanent, including permanent employees seconded to work in the OIC from other Queensland Government agencies. Three permanent employees resigned during 2018-19. Our permanent separation rate was 7.14 percent as at 30 June 2019.
During our final pay period for the financial year, five employees (4.2 FTE) were on paid and unpaid parental leave. No early retirement, redundancy or retrenchment packages were paid during the reporting period.

Figure 37. Number of full-time equivalent employees by gender

NOTE: Active and paid staff only
Figure 38. Our structure

Queensland community

Queensland Parliament

Parliamentary committee (Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee)

Information Commissioner

Right to Information Commissioner

Responsible for reviewing decisions of agencies and Ministers on access to and amendment of information under the RTI and IP Acts.

Privacy Commissioner

Undertakes mediation of privacy complaints about Queensland public sector agencies, leads improvement of public sector privacy administration through promoting privacy rights and obligations which includes guidance, assistance and training.

Director, Audit and Evaluation

Audits, reviews and surveys public sector agencies and reports on their performance and compliance with the RTI and IP Acts.

Director, Engagement and Corporate Services

Responsible for enquiries about the operation of the RTI and IP Acts, and the development and maintenance of guidelines and information for public sector agencies and the community.

Leads and manages promotional, marketing communication services, media relations, stakeholder engagement and training activities.

Leads and manages our administrative, financial, human resource, information technology, registry functions, records management, planning and facilities.
Corporate services
In house corporate services provided by our staff are supplemented through service level agreements (SLA) with third-party providers. We continued our SLA with the Corporate Administration Agency (CAA) providing human resource and finance services, and with Queensland Parliamentary Services (QPS) providing IT services until the end of 2019.

Our total spend for corporate services this year was $323,662. This represents a slight decrease of $15,149, from the previous reporting period ($338,811).

Information and technology
Consistent with our review of our ICT strategy that was completed in the previous reporting period, in June 2019, we signed a contract with a new IT Managed Service Provider.

A project to fully migrate to the services provided by the new IT provider was commenced in July 2019 with a project transition period of 4-6 months. Our agreement with QPS will conclude at the end of the transition period.

Workforce planning and performance
We have a comprehensive employee performance framework covering induction, performance management, staff development and recognition. We foster ongoing learning and development of our people to achieve a capable, professional and adaptable workforce.

Strategies to minimise workforce risk and boost performance include:
- consulting and collaborating with employees on issues that affect them including strategic and operational planning activities
- working with employees to develop actions arising from the 2018 Working for Queensland survey
- offering and supporting flexible work arrangements
- supporting employees to take up opportunities to grow skills, for example through higher duties or secondments
- coaching and mentoring by experienced officers
- training courses, seminars and workshops
- flexible deployment of staff to priority areas and to cover absences
- continually improving our corporate systems and procedures to ensure staff have the tools to work efficiently and effectively
- advertising positions broadly and developing key partnerships with tertiary institutions to recruit temporary assistant review officers
- providing access to confidential counselling to staff and their families through our employee assistance program
- providing and supporting wellness initiatives including flu vaccinations, sit stand desks, ergonomic assessments, end of trip facilities and employee-run lunchtime yoga.

Flexible working arrangements
We recognise the importance of flexible work arrangements in attracting and retaining a highly skilled workforce. Our employees actively embrace flexible work options including flexible start and finishing times, part-time work, job sharing, telecommuting, accrued time and access to a parenting room.

During our final pay period of the financial year, we employed 23 part-time staff and 34 full-time staff, including five staff on maternity leave and two on extended leave. Nine staff members telecommute on an ongoing basis and other staff telecommute on ad hoc basis. We facilitated and supported four job-share arrangements this year.

Capability development
During 2018-19 we spent $35,442 on staff professional development, training and workshops. The annual expenditure equates to approximately 0.65 percent of employee expenses, and an increase from $21,841 in 2017-18.

This year, consistent with our Strategic Plan we invested in employee capability and skills development in:
- leadership development
- technology skills
- legal skills
- negotiation
- investigations.

We continued to implement our career strategy in collaboration with our staff.
The career strategy re-focuses on a development based culture that prioritises an employee's individual development through experiences. This will enhance an individual's employability leading to improvements in job security, flexibility and employee talent.

The strategy falls within our broader human resources strategy focusing on:
- building relationships across OIC and beyond
- innovation and utilisation of technology
- growing and learning
- developing and supporting our people through various professional coaching programs.

All new staff members undertook online training in the areas of public service code of conduct, workplace bullying and workplace health and safety. Additionally, all staff undertook the sector-wide domestic violence training. This training will be provided to all staff in 2019-20 as a biennial refresher course.

Cyber security online training was undertaken by all staff. Managers and selected staff were also provided training in cyber security management and obligations.

During the year, we held formal discussions and workshops to enhance staff knowledge in the application of RTI, Privacy, Code of Conduct and ICT security.

Consultants and contractors

In 2018-19 we spent $146,109 on contractors and consultants. The expenditure was planned budget expenditure and predominantly related to the costs of:
- an ICT contractor to implement the outcomes identified through our ICT review and upgrade of our ICT systems and products
- updating and modifying our e-learning management tool to reflect contemporary technical requirements.

Improving our service

In 2018–19 we continued to look for opportunities to enhance our corporate services, including:
- refining internal business practices to simplify and streamline administrative activities
- reviewing internal policies and procedures to ensure they are contemporary and support our business practices
- updating our IT tools and services to maximise employee benefits and reduce wastage
- collaborating with staff to ensure our developmental focus aligns with our strategic goals and staff career goals.

Governance Committee

We are committed to ensuring robust governance arrangements operate, reflective of the size and function of the office.

The Governance Committee Framework formalises our governance arrangements by setting out the OIC Governance Committee arrangements, including the roles and responsibilities of the committee.

The Governance Committee was established on 21 August 2018 as a decision-making body, providing oversight of our governance arrangements. The Governance Committee is made up of the:
- Information Commissioner
- Right to Information Commissioner
- Privacy Commissioner
- Director, Engagement and Corporate Services.

During the year, the committee met every month to manage issues relating to four functional areas:
- Risk and audit
- Finance and procurement
- People
- Information and communication technology.

Risk Committee

Corporate governance is the way in which an organisation is controlled and governed in order to achieve its objectives. Our governance and assurance strategies for risk management reflect the functions and size of our agency.

Our Governance Committee provides oversight of our risk management framework and operational management of risks.

The committee is supported by the OIC Risk Advisory Group, whose role is to provide advice and recommendations to support our risk management approach.

Internal audit may also periodically review our risk management framework and its implementation.

Our Risk Advisory Group was established in line with recommendations arising out of the OIC Internal Audit on Risk Management in May 2018. We addressed and completed all items in the 2018-19 risk register.
OUR EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Executive management team consists of the Information Commissioner, two deputy commissioners (Right to Information Commissioner and Privacy Commissioner) and the Director, Engagement and Corporate Services.

Rachael Rangihaeata

Appointed as Information Commissioner on 20 September 2013, Rachael champions proactive disclosure of, and appropriate privacy safeguards for, information held by Queensland government agencies including local government, Queensland Government departments, public hospitals and health services and universities, and public authorities.

The Information Commissioner promotes awareness of information rights and responsibilities within the community and Queensland government agencies.

Rachael and her leadership team engage with agency leaders to promote cultures that support better RTI and IP practices, including proactive disclosure, administrative access, pro-disclosure bias in formal access application decision-making and privacy by design.

Rachael’s current term of appointment is to 30 June 2020.

Prior to her appointment as Information Commissioner, Rachael held senior leadership positions across all functions of the Office of the Information Commissioner since 2005. Rachael has over 20 years public sector experience, having also worked in various roles within the Queensland State and Commonwealth public service, primarily in strategic and legislative policy.

Rachael holds a Bachelor of Laws (Honours), Bachelor of Science (AES) and Graduate Certificate in Public Sector Leadership (PSM).

Information Commissioner

The Information Commissioner is the chief executive and accountable officer for the Office of the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner is also an officer of the Parliament and performs statutory functions under the RTI and IP Acts.

The Information Commissioner’s functions include independent merits review of Ministers and agencies’ access and amendment decisions, mediation of privacy complaints about agencies, audit and evaluation of agency compliance with the RTI and IP Acts, and assistance and training for agencies and the community.
Right to Information Commissioner

As a deputy to the Information Commissioner, the Right to Information Commissioner has particular responsibility for matters relating to the Information Commissioner’s functions under the RTI and IP Acts. The Right to Information Commissioner leads the external review services of the office and champions the push model of information access to government agencies and the community.

Louisa Lynch

Louisa Lynch was appointed Right to Information Commissioner on 6 July 2018. Prior to this appointment, Louisa was Acting Right to Information Commissioner from 28 August 2017 and an Assistant Information Commissioner at OIC for over six years. She brings more than 15 years of significant public sector experience and knowledge of the local government sector to the role of Right to Information Commissioner. Prior to joining OIC, Louisa was a senior lawyer in the Department of Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience. She has also worked in legal professional roles in a number of government agencies including Queensland Transport, the Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation and the Department of Infrastructure and Planning. Louisa holds a Bachelor of Laws and was admitted as a solicitor of the Supreme Court of Queensland in 1990. Louisa’s term of appointment is to 5 July 2023.

Privacy Commissioner

As deputy to the Information Commissioner, the Privacy Commissioner has particular responsibilities and delegations under the IP Act including dealing with privacy complaints that may involve mediation, consideration of compliance notices, applications for waiver of the information privacy principles or national privacy principles, raising awareness, creating resources and promoting good privacy and data protection practices in government and commenting and advising on significant projects and legislation impacting on privacy.

Philip Green

Appointed as the Queensland Privacy Commissioner in December 2015, Philip has an extensive career in the private and public sectors. Philip’s legal career at Allens included commercial banking and finance/insolvency. He has extensive central agency experience in criminal justice, legal and economic policy at the Department of the Premier and Cabinet in Queensland and a secondment to the UK, Strategy Unit in the Prime Minister’s Cabinet Office. Prior to his appointment, he led Innovation and Small Business for the Queensland Government. He has a keen interest in innovation and technology law and was instrumental in establishing Queensland’s first administrative privacy regime.

Philip holds degrees in Arts and Law from the University of Queensland and a Masters in Law from QUT, majoring in technology law and focusing on policy development surrounding intellectual property, privacy and commercialisation, information technology and regulation of the internet and media. Philip’s term of appointment is to 10 December 2021.
Director, Engagement and Corporate Services

The Director, Engagement and Corporate Services leads the teams responsible for providing information and assistance, communication, engagement, training, corporate and registry services to our internal and external stakeholders. This leadership role expanded to include the Training and Stakeholder Relations team and the Information and Assistance team in 2017. The broader role of Director, Engagement and Corporate Services was a result of a key recommendation from the 2017 Independent Strategic Review of the office.

Adeline Yuksel

Adeline joined OIC in December 2015. Since then, she has led the Engagement and Corporate Services team and delivered a transformational program to improve corporate services at OIC. Adeline has held senior roles leading and managing corporate affairs teams across the public and private sectors over the last 25 years. Adeline has a Bachelor of Communications and post graduate qualifications in marketing and international relations. She brings extensive experience in issues management, governance, communication, marketing, strategy development and community relations to OIC. Adeline was on secondment and returned in late April 2019.

Vivienne Van Der Laak
(Acting Director February 2018 – January 2019)

Vivienne joined OIC in February 2018 on a temporary basis to lead the Engagement and Corporate Services team. Vivienne has over 10 years of public sector experience, and brings significant leadership capability from her time in a number of agencies. Vivienne holds a Bachelor of Laws, Bachelor of Behavioural Science and a Graduate Certificate in Policy Analysis.

Lauren Schodel
(Acting Director January 2019 – June 2019)

Lauren was seconded from the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) in late January 2019 to lead the Engagement and Corporate Services team. Her main focus was to deliver a 10th anniversary public awareness campaign for the office. Lauren has nearly two decades of public sector experience in both operational and leadership positions within QFES. Lauren holds a Graduate Certificate in Public Sector Management.
OUR GOVERNANCE

The Information Commissioner is a statutory office holder appointed by the Governor-in-Council under the RTI and IP Acts, and is not subject to ministerial direction in the exercise of the functions under the Acts.

Two other statutory office holders appointed by the Governor-in-Council support the Information Commissioner; the Privacy Commissioner and the Right to Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner is accountable to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee (LACSC) of the Queensland Parliament and meets with the committee during the course of the year to report on the performance of the Information Commissioner’s functions and to discuss issues, such as our activities, structures and procedures, our work output, budget, Annual Report and any other significant issue. The parliamentary committee may also require a report on a particular aspect of our performance.

In accordance with the RTI and IP Acts, the Information Commissioner provides an Annual Report to Parliament through the Speaker. Tabling of our Annual Report to Parliament, meetings with the LACSC and our Service Delivery Statement ensure our governance and accountability.

We also support the public sector’s corporate governance and accountability framework by assisting agencies to improve their RTI and IP practices.

While the Information Commissioner is independent of ministerial control, under section 133 of the RTI Act, our budget must be approved by the Attorney-General, the Minister responsible for the Act.

Related key elements of the governance and accountability framework include the Service Delivery Statement and Estimates Committee hearings.

An independent strategic review of our office is required under section 186 of the RTI Act every five years. The terms of the strategic review are to be decided by the Governor-in-Council.

Before a reviewer is appointed, the Minister must consult with the parliamentary committee and the Information Commissioner about the appointment of the reviewer and the terms of reference for the review. The strategic review is to include a review of the commissioner’s functions and performance of those functions to assess whether they are being performed economically, effectively and efficiently.

The last independent strategic review was conducted in 2016-17.

Legislative compliance

We comply with a range of legislative obligations:

- A Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) program is embedded within our culture and practices. All staff are informed, and made aware of each person’s responsibility to create and maintain a safe workplace. All staff are encouraged and expected to identify, report and address potential WHS risks.
- Access applications can only be made to the Information Commissioner by our staff in relation to their personal information under section 46 of the IP Act. No such applications were made in 2018-19.
- The Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service applies to our staff as we are prescribed as a ‘public service agency’ under the Public Sector Ethics Regulation 2010. In accordance with section 23 of the Public Sector Ethics Act 1994, all new starters are provided with information about the Code of Conduct as part of their induction program and are asked to confirm their understanding and ability to apply the code. Staff can readily access the code through our intranet.
- New staff members are required to complete mandatory training upon commencement and at a biennial interval. The training is delivered online and includes the Queensland public service code of conduct, workplace health and safety, workplace bullying and domestic violence and general awareness training on the RTI and IP Acts. Our mandatory training was expanded this year to include cyber security awareness training for all staff. Mandatory training is supplemented through periodic discussions about the training content and its application in the workplace.
- Our Strategic Plan, staff performance agreements, procedures, practices and training give proper regard to the approved Code of Conduct, ethical decision-making and Public Sector Ethics Act 1994 in particular, the ethics obligations of public officials and our values.
Internal and external audit
As a small agency, the responsibilities associated with internal audit and the maintenance of an appropriate internal control framework are discharged by the Executive management team. We also have access to CAA’s internal audit services which are charged on a fee-for-service basis for approximately two internal audits conducted per year. This service is used to support our Executive management team in maintaining our risk management framework and associated strategies.

A copy of the external audit report and certificate of our financial statements are supplied with this report (see page 78). The Auditor-General has provided an unqualified certificate indicating our compliance with financial management requirements and the accuracy and fairness of the financial statements.

Risk management
Our risk management framework encourages an integrated approach to managing all risks that impact on achieving our strategic and business objectives. This year, our internal audit provider conducted an audit on our approach to contract management. Opportunities were identified to further strengthen our framework, reflecting our risk management culture and operational practices into our policies and procedures.

Implementation of these recommendations will continue in 2019-20. We also operate an internal Governance Committee whose primary role is to ensure that audit and risk related issues are addressed and managed in accordance with the Financial and Performance Management Standard and the Financial Accountability Act 2009.

Complaints management
Our complaints management process is available on our website. Complaints which cannot be informally resolved are to made in writing to the Director, Engagement and Corporate Services and are handled independently of the areas about which the complaint is made. Feedback is taken seriously and where specific improvements can be identified, they are implemented as soon as practicable. We cannot deal with complaints where they concern the merits or legality of a decision. In these circumstances, the participant may be able to appeal to QCAT or apply to the Supreme Court for a statutory order of review. Appeals and reviews of this nature can only be taken on a point of law.

During 2018-19, there were no substantiated general complaints about our office and no public interest disclosures, as per the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2010, received. One complaint, received in June 2018, remained outstanding at the end of the financial year.

Records management
Ensuring our staff use good recordkeeping practices continued to be a primary focus. We make and maintain full and accurate records of our activities and abide by any relevant policy, standards and guidelines in compliance with the provisions of the Public Records Act 2002 and our Retention and Disposal Schedule. The schedule guides us in managing our records and ensures they are accountable, reliable and secure.

Our systems are supported by internal guidelines, procedures and policies regarding the management of information and records. Records management is also incorporated in our business continuity planning. Throughout the year we continued to provide basic recordkeeping training for new staff members. We recognise that information security is a critical aspect of our business model and continue to look for opportunities to maximise our digital retention of records and reduce our paper footprint.

Environmental sustainability
Our waste management policy emphasises waste avoidance, reduction, reuse and recycling. We continue to reduce paper usage, and encourage all staff to recycle office and kitchen waste. Staff are expected to shut down their desktop computers overnight. Our premises are fitted with light sensors, ensuring lights are turned off when facilities are not in use and the air-conditioning system was updated at the start of our tenancy to be more environmentally sustainable and efficient.
Managing our budget
We ended the year in a secure financial position with adequate reserves to fulfil our responsibilities in 2018–19. Following on from the Independent Strategic Review undertaken in 2017-18, our appropriation for 2018-19 allowed for ongoing funding to support the creation of four permanent external review positions. The increase to our grant appropriation for 2018-19 was offset by a reprioritisation contribution of $48,000.

In 2018-19 we spent $581,000 less than our approved budget. Our underspend resulted from a range of factors including spending less than budgeted for legal costs, consultancies and contractors, a delay in ratification of a new Certified Agreement, unexpected long term leave and vacancy of positions, delayed costs of a professional development program to be conducted in 2019-20, and depreciation arrangements.

Expenses
Most of our funding appropriation was spent on employee-related expenses such as salaries, superannuation entitlement, long-service leave and payroll tax. Our financial statements show this year, we spent $5,426 million or 82.11 percent of our total expenses on employee related items.

Our day-to-day running expenses cost $1,158 million. Significant operating items related to our corporate service charges ($324k), office accommodation ($318k), computer related costs such as software licensing ($170k), and contractors and consultants ($146k).

Financial outlook

Figure 39. Five year comparison of revenue versus expenses ($’000)

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<tr>
<td>Appropriation</td>
<td>6,204</td>
<td>6,300</td>
<td>6,372</td>
<td>6,429</td>
<td>7,130</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other revenue</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>59</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employee expenses</td>
<td>4,406</td>
<td>5,125</td>
<td>5,215</td>
<td>5,467</td>
<td>5,426</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supplies and services</td>
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<td>1,374</td>
<td>1,415</td>
<td>1,431</td>
<td>1,158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation and amortisation</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other expenses</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surplus (Deficit)</td>
<td>657</td>
<td>(247)</td>
<td>(324)</td>
<td>(484)</td>
<td>581</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Assets
At 30 June 2019, assets totalled $2.663 million which comprised:
- cash at bank $2.525 million
- plant and equipment $0.014 million
- receivables and other current assets $0.124 million.

Liabilities
As at 30 June 2019, our liabilities totalled $0.457 million which included:
- $0.121 million in payables
- $0.227 million in accrued employee benefits
- $0.109 million in accrued rent payable.

The financial statements that follow provide an overview of our financial activities during 2018–19. The Queensland Audit Office reviewed these statements, our supporting documentation and our systems and processes. We received an unqualified audit report.

Financials (Audit Office)
A more detailed view of our financial performance is provided in the Office of the Information Commissioner Queensland Financial Statements for the financial year ended 30 June 2019. The audited financial statements are available at page 57.

Accountable and transparent
In line with the Queensland Government’s commitment to improve financial management in the public sector, we continued to review our internal accounting practices as well as the quality of information we provided to Queensland Treasury.

We worked with our corporate service provider to streamline our reporting processes and continued to improve the accuracy of our reporting.

We continued to provide information to the Queensland Audit Office as requested and discussed ways to improve our financial management practices.

This year, we also completed a review of our Finance Management Practice Manual to reflect changes in business process due to the change in corporate service providers and the implementation of a new finance system. The refreshed Finance Management Practice Manual was approved and implemented in June 2019.