

# Report on a page

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This report brings together regional insights from our financial audits across government entities. It is the first in a series that will complement our annual sector-based reports by examining different aspects of government support of Queensland's regions.

## Queensland's regions are diverse and vast

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We use the term 'regions' to refer to all areas outside of Greater Brisbane. This represents around 99 per cent of the state's land mass, and ranges from coastal cities like the Gold Coast through to remote areas in Queensland's outback. The regions are home to diverse natural environments, reflected in significant industries like mining, manufacturing, agriculture, and tourism.

Of all the states and territories, Queensland has the most people who live outside the greater capital city areas. Around three-quarters of all Queenslanders live in the regions, and the population is expected to grow over the next 20 years. More demand for government services in the regions will follow, along with a greater need for coordinated planning, economic, and social development activities.

## The government supports and invests in the regions

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All Queensland Government departments are responsible for policies, programs, and services that impact on the regions. Around 64 per cent of all Queensland Government employees are based in the regions. The vast majority are in frontline roles, including healthcare workers, teachers, and first responders. Many Queenslanders are also employed by the local governments (councils) that deliver services across the state.

The government supports economic outcomes throughout the regions, by providing grants and investing in infrastructure, and through its policies, such as promoting the use of local suppliers when purchasing goods and services. Between 2021 and 2023, government departments provided approximately \$1.1 billion in grants to support regional businesses and local governments with infrastructure investment and to assist them in growing their economies and employment.

## Growing the regions requires coordination

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One of the Queensland Government's community objectives is to 'help Queensland's regions grow by attracting people, talent, and investment, and driving sustainable economic prosperity'. Government entities share responsibility for achieving this.

Coordinating across government to deliver regional growth initiatives is an ongoing challenge. For example, most state entities divide the state up differently, which can complicate how they plan their activities and work together.

Some of the government's regional growth functions have been frequently moved between entities through machinery of government changes. For example, responsibility for regional planning has shifted between departments 5 times since 2015. These constant disruptions introduce risks to achieving strategic initiatives and project delivery.

The Queensland Government is implementing a new regional governance model to improve how entities work together. The government is also updating statutory regional plans for 10 regions across the state, intending to align economic drivers, infrastructure priorities, and land use planning.

We may examine these initiatives and challenges for regional growth in future reports.

