

Message from the Director-General

2019–20 was a year like no other. Driven by a shared passion for the health and vibrancy of our communities, our department has responded with the expertise, energy and collaborative mindset needed to support Queensland communities.

I would like to express sincere thanks to all of our valued stakeholders for the ongoing commitment to a partnership approach, which enabled us, like most organisations around the world, to navigate the disruptions and respond to the outbreak of COVID-19.

As part of The Queensland Economic Recovery Strategy: Unite and Recover for Queensland Jobs — the government’s overarching response to the pandemic — and in direct response to urgent community and economic need, the department reallocated resources to deliver new funding programs to support local communities and the racing industry and to create jobs.

Under our local government portfolio, we developed two new job-creating infrastructure programs for local governments — the state-wide \$200 million COVID Works For Queensland program and the \$50 million Unite and Recover Community Stimulus Package for South East Queensland councils — which will deliver \$250 million to support Queensland councils in 2020–21.

To support the successful and safe delivery of the 2020 Local Government elections we delivered information to our culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in multiple languages about how to vote safely.

In response to COVID-19 we reassigned \$900,000 in funding to the Community Connection Package to enable community organisations to provide much needed support to vulnerable Queenslanders from CALD backgrounds.

In the multicultural affairs portfolio, we worked to address one of the most challenging aspects of the pandemic — sharing vital health and community messaging to all Queenslanders, through a range of channels, formats and languages.

We also re-negotiated our contracts with 19 existing funded organisations across Queensland to ensure their work focused on supporting CALD communities through the pandemic.

And as we continue our support to create a sustainable racing industry for Queensland, we brought forward \$2 million in funding under the Track Training Subsidy Scheme to support race clubs struggling with funding shortfalls with the onset of COVID-19 and restrictions on public gatherings.

The pandemic did not mean we put our business as usual to the side, and I am proud of the department’s efforts to continue delivering on our strategic objectives, albeit with big changes to our engagement and communication strategies.

Following the local government elections we worked quickly to reorganise councillor induction training into a virtual format, building on the successful delivery of mandatory So You Want To Be A Councillor training.

In a key milestone for our rolling program of local government reform, the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 and the Electoral and Other Legislation (Accountability, Integrity and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2019 were passed.

We also delivered the Grants to Local Government Model, streamlining the funding process for councils and delivering on a key government commitment.

In line with our objective to deliver policies, programs and services responsive to Queensland's cultural diversity we released the Queensland Multicultural Action Plan 2019–22, the second under the Queensland *Multicultural Recognition Act 2016*.

We tabled the plan's First Progress Report and delivered another successful Multicultural Queensland Month and Multicultural Queensland Awards event, celebrating our diversity and reinforcing a sense of belonging for all Queenslanders.

We worked closely with Racing Queensland to administer the Racing Infrastructure Fund, Country Racing Program and Training Track Subsidy Scheme, committing over \$100 million to support the sustainability of the racing industry.

To achieve these important goals, it is vital our people take pride in the work they do, understand the connection between their work and the department's overarching strategy, and have the energy and enthusiasm to deliver. Working from home during the initial months of the pandemic presented a unique set of challenges and our people have stepped up for the benefit of all Queenslanders.

I am grateful to our team for their tireless efforts over the year. Their work directly supports well-managed local government, sustainable racing and healthy, vibrant communities and is highly responsive to the needs and opportunities of our cultural diversity.

In the coming year we will continue our mission to be a contemporary organisation enabling sustainable, vibrant, inclusive and confident local communities.

We will help local governments be efficient and sustainable and deliver long-lasting benefits.

We will develop policies, programs and services that meet government and community expectations, and deliver outcomes under our community-focused funding programs by ensuring we have sound funding agreements and clear measures in place.

We will help the racing industry bolster regional economies and the social capital it generates across the State, including providing stimulus for regional and rural race clubs.

We will connect employers with migrant and refugee job seekers across priority industries and help councils and the private sector boost local economies and create or expand industries.

As our communities respond to the health and economic challenges presented by COVID-19, we will deliver responsive programs and initiatives that will help local governments, the racing industry and our communities rise above challenges they face and emerge strongly from the crisis.

With the fundamentals in place to help us be agile and responsive, we remain tightly focused on the task at hand.



Warwick Agnew
Director-General

Department of Local Government, Racing and
Multicultural Affairs