Auditor-General of Queensland

Report to Parliament No. 6 for 2008

Follow-up audit of Workforce Planning at Departments of Education, Training and the Arts and Health, incorporating their responses to an ageing workforce

A Performance Management Systems Audit

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Queensland

Prepared under Part 6

Division 3 of the

Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977

Auditor-General of Queensland

October 2008

The Honourable M F Reynolds MP
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Speaker

This report is prepared under Part 6 Division 3 of the *Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977*, and is on the Results of Follow-up audit of Workforce Planning at Departments of Education, Training and the Arts and Health, incorporating their responses to an ageing workforce. It is the sixth in the series of Auditor-General's Reports to Parliament for 2008.

In accordance with s.105 of the Act, would you please arrange for the report to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

Yours sincerely

Glenn Poole
Auditor-General

Contents

Glossary
Frequently used terms and abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
Baby Boomers	Generation born between 1946 and 1965
DEIR	Department of Employment and Industrial Relations
DETA	Department of Education, Training and the Arts
Education	Education Queensland
EPAS	Experience Pays Awareness Strategy
Forster Review	*Queensland Health Systems Review*, 2005
Health	Department of Health
IPPC	Integrated Policy and Planning Committee, Department of Health
MOHRI	Minimum Obligatory Human Resource Information
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPSC	Office of the Public Service Commissioner
PSC	Public Service Commission
QHEST	Queensland Health Enterprise Solutions Transition
QHIC	Queensland Health Implementation of Continuity Project
QPS	Queensland public sector
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
Training	Training Queensland
WPOC	Workforce Planning Oversight Committee, Department of Health
WRRC	Workforce Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee, Department of Health

Section 1
Executive summary

1.1 Audit overview

Workforce planning is essential to the development of a capable workforce and is a key tool in ensuring efficient and effective service delivery for the Queensland public sector (QPS) in both the short and long term. The ageing workforce is a key workforce challenge affecting current and future public sector service delivery.

In 2007, 48.1 per cent of permanent QPS employees are aged over 45 years.[1] In the next 15 years, over 70,000 of the current 168,000 permanent employees are expected to retire based on a retirement age of 60 years. This means an average of over 4,500 employees are expected to retire each year, which is almost double the annual average for the last three years of 2,873 employees. This rise in retirement, combined with a projected reduction in the number of people entering the labour force during this time, could result in some agencies facing a serious shortage of employees. Given an increasing public demand for government services, these shortages will impact on the government's ability to deliver services to the Queensland community.

The main challenges and risks for agencies from the ageing workforce include the loss of large numbers of people due to retirement over a short period of time, the loss of associated knowledge and skills and the need to ensure that there are adequately trained applicants available to replace these losses in a tight labour market. Many current public sector managers have not experienced significant labour shortages before, and therefore there has been a limited focus on long term workforce management and planning.

In 2006, I tabled a report in Parliament on the results of a performance management systems audit of workforce planning at the Department of Education, Training and the Arts (DETA) and the Department of Health (Health), which between them employ over half of the QPS workforce. Given the importance of workforce planning to the public sector in meeting strategic and service delivery objectives, a follow-up audit has been conducted to see what progress had been made in implementing the recommendations from the 2006 audit. The 2006 recommendations are outlined in Section 3.

The audit has been extended to assess how these two departments are dealing with the challenges of an ageing workforce and the systems they have in place to minimise the potential effect on their agencies. From a whole of government perspective, I also looked at the systems in place at the Public Service Commission (PSC) and Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (DEIR) to determine how effectively they support other public sector agencies in addressing the ageing workforce issue.

1.2 Audit opinion

Overall, both Departments have made substantial progress in implementing the recommendations in relation to workforce planning from my Report No. 6 for 2006. I found evidence of strengthened governance arrangements, improved systems of data collection and enhanced processes for demand/supply analysis. I saw evidence of an increasing focus on attracting and retaining staff to meet shortages in the workforce such as specialist teachers, specific groups of health care workers and staff positions in remote and rural areas.

In terms of the ageing workforce, I found that the PSC and DEIR have systems in place to identify and assess the potential impact of an ageing workforce for the QPS and have measures to assist agencies address future challenges. DETA and Health are making progress towards identifying and addressing the impacts, but the more immediate issue of current workforce shortages often takes precedence.

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[1] Characteristics of the Queensland Public Service Workforce (as at June 2007)

There are some good initiatives being implemented at both these departments and across government which appear to be appropriate to address the ageing workforce. However many initiatives are in the early stage of implementation and it will be some time before the success of these programs is known. At this stage, it is difficult to assess whether the action being undertaken is sufficient and adequate. Government and agencies will need to closely monitor the effect of these strategies and continue to develop measures to address potential skill shortages. To do this, appropriate performance measure systems need to be in place to monitor the outcomes.

The ageing workforce is a potentially critical issue for the QPS, though it will be five to 15 years before the effects are truly known. However, any adverse impact could be minimised through appropriate strategies being implemented now. It is therefore important that all agencies continue to develop a clear picture of the extent of projected employee shortages and implement strategies to address those outcomes.

1.3　Key findings

1.3.1　Progress on 2006 workforce planning recommendations

From a whole-of-government perspective, the PSC has increased its focus on assisting agencies develop workforce planning capabilities to meet the recommendations in Report No. 6 for 2006. The PSC has developed and refined a suite of tools and strategies and is working directly with HR managers to assist them improve their workforce planning processes.

The implementation of the 2006 audit recommendations is progressing at DETA through such actions as expanding the scope of the Workforce Committee, improving mid to long term workforce forecasting, and the Strategic HR Unit strengthening its communication not only with regional and district offices but also with school principals.

Health has made significant progress in implementing the recommendations. The workforce planning governance framework has been strengthened and expanded to include all levels of the Department. In August 2008, a restructure abolished the three Area Health Services. As a result, the implementation of my 2006 recommendation regarding a detailed central action plan underpinning the current Workforce Strategic Plan should be reconsidered.

Progress is continuing on the implementation of the whole-of-government HR solution at both agencies, with departmental workforce planning needs being considered. Collaborative forums have been established between key stakeholders to ensure that common business requirements for workforce planning are considered in the development of the solution.

1.3.2　Addressing an ageing workforce

All agencies audited have systems and processes in place to identify, address and monitor their ageing workforce issues. The QPS generally responds to the ageing workforce issue through the strategies of recruitment, retraining and retention.

At a whole-of-government level the PSC and DEIR have developed tools and guidance material to assist agencies respond to ageing workforce challenges. They provide direct assistance to agencies to help them with workforce planning, strategies and leadership development.

DETA and Health have appropriate frameworks and strategies in place to retain existing employees, transfer key knowledge and skills and attract new employees. Each Department profiles its workforce to determine priorities then develops and delivers strategies to address these priorities.

Improvements identified for both DETA and Health include developing key performance indicators that include specific and measurable targets to allow stakeholders to assess the results of strategies and initiatives. DETA's reporting, particularly in supply and demand forecasting, would be strengthened by revising the assumptions used in their analysis and documenting these assumptions in workforce planning reports.

1.4 Summary of recommendations

The following recommendations are made in relation to the issue of the ageing workforce:

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1.   **all public sector entities utilise the assistance provided by PSC and DEIR to ensure they have adequate systems in place to identify and respond to ageing workforce issues and monitor the results of initiatives put in place**

2.   **DETA review the assumptions used in forecasting supply and demand of teachers and document these assumptions in workforce planning reports**

3.   **DETA develop measurable targets for key performance indicators for inclusion in all planning documents, and promote a culture of defining and measuring performance**

4.   **Health develop a comprehensive suite of key performance indicators for inclusion in all planning documents, and promote a culture of defining and measuring performance.**

1.5 Agency responses

1.5.1 Public Service Commission

Chief Executive's response

In a response dated 22 September the Chief Executive stated:

I have considered the matters proposed in your draft report and am supportive of your proposal. As mentioned in your report, workforce planning is essential to the development of a capable workforce and is a key tool in ensuring efficient and effective service delivery. To this end, the Public Service Commission this year has begun to implement a program of work to:

- *Assist agencies to develop workforce planning capabilities*

- *Develop and refine a suite of tools and strategies*

- *Work directly with clusters of agencies through their HR Managers to assist them to improve their workforce planning processes and address critical labour and skills shortages for occupations in demand.*

1.5.2 Department of Employment and Industrial Relations

Minister's response

In a response dated 25 September the Minister stated:

In response I am pleased to note that the draft report provided identifies that the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (DEIR), together with the Public Service Commission (PSC), has systems in place to identify and assess the potential impact of an ageing workforce for the QPS.

In particular, it is encouraging to see that the draft report acknowledges the following:

- *the contribution of the Experience Pays Awareness Strategy (EPAS) to raising awareness among employers and employees of the benefits of mature workers;*

- *the contribution the EPAS Industry Liaison Officers have made to enhancing industry and public sector awareness of the benefits of attracting, retraining and retaining mature workers;*

- *the contribution that practical web-based tools such as "Managing an Ageing Workforce" make to building the capability of public sector organisations; and*

- *the value of the Attraction and Retention Remuneration Incentive Policy in assisting agencies impacted by skills shortages.*

In addition, the draft report also affirms the role of DEIR in monitoring and responding to general employment trends and issues. I can advise that DEIR monitors and responds to these issues in a multitude of ways including through:

- *DEIR's participation on the Labour Market Advisory Committee, established in partnership with the Department of Employment, Training & the Arts to provide a better evidence-base in relation to skills shortages; and*

- *conducting research projects focused on better understanding of labour market issues, such as underutilisation of labour in Queensland. Recent research reports are available on the department's website.*

Through Workplace Health and Safety Queensland, industry action plans also focus on educating and informing employers and employees on managing risks in the workplace and aim to build a Queensland workplace culture that sees health and safety as an integral part of normal business operations. The action plans support industry to manage issues impacting on them, which may include workforce ageing – particularly in industries such as community services and health.

I also note that your draft report covers the recent changes to the PSC. In this context, I am advised that DEIR is providing input to the PSC's Strategic Directions project. This will ensure that PSC and DEIR roles remain complementary in relation to industrial and employee relations, workforce management and specific workforce issues including ageing.

1.5.3   Department of Education, Training and the Arts

Director-General's response

In a response dated 19 September the Director-General stated:

The draft report has been reviewed and DETA supports its recommendations.

1.5.4   Department of Health

Deputy Director-General's response

In a response dated 18 September the Deputy Director-General, Policy Planning and Resourcing stated:

It is reassuring to receive an independent audit report showing that Queensland Health has made significant progress across the majority of recommendations from the 2006 audit.

Throughout the recommendations, reference is made to the restructure announced in August 2008 and the requirement to reconsider the recommendations from the 2006 audit that had included the role of Area Health Services. The restructure has established a flatter structure with increased responsibilities for Health Service Districts and a more direct reporting line between central office and the Health Service Districts. As a consequence, the terms of reference and membership of workforce planning committees such as the Workforce Planning Oversight Committee and the governance arrangements for workforce planning will be reviewed.

Queensland Health is in agreement that the development of a comprehensive suite of key performance indicators for inclusion in all planning documents is a worthwhile exercise and the parameters for reporting need to be considered further.

Additionally, the National Health Workforce Taskforce are developing an agreed set of key performance indicators to assess jurisdictional health workforce planning performance against the seven principles established in the National Health Workforce Strategic Framework.

The evaluation will:

- *Assess the impact of policy reform against the National Health Workforce Strategic Framework principles using agreed key performance indicators.*

- *Provide advice to the Health Workforce Principal Committee on progress toward National Health Workforce Strategic Framework principles.*

- *Implement the Council of Australian Governments' decision that regular reviews of progress in implementing the National Health Workforce Strategic Framework are undertaken and publicly reported.*

- *Provide Health Workforce Principal Committee with recommendations for further refinement of key performance indicators and National Health Workforce Strategic Framework.*

Section 2
Audit focus

2.1 Reasons for the audit

2.1.1 Follow-up audit

The 2006 audit of workforce planning at DETA and Health (reported to Parliament in the Auditor-General's Report No. 6 for 2006), noted the increasing importance of workforce planning to underpin agencies' ability to meet strategic and service delivery objectives. This audit reviewed the workforce planning systems in place at DETA and Health, who together now employ over 60 per cent of the Queensland public sector workforce. These departments also deliver critical services to support the current and future needs of the State so it is important that they have the workforce to respond to the demands of a growing population. Overall the audit assessed that workforce planning systems and processes were substantially implemented at DETA, but only partially implemented at Health.

Given the importance of workforce planning to future service delivery, it is timely to review the progress that DETA and Health have made in implementing the recommendations from the 2006 audit.

2.1.2 Addressing an ageing workforce

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has noted that the ageing population presents *"specific challenges within the public service, where workforces are ageing even more rapidly than the rest of society and the wider labour market."*[2]

The main challenges and risks to agencies from the ageing workforce include the loss of large numbers of people to retirement over a short period of time, the loss of associated knowledge and skills and the need to ensure that there is an adequate pool of experienced applicants available to replace this loss in a tight labour market. If older workers delay their retirement, this also leads to challenges of providing appropriate work programs such as flexible working arrangements, health and wellbeing programs and possibilities of redeployment or job redesign.

The largest numbers of QPS retirements are expected between 2013 and 2022. Although this is still some time away, agencies need to put strategies in place now to prepare for a large proportion of employees leaving the public service.

2.2 Audit objective

The objectives of the audit were to determine:

- the current status of implementation of recommendations made to DETA and Health in the Auditor-General's Report No. 6 for 2006 on workforce planning

- whether these departments have appropriate systems and processes in place to identify and respond to the challenges of an ageing workforce

- whether the Public Service Commission and Department of Employment and Industrial Relations in their central or lead agency roles, have systems and processes to effectively support other public sector agencies in addressing the ageing workforce issue.

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[2] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2007, *Ageing and the public service: human resource challenges*, www.oecd.org.

2.3 Audit scope

2.3.1 Agencies audited

- Department of Education, Training and the Arts (DETA)
- Department of Health (Health)
- Public Service Commission (PSC)
- Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (DEIR)

2.3.2 Audit matters examined

Follow-up audit

The Auditor-General's Report No. 6 for 2006 was followed up to determine if recommendations in the report had been implemented.

The Public Accounts Committee conducted a review of Report No. 6 for 2006, the results of which were included in their Report No. 74 tabled in Parliament on 24 May 2007. The Committee recommended that "the Office of the Public Service Commissioner review its workforce planning resources to include detailed guidance, including case studies, to assist agencies with how to go about long term workforce planning". Whilst this recommendation was not directly followed-up in the current audit, the findings in Section 3.1 in this report are relevant to this recommendation.

Addressing an ageing workforce

What is happening at a whole-of-government level

Do the PSC and DEIR in the roles of central or lead agencies, have systems and processes to:

- understand the public sector profile
- assist agencies to identify and respond to emerging employment trends
- monitor results.

What is happening at DETA and Health

Do DETA and Health have appropriate systems and processes in place to:

- identify the challenges
- respond to the challenges
- monitor results.

2.3.3 Time period covered by the audit

The audit assessed systems and processes in place in agencies and progress made since November 2006. Audit field work was conducted from June 2008 to August 2008.

2.3.4 Audit procedures

The audit concentrated on reviewing the systems in place to ensure a readiness to respond to a potential risk of scarce human resources across the public sector caused by an ageing workforce. Background research, review and analysis was conducted on:

- literature and studies, including publications from international and Australian jurisdictions
- Queensland Government documents including Service Delivery Statements, Annual Reports and relevant agency publications.

Review and analysis of agency systems also included interviews with key departmental officers and examination of internal agency documents.

2.4   PMSA approach

The legislative basis for this audit is Section 80 of the *Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977* (FA&A Act). A performance management systems audit (PMSA) is an independent examination of whether an entity or part of an entity's activities have performance management systems in place to enable management to assess whether its objectives are being achieved economically, efficiently and effectively. While a PMSA will not review or comment on government policy, it may extend to include a focus on the entity's performance measures and whether in the Auditor-General's opinion, the performance measures are relevant, purposeful and fairly represent the entity's performance.

The intent of a PMSA is to provide independent assurance to the Parliament, and to act as a catalyst for adding value to the quality of public administration by assisting entities in the discharge of their governance obligations. A PMSA has a focus on ascertaining whether the systems and controls used by management to monitor and measure performance, assist the entity in meeting its stewardship responsibilities.

The statutory office of the Auditor-General, as the external auditor for the Parliament, is established pursuant to the FA&A Act. The Auditor-General is independent and is not subject to direction by any person in the way audits are conducted. Although the Auditor-General takes note of the entity's perspective, the scope of a public sector audit is at the sole discretion of the Auditor-General as the FA&A Act prescribes that the Auditor-General may conduct an audit in the way the Auditor-General considers appropriate.

The Queensland Auditor-General's Guidelines for the Conduct of Audits of Performance Management Systems is available at www.qao.qld.gov.au.

Section 3
Workforce planning – status of 2006 recommendations

3.1 What has happened at a whole-of-government level?

The PSC has increased its focus on assisting agencies to develop workforce planning capabilities to meet the recommendations in the Auditor-General's Report No. 6 for 2006. A suite of tools and strategies has been developed to assist agencies and a number of these strategies and tools are currently being reviewed for their effectiveness. The PSC is working directly with agency human resource (HR) managers to assist them improve their workforce planning processes.

The following whole-of-government recommendations were included in the Report No. 6 for 2006.

RECOMMENDATION 1

It is recommended that public sector entities:

- **integrate workforce planning with their overall strategic planning, corporate governance and business management**
- **ensure regular monitoring and reporting arrangements are in place for workforce planning and are integrated with regular management reporting.**

RECOMMENDATION 2

It is recommended that public sector entities:

- **ensure data collection systems are in place that provide meaningful data for workforce planning purposes**
- **implement appropriate controls over the integrity of the data in their systems.**

RECOMMENDATION 3

It is recommended that public sector entities:

- **ensure forecasting models are transparent, covering both short and long term scenarios**
- **involve key stakeholders in workforce analysis to ensure an integrated and informed approach, taking all potential workforce impacts into account.**

Findings

In late 2006, the Public Service Commission (PSC), formerly the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, undertook a survey of workforce planning across the Queensland public sector. The findings of this survey were consistent with the recommendations made in the Report No. 6 for 2006. Since the Report was tabled, the PSC updated the Workforce Planning Resource Toolkit for agencies. They also delivered training to agencies on how to analyse workforce information, identify critical workforce management issues, apply evidence-based decision making and present effective workforce management business cases. The success of these measures is being reviewed.

The PSC also provides quarterly reports to agencies on a range of workforce indicators, which benchmark agency performance against whole-of-government averages and trends. This reporting is based on Minimum Obligatory Human Resource Information (MOHRI) data as provided by agencies.

The PSC continues to work with agencies on improving the quality of the MOHRI data. Improvements in the quality of data were evidenced at both Education and Health.

3.2 What action has DETA taken?

Overall, DETA has made considerable progress on all recommendations.

DETA's Workforce Committee has expanded its scope to incorporate the 2006 audit recommendations. The Committee provides advice on workforce planning issues and monitors departmental initiatives. Workforce planning issues are reported to the Executive Management Group (EMG) by a Workforce Committee representative and the Strategic HR Unit.

Progress is continuing on the implementation of the whole-of-government HR and OneSchool systems, with departmental workforce planning needs being considered. Greater collaboration between DETA and Health is ensuring that common business requirements across the two agencies are considered in the development of the whole-of-government HR solution.

The Teacher Supply and Demand Situation Report 2007 provides mid to long term (four to 10 years) forecasting of teacher supply and demand, including at specialist level. The Strategic HR Unit has strengthened its communication not only with regional and district offices but also with principals. The audit did however identify concerns regarding assumptions used in teacher supply/demand ratios. These concerns are discussed in Section 4.3.1 of this report.

The following sections outline the DETA recommendations included in Report No. 6 for 2006 and the follow-up findings.

3.2.1 Overall corporate governance framework

2006 RECOMMENDATION 1

It is recommended that Education ensure its Workforce Committee:

- **expand its focus beyond short term human resource management issues to include a role in departmental workforce planning initiatives such as teacher supply and future student enrolment trends**

- **provide a monitoring function over departmental workforce planning initiatives through more structured reporting of mid to long term vacancies**

- **provide regular reports to the Executive Management Team outlining the outcomes of any departmental workforce planning initiatives.**

Findings

The function of the Workforce Committee was updated through a new terms of reference developed in 2007. Its role includes responsibility for providing advice on strategies that align workforce planning to future service needs (workforce supply and demand). It also monitors specification development for the whole-of-government HR system and oversees the implementation of recommendations in the Report No. 6 for 2006.

The Committee monitors mid to long term vacancies and has endorsed a number of reports related to workforce planning.

As outlined in the Committee's terms of reference, it monitors:

- workforce modelling and projection processes
- workforce policies for changing workforce expectations
- the impact on the workforce from the national agenda
- departmental workforce planning initiatives through more structured reporting.

An annual update report is provided by the Strategic HR Unit to the EMG highlighting recent progress and current initiatives in workforce planning. A representative from the Workforce Committee is also on the EMG.

3.2.2 Systems for data collection

2006 RECOMMENDATION 2

In order to enhance current workforce planning data, it is recommended that Education:

- **continue its plans to conduct impact assessment workshops with all relevant business units on the new whole-of-government HR solution to ensure appropriate functionality is in place and meaningful data can be extracted for workforce planning purposes**

- **continue work on the OneSchool system to enable better workforce planning through access to individual school timetables that can be integrated with teacher details from the new whole-of-government HR solution**

- **establish a regular process for maintaining a teacher qualifications database that is updated regularly and integrated with the new whole-of-government HR solution**

- **consider a collaborative approach with the Department of Health about business requirements for workforce planning and integration with the new whole-of-government HR solution.**

Findings

Work is continuing on the implementation of the whole-of-government HR system and the OneSchool system as recommended. Project teams have been established for both systems and meet regularly with key internal and external stakeholders.

DETA has advised that impact assessment workshops were held with internal stakeholders, facilitated by CorpTech. Workforce planning requirements for the new whole-of-government HR system have been endorsed by the Workforce Committee. These requirements include the provision for a teacher qualifications database and have been submitted for development. The final solution is now expected to be implemented in October 2009.

DETA has confirmed that regular communication with Health has been established. It is noted that DETA and Health are at different stages of implementation, however they are working together to ensure that common business requirements for workforce planning are included in the system.

School timetabling functionality is planned for inclusion in Release 4 of the OneSchool system, which is currently in the feasibility stage with release planned for 2010. It is expected this release will be integrated with the whole-of-government HR solution.

While work on these new systems is progressing, DETA has also implemented a number of manual data gathering systems to ensure the quality of data reflects planning needs. DETA has instigated a number of surveys for information gathering, including:

- Teacher Qualification Survey
- Pre-service Teacher Survey
- Applicant Pool Survey
- Class Size and Timetabling Survey.

At a national level, DETA has nominated to lead the development of definitions for a national data set. DETA's involvement in the national agenda should further assist in refining data collection needs and processes.

3.2.3 Processes for demand/supply analysis

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2006 RECOMMENDATION 3

It is recommended that Education enhance its existing longer-term forecasting by including the skill mix and the number of specialist teachers required. Education is continuing work on the implementation of the whole-of-government HR solution and the OneSchool system to address this.

2006 RECOMMENDATION 4

It is recommended that Education consider sharing longer-term trend analysis with regional offices. This would assist regional offices to understand what long-term actions Education is taking to address workforce planning issues, such as the shortage of specialist teachers.

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Findings

Since the 2006 audit, DETA has produced a Teacher Supply and Demand Situation Report providing mid to long term forecasting of teacher supply and demand. The report provides forecasts and risk assessments at subject level for maths, science, industrial technology and special education. These areas have been identified as higher risk areas for shortages.

DETA's workforce planning projections indicate an adequate supply of primary and secondary teachers overall across the State. However, shortages in some geographic locations and specialist secondary teachers have been identified. Better information on shortages at the individual school level will be available once the OneSchool system has been implemented.

One shortfall noted in the Teacher Supply and Demand Situation Report is that it does not outline key assumptions underlying supply and demand projections. This issue is further discussed in Section 4.3.1.

DETA has improved the flow of information both to and from schools and regions, which has provided greater intelligence on workforce planning at a local level. The Strategic HR Unit presented data from the Teacher Supply and Demand Situation Report 2007 to regional officers and principals, and provided training to enable them to analyse workforce profile and benchmarking reports. In conjunction with school principals, the Strategic HR Unit has conducted a needs analysis survey and developed workforce planning tools. DETA has advised that they are now working closely with principals to refine the tools and assist them with workforce planning.

3.3 What action has Health taken?

In the eighteen months since the 2006 audit, Health has made significant progress in implementing the recommendations. The Department has further developed its decentralised model which enables it to quickly gather vital information and to respond to workforce issues as they arise.

The workforce planning governance framework has been strengthened and expanded to include all levels of the Department. This means that clearer direction on roles and responsibilities of staff and committees is available throughout the organisation.

The implementation of the whole-of-government HR solution is progressing and the Department should continue to liaise with key stakeholders to gain maximum benefit from this system. The progress made, particularly in relation to quality of data being migrated between payroll systems, is encouraging.

The quality of supply and demand data available to decision makers to assess the Department's workforce planning needs has also improved. While delays have been encountered with the implementation of key systems, district and area staff have implemented interim measures to ensure the best data is provided in a timely manner. The three Area Health Service plans contributed to coordinated central planning and adequately addressed the 2006 recommendation for a single central plan. Given the abolition of Area Health Services in the August 2008 restructure, implementation of the 2006 recommendation regarding a detailed central action plan underpinning the current Workforce Strategic Plan should be reconsidered as a priority.

The following sections outline the Health recommendations included in Report No. 6 for 2006 and the follow-up findings.

3.3.1 Overall corporate governance framework

2006 RECOMMENDATION 1

It is recommended that Health:

- **ensure that the Workforce, Recruitment and Retention Sub-Committee provides a governance role in relation to departmental workforce planning issues including any analysis of future workforce gaps and the development of resultant strategies**

- **assigns responsibility to the Workforce, Recruitment and Retention Sub-Committee to regularly report on workforce planning issues to the HR Board to ensure these issues are brought to the attention of senior departmental management.**

2006 RECOMMENDATION 2

It is recommended that in accordance with its terms of reference, the Workforce, Recruitment and Retention Sub-Committee should take on a monitoring role over departmental workforce planning initiatives. Senior management (HR Board) should monitor workforce planning issues and strategies through the review of regular periodic reporting as provided by the Committee.

Findings

During the departmental reform that followed the 2005 Forster Review, Health reassessed the functions and roles of its committees. As a result, the Workforce, Recruitment and Retention Sub-Committee (WRRC) which reported to the HR Board in 2006, was disbanded.

A Workforce Planning Oversight Committee (WPOC) was formed in place of the WRRC. Its purpose is to coordinate workforce planning processes, provide expert advice on and support for workforce planning activities. Membership of this Committee includes regional managers from Workforce Units and central office staff from the Workforce Planning and Coordination Group. While its terms of reference are strategic, the focus of this Committee has become operational by necessity, due to the large amount of change within the Department. As a consequence of this operational focus, management identified a strategic gap in workforce planning and, early this year, formed the Integrated Policy and Planning Committee (IPPC).

The IPPC, whose members include the Department's Director-General and key senior staff, will provide the strategic direction in workforce planning recommended in the 2006 audit. Together, the IPPC with its strategic focus and the WPOC, with an operational focus will seek to ensure that both policy and workforce planning issues are addressed in the appropriate forum and conveyed to the Executive Management Team as required.

3.3.2 Systems for data collection

2006 RECOMMENDATION 3

It is recommended that Health:

- **establish mandatory policies and processes to ensure that accurate and complete contractor information is captured in a central location. This will assist in establishing sound baseline data for workforce planning**

- **coordinate existing information on skills and qualifications into a central database that is integrated with the new whole-of-government HR solution to better assist state-wide data analysis and forecasting**

- **conduct a gap assessment between the new whole-of-government HR solution and the Department's key business requirements, such as the identification of key groups that affect long-term workforce planning including graduates and contractors, and implement effective strategies to remedy these gaps**

- **give urgent priority to conducting further impact/gap assessment workshops with all relevant internal business units on the best way to leverage the new whole-of-government HR solution to ensure that meaningful data can be obtained for workforce planning purposes**

- **consider a collaborative approach with the Department of Education, Training and the Arts regarding business requirements for workforce planning and how it will integrate with the new whole-of-government HR solution.**

2006 RECOMMENDATION 4

It is recommended that Health:

- **give urgent priority to cleansing of data in Lattice in preparation for the transfer of data to the new whole-of-government HR solution**

- **assign and document clear roles and responsibilities for ensuring the integrity of data in Lattice. This could include a central data validation team that performs regular and frequent checks on data in Lattice and reports on the results to executive management**

- **encourage a culture where service delivery staff understand the value of good workforce planning data and encourage compliance with procedures for data quality.**

Findings

The systems for data collection in Health have improved since the 2006 audit. Progress is underway to decommission the Department's Lattice Payroll system and migrate data to the whole-of-government HR solution. While full migration is some way off with a planned commissioning date of mid-2010, the Department has adopted a staged approach to full implementation. As a result, many aspects of Recommendation 3 above will not be fully realised until the end of the implementation process in 2010.

Some aspects, such as the gap assessment workshops to identify key business requirements have been undertaken to ensure that the best possible solution is implemented in the long term. Other aspects, such as recording complete contractor information to establish sound baseline data on a statewide level is under consideration for later stages of the implementation.

Collaborative forums have been established between key stakeholders to ensure that common business requirements across agencies are met by the whole-of-government HR solution.

Substantial progress has been made regarding the quality of data and the need for cleansing prior to migration to the new system. The migration of data from Lattice to the new payroll system constitutes the first phase of the Queensland Health Enterprise Solutions Transition (QHEST) known as QHIC, the Queensland Health Implementation of Continuity Project.

The purpose of the QHIC project is to ensure that data migrated from the Department's existing systems to the new system is efficient and consists of high quality data. An information management team developed a data migration strategy to facilitate a smooth data migration process. An independent assessment of the quality of data migrated to date, and presented to the QHIC Implementation Steering Committee indicated a "*good result from data migration – 2.7 million records with 89% success rate*" equating to approximately 85 per cent of the data to be transferred.

Stage 2 of the HR solution is known as the Standard Offering, where Health and DETA have common processes to be implemented. The anticipated date of completion is September 2009, with additional specific Health Department requirements to be finalised around June 2010.

In addition to the progress made in data cleansing, roles and responsibilities have been strengthened with the assigning of process owners, who regularly meet and update other stakeholders with progress of the project. Ownership of the process has aided in the development of a culture of high data quality, particularly regarding the quality expectations for migrated data and data entry of new details.

3.3.3 Processes for demand/supply analysis

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2006 RECOMMENDATION 5

It is recommended that Health:

● **base its workforce planning initiatives on a strategic state wide health service delivery planning process, such as the state wide Health Services Plan that is currently in development**

● **incorporate specific initiatives for succession planning for critical service delivery staff in future workforce plans**

● **develop a detailed central workforce plan that underpins the current Workforce Strategic Plan 2005-10. This plan should include regular analysis of the critical workforce and set specific action items and timeframes to support the Workforce Strategic Plan**

● **review the Workforce Strategic Plan 2005-10 to take into account the Forster Review and the subsequent restructure of the Department**

● **undertake long term workforce planning in conjunction with short term workforce planning. This should include adequate resourcing of workforce planning at all levels to enable the Department to meet its future workforce challenges and address current priorities**

● **develop consistency amongst all area offices and district workforce plans to enable appropriate performance reporting. This could take the form of consistent KPIs across all plans.**

2006 RECOMMENDATION 6

It is recommended that Health give priority to clearly defining and documenting roles and responsibilities for all staff involved in workforce analysis throughout the Department at the head office, area health service and district levels. This should include the role of finance staff in the determination of the resources required for quality service delivery.

2006 RECOMMENDATION 7

It is recommended that Health assign and document clear roles and responsibilities for developing suitable strategies to address current data analysis challenges. This should be considered when developing the forthcoming whole-of-government HR solution implementation plan, as many of these challenges would affect the quality of data in the new system.

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Findings

Since the 2006 audit, Health has undertaken an extensive process where key corporate documents were developed, such as the State-wide Health Services Plan, Strategic Plan, People Plan and Area Health Service Plans for each of the three Areas.

The top-down approach of this planning framework provided for consistent application of the aims and objectives of the Department through Area Offices to each of the District Health Offices across the State. Likewise, analysis of workforce planning issues in the Districts feeds up through the line to create a state-wide picture of issues within the workforce through the Area Health Service Plans.

The 2006 audit recommended that a central workforce plan be developed. Presently, this recommendation is still under consideration. Management indicated that a barrier to a successful state-wide planning document was the complexity of workforce issues across the State.

Prior to the restructure announced in August 2008, valuable information was contributed to the state-wide planning approach via the Area Health Service Plans which had been developed with a consistent format, reporting common data and statistics, but also conveying the issues pertinent to each area's unique geographic and demographic circumstances. The data from each Area Plan was compared and analysed for common themes by the Workforce Planning and Coordination Branch.

In addition to the workforce analysis performed at the State level, the Department actively participates in the National Health Workforce agenda, particularly addressing long-term workforce planning issues. This knowledge sharing across the States assists the Department to address emerging issues.

With the development of the planning framework, Health has realigned the roles and responsibilities of the workforce planning staff across the State. In addition to improvements in the planning framework, the Department has realigned key units in central office under the leadership of the Deputy Director-General, Policy, Planning and Resourcing, combining the functions of Funding and Resourcing, Policy, Planning and Coordination, Workforce Planning and Coordination and Legislative Policy.

Section 4
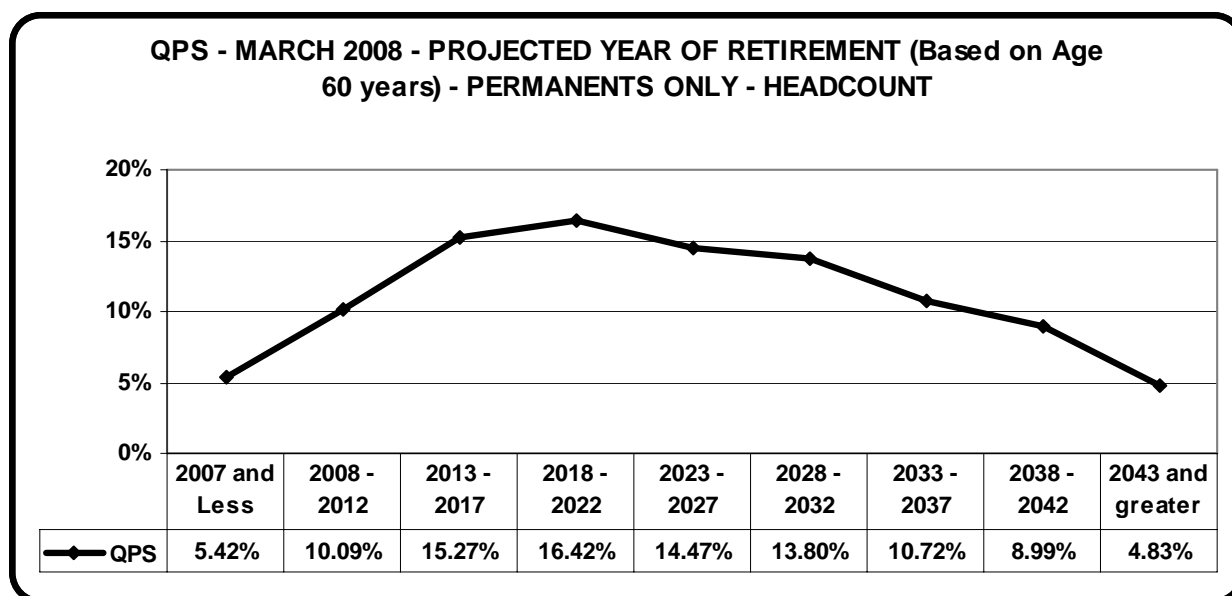## Addressing an ageing workforce

4.1 The impact of the ageing workforce

"The Queensland government labour force is ageing rapidly and also has an older profile than that of broader industry... secondary school teachers, managers, social welfare workers, nurses, cleaners and carers are among those with high expected retirement rates and lower proportions of younger 'replacement' employees." [3]

Studies indicate that the ageing population is likely to affect the public service by both increasing demand for services such as health, and decreasing the supply of workers to deliver critical services. This problem is not unique to the QPS but has been identified as an important issue both nationally and internationally.

As shown in Figure 4.1, in the 15 years from 2008 to 2022, around 70,000 employees or 41.8 per cent of the current QPS permanent workforce will potentially retire. During the same period, approximately 27,500 employees, or 47.4 per cent of DETA's current permanent staff are expected to retire. For Health, nearly 21,500 employees or 41.9 per cent of current permanent employees are expected to retire. Section 5.1 has specific graphs for DETA and Health.

Figure 4.1 — Queensland Public Service – Projected Year of Retirement

QPS - MARCH 2008 - PROJECTED YEAR OF RETIREMENT (Based on Age 60 years) - PERMANENTS ONLY - HEADCOUNT

	2007 and Less	2008 - 2012	2013 - 2017	2018 - 2022	2023 - 2027	2028 - 2032	2033 - 2037	2038 - 2042	2043 and greater
QPS	5.42%	10.09%	15.27%	16.42%	14.47%	13.80%	10.72%	8.99%	4.83%

What does this mean for agencies?

The key challenges for agencies are:

- retaining older workers longer to delay the impact of the impending retirements

- transferring key knowledge and skills to a new generation of leaders to build capacity and competencies

- attracting appropriately qualified and experienced staff to fill the vacuum to ensure critical services are delivered.

It is important that agencies are able to identify their unique challenges, address these challenges effectively and monitor the success of their strategies.

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[3] Queensland Government 2006, *The implications of demographic ageing for Queensland's labour force – a collaborative project of the departments of Treasury, Industrial Relations and Employment and Training*, Queensland Government, Brisbane.

Taking into account the options available to older workers, there are a number of factors that affect their decisions to either retire or participate in the workforce. These include:

- the opportunity cost of retirement or the value of the gap between income lost by retiring and superannuation or pension payments
- family responsibilities and the changing dynamics of family units
- employment flexibility
- employer perceptions (age discrimination and stereotypes)
- access to training and the impact of new technology
- health of workers as they age and workplace safety issues
- access to transport and housing.[4]

Public sector agencies can respond to some but not all of these factors. Other factors impacting retirement decisions, such as superannuation investment returns and retirement lifestyle aspirations, are outside the control of employers. Ultimately, the retirement decision is personal and based on a range of factors.

4.2   What is happening at a whole-of-government level?

The PSC and DEIR both have responsibilities which contribute to understanding and addressing the challenges of an ageing workforce at a whole-of-government level.

The PSC has recently undergone some changes to its structure and function, however in terms of workforce planning and management its mandate is continuing. As outlined in s.46 of the *Public Service Act 2008*, the PSC's functions relevant to workforce planning and addressing an ageing workforce include:

- enhancing the public service's human resource management and capability
- developing and implementing public service-wide workforce management strategies
- together with the departments responsible for public sector industrial relations and public sector financial policy, considering improvements in the performance of departments through remuneration and conditions of employment
- providing a best practice advisory role on public service management, organisational performance management and workforce practices.

DEIR has two roles which are relevant to identifying and responding to the challenges of an ageing public service, namely monitoring and responding to general employment trends and issues, and supporting agencies with industrial and employee relations policy and strategy.

DEIR and the PSC have been working collaboratively to identify and address ageing workforce issues within the QPS.

What we found

The PSC and DEIR have appropriate systems in place to identify and assess the effects of the ageing workforce on the QPS. They have measures in place at a whole-of-government level to assist in addressing the challenges identified, including directives, policies and initiatives such as a graduate program.

They have developed tools and guidance material to assist agencies respond to their ageing workforce challenges. Through the Experience Pays Awareness Strategy (EPAS), they are providing direct assistance to agencies to develop and implement initiatives to attract, retrain and retain older workers. The PSC provides training and assistance to agencies to help them with workforce planning, strategies and leadership development.

The PSC and DEIR have both formal and informal mechanisms in place to monitor agency take-up and the effectiveness of assistance and strategies.

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[4] Queensland Government 2004, *Queensland Government submission on the economic implications of an ageing Australia*, Queensland Government, Brisbane.

4.2.1 Understanding the public sector profile

What we looked for:
● What data collection and analysis is available at a whole-of-government level to identify and assess the impact of the ageing workforce on the QPS as a whole?

Findings

The PSC is responsible for the collection of Minimum Obligatory Human Resource Information (MOHRI) data from agencies. Analysis of this data provides key statistics and trends in the QPS. The PSC regularly publishes aggregated data such as age profile in their Annual Report. In 2007, a report outlining key characteristics of the QPS was published. This report included statistics on the current age profile, average retirement age and projected retirements to 2042.

Since 2004, DEIR has conducted workshops and research in collaboration with the Department of Treasury and the Training component of DETA on Queensland's ageing population and its effect on the labour force into the future. Whilst this research focussed on Queensland-wide trends it featured analysis of the projected impacts on the QPS workforce.

In their capacity as central agencies, the PSC and DEIR are also working to ensure whole-of-government policies and directives are responsive to the challenges of an ageing workforce identified in Section 4.1.

In conjunction with the PSC, DEIR has developed an Attraction and Retention Remuneration Incentive Policy which provides a procedure for agencies facing skills shortages in key areas to offer remuneration incentives to attract and retain critical employees.

A PSC program that focuses on developing leadership capabilities across the public service is the Practical People Management Program. This program is run in conjunction with participating agencies. The PSC is currently trialling an additional module in this program on managing an intergenerational workforce.

The PSC has implemented the Talent Attraction Project to market the Queensland public sector as an employer and streamline selection processes. It has also introduced a whole-of-government graduate program to increase the pool of potential future public service leaders.

4.2.2 Assistance for agencies

What we looked for:
● What resources are available to assist agencies identify and address their ageing workforce issues?

Findings

The PSC provides a range of resources and assistance to agencies to help them identify their ageing workforce profile and address the three key challenges of retention, knowledge transfer and recruitment. The programs they have in place appear consistent with those being implemented at a national level.

In addition to providing agencies with quarterly workforce profile and benchmarking data based on the MOHRI data, in 2007 the PSC trialled a three day cross-agency training program, the Workforce Management Information and Data Analysis Program. The aim of the program was to assist agencies to analyse workforce information, identify critical workforce management issues, apply evidence-based decision making and present effective workforce management business cases. A recent evaluation of this program highlights that participants have gained additional skills and knowledge which they have applied in their agencies.

The PSC has also updated guidance material for agencies on workforce planning, flexible work practices and work-life balance and has developed guidance material on telecommuting and succession planning. This information is available on the PSC's website.

DEIR has developed a suite of tools specifically for Queensland public sector agencies, including a Workforce Demographic Toolkit and a guide for *Managing an Ageing Workforce*. These documents contain practical suggestions for implementing age-friendly policies and provide descriptions and advice on implementing particular policies including recruitment, career succession management, phased retirement including flexible work practices, health and wellbeing and training and development. This information is also available on the DEIR and PSC websites.

The Guide aligns with the Commonwealth Government's *Mature Age Employment Practical Guide* and includes all strategies outlined in the Commonwealth guide with additional strategies on succession planning and knowledge transfer and spousal care.

In 2007, DEIR implemented the Experience Pays Awareness Strategy (EPAS), which raises awareness among employers and employees of the benefits of mature workers. An employer guide to assist businesses to recruit, retrain and retain mature workers and an employee guide have been released. Under EPAS, DEIR has funded eight industry liaison officers to work with particular industries to assist them develop strategies to recruit, retrain and retain mature workers.

An EPAS Liaison Officer for the public sector is located within the PSC. The Liaison Officer provides information and assistance to agencies on how to manage an ageing workforce. A series of workshops has been delivered across the State and pilot programs have been established in three departments – DEIR, Natural Resources and Water, and Child Safety. The Work and Life by Design project piloted in DEIR worked with line managers to assist them to understand and implement strategies to engage with older workers regarding future intentions and possible flexible working practices. The PSC has made documentation on this program available for use by other agencies.

Proposed PSC activities for 2008-09 include developing a state-wide communication strategy on minimising barriers affecting older workers, facilitating regulatory reform on workforce management arrangements (e.g. recruitment and selection, superannuation, carers leave), evaluating the pilot module on managing an intergenerational workforce in the PSC's Practical People Management Program, and working with a cluster of agencies with common occupations in demand to assist them to coordinate their staffing and retention strategies.

4.2.3 Monitoring results

What we looked for:
● What mechanisms are in place to monitor agency take-up of recommended strategies?

Findings

The PSC and DEIR monitor agency take-up of strategies through a combination of formal evaluation and informal feedback.

The PSC has recently evaluated the impact of Workforce Analysis Skills Training 2007 and the three agency pilots under EPAS. Participant feedback on the training course indicated that the program increased staff capability and knowledge and that the perceived value of the program has increased over time as staff has used the knowledge and skills within their agencies. The review of the agency pilots under EPAS outlined what did and did not work and found that overall, the pilot projects were delivered effectively and the intended outcomes were met.

DEIR has recently commissioned an external review of EPAS. This review found that overall the program has achieved its objectives. However it made a number of specific recommendations to improve and expand the program in the future.

Through the MOHRI data, the PSC also monitors trends across agencies such as age profile, retirement age and workforce composition. For example, data collected by the PSC shows that the percentage of part time workers has increased from 17.6 per cent in 2000 to 24.5 per cent in 2007. This indicates an increase in take-up of flexible working practices across the sector. This not only benefits older workers but assists in the attraction and retention of workers across all age groups.

The PSC and DEIR have informal feedback mechanisms on agency take-up of programs, as well as issues agencies are facing, through their direct contact with agencies. This feedback suggests that individual agencies face very different challenges based on their workforce profile and service delivery models, and that ageing workforce challenges are often experienced in pockets of skill sets, even within agencies.

Feedback also suggests that agencies are still strongly attached to traditional models and approaches. A criticism often identified during recruitment processes is that the process is too long, too complicated and does not give the flexibility offered in the private sector. The key challenge for the public sector is the need to balance flexibility and timeliness of processes in order to attract and retain high quality staff against the need for robust processes which are merit-based.

4.2.4 Recommendations for whole-of-government

RECOMMENDATION

1. **It is recommended that all public sector entities utilise the assistance provided by PSC and DEIR to ensure they have adequate systems in place to identify and respond to ageing workforce issues and monitor the results of initiatives put in place.**

4.3 What is happening in DETA?

In 2006, Training Queensland was combined with the Department of Education and Arts to form the new Department of Education, Training and the Arts (DETA). DETA now employs around 35 per cent of Queensland public sector employees. Eighty-three per cent of the Department's employees are teachers within Education and Training who are educating Queenslanders for today and tomorrow.

Recently DETA conducted an assessment of its total workforce through the Organisational Review and Improvement Initiative. A risk profile highlighting DETA's emerging priorities was developed, identifying where DETA needs to focus its attention in terms of addressing workforce issues.

The top priorities identified are:

● succession planning

● reallocation of human resources

● work life balance and staff wellbeing.

Other high priorities include staff attraction and retention, job security, and induction programs.

Prior to this assessment, Education Queensland (Education) and Training Queensland (Training) performed separate assessments of their workforce needs.

Education is responsible for more than 1,300 primary and secondary schools staffed by more than 35,000 teachers and attended by over 490,000 students. Historically, workforce planning in Education has been undertaken at a central level, however schools and districts are becoming increasingly responsible for workforce planning and management. The average age of teachers is 41.7 years. Over 43 per cent of the teaching workforce was over 45 years in March 2008. The highest proportion is in the 50-54 year age group, which means they will become eligible for retirement within the next five years. This profile is very similar to the overall Queensland public service profile.

Training supports 13 TAFE institutes across 80 metropolitan and regional locations who deliver training to around 230,000 students per year. TAFE institutes are responsible for maintaining their own workforces and are administered independently from each other. Teachers within the TAFE system are required to have a minimum of five years industry experience. This, combined with the nature of TAFE teaching, means they are often older than school teachers. TAFE teaching provides an additional level of flexibility attractive to older workers. Training has a significantly larger proportion of older workers to Education, with nearly 60 per cent of TAFE teacher over 45 years in July 2008.

What we found

DETA has appropriate systems in place to identify, address and monitor its workforce profile and potential problems in specialist areas. Both Education and Training have recently produced summary reports of their workforce profile and Schools and TAFEs have access to local information for their own planning. Some discrepancies were noted in key assumptions underlying the Teacher Supply and Demand Situation Report and also these assumptions were not documented. This may lead to an overstatement of available teachers which could provide unrealistic projections.

DETA has identified the need to improve specialist teacher forecasting and is currently implementing processes to better predict specialist teacher supply and demand. These processes include obtaining data on recent teaching graduates from Queensland-based higher education institutions and the *Pre-Service Teacher Survey* conducted by DETA in 2007.

DETA has an appropriate framework of strategies in place to retain existing workers, transfer key knowledge and skills and attract new workers. In addition to existing DETA initiatives, Education has commissioned a study to investigate innovative strategies to attract and retain suitably qualified people. Training has developed the TAFE Attraction and Retention Framework which particularly targets older, more experienced workers. DETA has advised that the alignment of these strategies across the department is underway.

DETA has both formal and informal processes for monitoring and reviewing the effect of its programs generally. Training has demonstrated robust evaluation of particular programs. It is recognised that many DETA programs are in preliminary stages and evaluation will take place in the future. However, measurable targets were absent in planning documents. This could make the results of initiatives difficult to assess.

4.3.1 Identifying the challenges

What we looked for:
- Are there appropriate systems in place to forecast, monitor and plan for short, medium and long term:
  - workforce demographic trends (including retirement intentions)
  - demand trends
  - critical areas of projected shortage at aggregate and local levels?
- Are there appropriate mechanisms in place to convey this information to internal and external stakeholders?

Findings

DETA has entered into a new phase of workforce planning, through priorities identified in the Organisational Review and Improvement Initiative discussed in Section 4.3. The Department has recently amalgamated the responsibilities for workforce planning from Education and the Arts and Training Queensland. Systems currently in place as discussed below will be integrated in the future.

Education

Education has identified its ageing workforce profile based on the PSC's MOHRI and internal data. Education is currently focussing on ensuring its recruitment pipeline caters for anticipated future vacancies. This is evident by the surveys and attention given to the applicant pool and pre-service teachers. Further, Education has identified that it currently has the youngest teaching workforce in Australia, with an average age of 41.7 years. The average age at retirement has increased to 60 years.

Over the past two years, Education's focus has been on addressing urgent shortages in key specialist areas through matching teacher skills to school requirements. A teacher scholarship program, which retrains existing teachers for specialist areas, has been piloted. Based on its success, the pilot program has been extended to capture needs across key subject areas.

In the short term, a process called the Day 8 teacher allocation process is used. Numbers of students are registered on Day 8 of first term. The registration results are used to determine the number of teachers to students in the school. Supply of additional short term and contract teachers is coordinated through an applicant pool. In 2007 Education surveyed the teacher applicant pool to gain a better understanding of the employment preferences and skills of the teachers to assist in matching supply to school needs.

Medium and long term supply and demand forecasting for teachers is performed by the Strategic HR Unit with monitoring and planning increasingly becoming the responsibility of schools and regions. Education monitors the universities intake to determine whether there are enough graduates to meet its projected demand, particularly in areas of projected shortage such as specialist teachers. The Teacher Supply and Demand Situation Report, released by the Strategic HR Unit, provides medium (four year) and long term (ten year) forecasting of teacher supply and demand, including in specialist areas. This Report contains aggregated and disaggregated projections for the State. Demand trends are modelled in terms of projected growth in student numbers, projected replacement rates (through retirements) and attrition rates (through resignations).

Projected retirement figures for supply/demand analysis are based on historical trend data rather than retirement intention surveys. Education has however conducted retirement intentions surveys in particular areas identified as having greater concentrations of older workers, such as guidance officers. An exit survey is also circulated to staff leaving the Department. According to results of this survey, resignations currently outnumber retirements by a ratio of 2:1.

Some discrepancies were noted in key assumptions underlying the Teacher Supply and Demand Situation Report and these assumptions were not documented. For example, the potential supply of teachers excludes qualified teachers moving into the State or returning to the workforce. In terms of graduate teachers the projections are not discounted to allow for those who will not take up positions with the Department but who will gain employment in the non-state sector or outside the teaching field. This may lead to an overstatement of available teachers which could provide an unrealistic projection.

Education has confirmed that the Teacher Supply and Demand Situation Report has been presented to key internal and external stakeholders including DETA's executive, regional senior management and Universities to help inform student enrolment planning.

The Strategic HR Unit also produces Regional HR Snapshots and benchmarking reports which provide HR performance against targets to internal stakeholders. Benchmarking reports outlining the profile and key staffing indicators of individual schools are provided for the purposes of monitoring and addressing current trends.

Training

Training differs from Education in that Education has an established workforce pipeline where teaching graduates supplement an applicant pool, and an internal transfer mechanism which helps manage changing workforce supply and demand. Training does not have a readily identifiable workforce pool and each institute must recruit new staff to cover changing workforce supply and demand.

TAFE institutes are responsible for their own workforce planning, which includes forecasting, monitoring and planning. A Workforce Planning Resource was developed internally to provide tools to assist institutes in their workforce planning. This resource recommends one, three and five year plans and includes detailed information and tools for forecasting supply and demand. To date, most institutes have implemented one year plans and DETA is continuing to work with institutes to assist them with mid term forecasting and planning. Long term forecasting has been difficult for institutes, as their demand is heavily influenced by rapidly changing external policy and workplace environments together with the needs of each community, which means that supply and demand in institutes can vary from semester to semester.

In 2006, Training produced a Workforce Profile which provided demographic information for the TAFE workforce (broken down into teaching and non-teaching staff) and non-TAFE workforce (Divisions and Regions and Graduates). Workforce projections were undertaken to inform the TAFE Attraction and Retention Framework. These projections quantified the financial impact of retirements on Training and anticipated cost savings of retaining one in four retirees for one extra year. Similar to Education, projected retirement figures for supply/demand analysis are based on historical trend data rather than retirement intention surveys. Retirement intentions surveys have been undertaken through the Men's Stuff program, showing a high proportion of staff who intend to continue working after the superannuation preservation age. However due to the small sample size, it would not be appropriate to extrapolate this data to DETA.

Training has identified an aggregate current TAFE teacher shortfall of 528 teachers (18 per cent of the workforce), projected to increase to 1,942 teachers (53 per cent of the workforce) within five years (demand projections are based on levels of service outlined in the Queensland Skills Plan). These projections do not identify specific critical areas. Institutes are responsible for identifying local shortages through their workforce planning processes.

Information on workforce planning is conveyed to both senior management and to institutes. There are both formal and informal channels for conveying information to institutes. These include:

- People Excellence Network – a formal network including institute Directors, Business Managers and HR Managers
- VSR intranet site – a log-on site where monthly reports and other reports are made available for institutes
- direct contact with institutes to assist them in workforce planning and implementation of department-wide initiatives.

4.3.2 Responding to the challenges

What we looked for:

Are appropriate strategies/systems in place to minimise the impact in critical areas to:

- encourage retention of mature workers (e.g. flexible work practices, rewards and recognition, redeployment, training and development, health and safety programs, information sessions for employees e.g. superannuation)
- ensure critical knowledge and skills are transferred / retained (e.g. succession planning, leadership programs, mentoring)
- attract/recruit new staff?

Findings

Shortages of specialist education professionals can occur in areas that have a high proportion of older workers, e.g. special education teachers and guidance officers. This situation often arises because of the time taken to develop capabilities and life experience.

To counter this situation, DETA has a range of policies and initiatives aimed at retaining key staff, transferring knowledge and skills and attracting new staff. At a strategic level, DETA is focussing on:

● finding the right people and creating the right jobs

● developing the performance of its people

● looking after and valuing people and

● using data, governance and systems to drive quality in human resource management.

Part of DETA's framework is the Work-Life Balance Policy and associated material, such as the Flexible Work Arrangement Guide, which encourages staff and managers to consider the applicability of a range of flexible work arrangements. Some practices specific to DETA include a deferred salary scheme (to fund one year sabbatical after five years service), professional year (Education), release to industry (Training) and medication/treatment breaks.

DETA's suite of initiatives also include reward and recognition programs and a Health, Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan. A range of leadership and mentoring programs are in place to assist DETA to develop a cohort of employees who possess the skills and knowledge to take on future leadership roles.

Education

Education recently implemented a teacher scholarship program. In 2008 the pilot program was extended to assist 132 teachers to gain specialist qualifications to ease teacher shortages in areas such as special education, industrial technology and design, science and mathematics.

Education is working with universities to determine whether there is a sufficient supply of teachers, particularly in areas at risk of shortages. DETA has advised that the Supply and Demand Situation Report is provided to universities to inform their student intake planning.

Education has recently commissioned a study to identify the barriers and enablers to effective attraction and retention as well as investigate innovative strategies that contribute to attraction and retention of suitably qualified people to specialist teaching and non-teaching roles in Queensland State schools. This study includes benchmarking with other jurisdictions and is expected to be finalised in late 2008.

Training

The TAFE Attraction and Retention Framework is an initiative developed in response to a difficulty experience by institutes in attracting appropriately experienced staff. This initiative provides a suite of attraction and retention programs run centrally and by institutes. Programs include the:

● Stay in Touch Program

● *Skills Treasury*, a system-wide relief teaching workforce pool

● Alumni Network.

Older workers are a key target recruitment market and strategies have been designed to specifically attract experienced workers. The *Teach Your Trade* program was launched in 2007 to attract teachers to identified shortage areas, particularly in the trades. The first round of this program was centrally administered, and provided training and support for successful applicants for two years to aid in their integration into a teaching environment. The success of this program has seen its roll-out to institutes.

Training also conducts a series of health and wellbeing workshops for older workers called *Wise Women* and *Men's Stuff*.

4.3.3 Monitoring results

What we looked for:
- Are there appropriate systems in place to monitor and review the success of strategies implemented?
- Are there appropriate mechanisms in place to convey this information to internal and external stakeholders?

Findings

DETA monitors the success of its initiatives generally through monitoring HR performance and trends. Information on most DETA workforce management initiatives is available on the departmental intranet. In their Workforce Strategic Plan, DETA includes performance indicators for key focus areas, however these are generally worded and do not provide specific measurable targets.

Education

Results of programs, such as the teacher scholarship program, are formally evaluated at the end of the pilot. For this particular program, the value to the agency has been recognised and has resulted in its extension to other specialist areas. Education advised that informal evaluation and feedback of initiatives is also conducted through direct contact with schools and regions.

Education monitors the success of its initiatives generally through monitoring HR performance and trends in the Regional HR Snapshot and school benchmarking reports. The information is then reported to senior management and provided to principals and key regional staff.

Training

Training has formal and informal systems in place for monitoring and reviewing the performance of its programs. Regular progress reports and formal evaluation reports for the *Teach Your Trade* initiative were provided to senior management. These reports assessed the project against objectives and provided quantitative cost/benefit assessments.

As the TAFE Attraction and Retention Framework was only launched in July 2008, no evaluation has yet taken place, though formal evaluation is planned. Many of the Framework initiatives however are being implemented at an institute level and Training has advised it will monitor the uptake and success of these initiatives through informal communication directly with institutes during and after implementation.

Institutes gather feedback through stay and exit interviews. Stay interviews have been implemented as a new initiative, to gauge staff feedback on what makes them remain in the organisation, where exit interviews are conducted with outgoing officers to look to potential ways to improve the work environment.

4.3.4 Recommendations for DETA

2.   It is recommended that DETA review the assumptions used in forecasting supply and demand of teachers and outline these assumptions in workforce planning reports.

3.   It is recommended that DETA develop measurable targets for key performance indicators for inclusion in all planning documents, and promote a culture of defining and measuring successes.

4.4   What is happening in Health?

With over 52,000 employees, Health employs nearly 30 per cent of the total Queensland public sector workforce. These employees work throughout a network of Health Service Districts providing services as varied as hospital inpatient, outpatient and emergency services, community and mental health services, aged care services and public health and health promotion programs.

Within Queensland Health, 41.9 per cent of the workforce is currently 45 years and over which is consistent with the Queensland public sector. Health's statistics show that age group 45 years and above are increasing their percentage in the workforce. The highest proportion of workers is in the 45 to 49 years age group, which means they will be eligible for retirement within the next ten years. The older workforce, combined with a global health worker shortage, highlight the need for Health to focus closely on workforce planning and management.

Building on the Forster Review reforms, which prompted a range of improvements in coordination, planning and workforce management, another round of major reforms was announced on 15 August 2008 to sharpen Health's focus on patient care. These reforms took effect from 1 September 2008. The reforms are aimed at strengthening performance and accountability for managers, and redirecting savings of at least $5m to patient care, and involve restructuring the Department. The restructure includes the abolition of the three Health Area Services and reduction in the number of Health Districts from 20 to 15. Direct reporting lines from Health District heads to the Director-General facilitate the strengthening of performance and accountability.

What we found

Health has appropriate systems in place to identify, address and monitor its workforce profile. Health has adopted a "report from the grass-roots level" approach to identifying gaps and issues. The data collected is analysed at all levels, through District reports to Area reports (until August 2008 when the restructure was announced) through to the Executive Management Team. To date, the systems and processes in place ensure that Health's decision makers are given timely information to make informed decisions.

Health's strong workforce planning framework supports the implementation of varied strategies across the agency to ensure they are working towards retaining existing workers, transferring key knowledge and skills and attracting new workers. Since the 2005 Forster Review, there has been much effort expended to address identified shortfalls within Health's workforce. The Department's ability to deal with shortages and issues as they arise, given the global shortage in trained medical and nursing practitioners is demonstrated through the variety of initiatives under development. Examples include the introduction of pilot programs for Physician's Assistant and Nurse Practitioner for rural and remote areas.

Reporting of results of projects and strategies are well monitored through appropriate forums, and ultimately by the Executive Management Team. Successes are being actively promoted with media coverage of initiatives, launches of initiatives and with updates available on Health's website. However, measurable targets were absent in planning documents. This could make the results of initiatives difficult to assess.

4.4.1 Identifying the challenges

What we looked for:
- Are there appropriate systems in place to forecast, monitor and plan for short, medium and long term:
  – workforce demographic trends (including retirement intentions)
  – demand trends
  – critical areas of projected shortage at aggregate and local levels?
- Are there appropriate mechanisms in place to convey this information to internal and external stakeholders?

Findings

At the highest level, the State-wide Health Services Plan outlines the direction for the Department. This plan is supplemented by the Health Action Plan and Queensland Health Strategic Plan. These key documents provide a framework which includes the Queensland Health People Plan (the People Plan).

The People Plan "*defines the strategic priorities and enablers that we must focus on, achieve and sustain for developing our people in a way that recognises and supports their role in the delivery of sustainable health services now and into the future*".

This Plan links to other key documents, such as the Leadership Development Program, Better Workplaces Staff Opinion Survey and Code of Conduct and drives the departmental focus on workforce development.

Prior to the most recent restructure, the People Plan directed action through its three strategic priorities and identified enablers, which flowed through to operational plans for Divisions, Area Health Services and Health Service Districts. Each priority and enabler provided further information through focus areas and actions, which were aimed at achieving the priority or enabler.

The Health Areas developed five-year Workforce Plans. This cycle commenced in 2007, and a review was planned for the end of 2008. To supplement each area plan, they developed an annual Implementation Plan, which summarised initiatives identified for action through the year. The Implementation Plan was endorsed by the Area Executive.

Area Plans, outlining details of the planning methodology used, included assumptions to projected service demand, workforce requirements and workforce supply. Information is collected from a myriad of sources such as Queensland Health databases, Minimum Obligatory Human Resource Information (MOHRI) and Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reports. The Areas conducted environmental scanning and included details in their Plans on anticipated population growth, ageing of the population, burden of disease, changing models of service delivery, and the labour market. Internally, statistics are gathered at the local district level. All hospitals, in each district conveyed workforce information through to their respective Area Workforce Planning Unit where it was collated and analysed.

A number of other internal reports monitor critical current and impending workforce issues. A whole-of-State clinical workforce analysis paper was developed detailing gaps in the future workforce. In addition, a state-wide Medical Vacancy Report is produced, which reports trends such as overall unfilled vacancies, unfilled vacancies by speciality, by district, critical versus non-critical vacancies, critical unfilled vacancies by level and specialty. The critical vacancy data is posted onto Health's website under the "Work for Us" section, providing vital information for job seekers in Queensland.

Prior to the restructure, information was conveyed from Area Health Services to their Area Executive, who reported key information through the Workforce Planning and Coordination Branch to the Department's Executive Management Team. It is yet to be determined how this information flow will change under the restructured Department.

4.4.2 Responding to the challenges

What we looked for:

Are appropriate strategies/systems in place to minimise the impact in critical areas to:

● encourage retention of mature workers (e.g. flexible work practices, rewards and recognition, redeployment, training and development, health and safety programs, information sessions for employees e.g. superannuation)

● ensure critical knowledge and skills are transferred / retained (e.g. succession planning, leadership programs, mentoring)

● attract/recruit new staff?

Findings

The planning framework guides each level of Health in establishing strategies for dealing with workforce challenges. Most of the key initiatives identified in the People Plan are driven by the Human Resources Branch, the Workforce Planning and Coordination Branch or the Workplace Culture and Leadership Centre, but initiated at the District level, so each project is specific to that region. Initiatives are linked to a strategic priority or enabler in the People Plan. This ensures that all efforts are directed to achieving the goals of the Department.

In the People Plan, Health states "*the way in which we recognise and manage our people will be a key factor in determining our ability to attract, retain and build our current and future workforce*".

With a global shortage of health professionals, the costs associated with recruiting staff are often greater than the cost of retaining staff. Health's primary focus is to retain those professionals already in its workforce. Retention strategies identified in the People Plan address the three priorities of Attracting and Retaining People, Building our Workforce and Creating a Positive Workplace Culture.

Some initiatives linked to these priorities that aim to retain staff, particularly mature workers include:

● *Maturity Matters*, an initiative developed by the Northern Area Health Service includes publications, web links, practical advice, and worker profiles "Mature Aged Staff Member (MASM) of the Month".

● Pilot stage of *Transition to Retirement*, a project that identifies important factors to older staff, such as a phased approach to retirement through flexible retirement options. If successful phase two, then possible implementation across Health will be considered.

● Pilot stage of *Grey Nomads Project*, a project where a four-wheel drive and caravan have been acquired for an officer, in semi-retirement, to move from hospital to hospital, relieving senior nurses – a win-win situation to enable rural nurses to have a break and a semi-retired nurse to travel and work his way around small towns he has not visited before.

Coupled with the approaches outlined above, Health continues to implement training programs aimed at increasing the knowledge of workers. Particular attention has been given to leadership programs across the Department. Many opportunities exist for all staff to participate in improving their skills. Varied training delivery modes are offered to staff who cannot travel due to distance or family obligations.

A Workforce Planning Skill Development Program was also implemented across the previous Area Health Services. This program allowed workforce planning officers to broaden their skills and ensured a more consistent approach to skills development and application in the workforce. As the restructure takes effect, the skills learned by staff participating in the Workforce Planning Skill Development Program will be absorbed into either the district offices, or corporate office.

Health has adopted both traditional and innovative recruitment practices. A large proportion of Health's workforce is tertiary trained. Health professionals can take from between three to 14 years to become trained and available for employment making predicting the incoming supply of clinicians difficult. Traditionally, Health has adopted a pipeline approach to recruitment in that they recruit from universities and maintain officers through the system to retirement if possible. Some pilot initiatives in the "hire to retire" pipeline include the introduction of the new roles of Physician's Assistant and Nurse Practitioners. These roles will particularly assist in rural and remote areas.

The challenge of rural and remote facilities, however, calls for a more creative approach. An example of Health's creativity is the *Rural Return to Nursing* recruiting program. Letter-box drops in a small rural town and its surrounding districts called on nurses currently not employed to reconsider their employment options. Another recruiting program targets nursing and midwifery practitioners.

4.4.3 Monitoring results

What we looked for:
- Are there appropriate systems in place to monitor and review the success of strategies implemented?
- Are there appropriate mechanisms in place to convey this information to internal and external stakeholders?

Findings

All strategies and initiatives link back to the People Plan. To date, progress has been reported to the HR Board regularly with details on each project and achievements to date.

Each level in the Department reports on its activities to the next level, up to the Executive Management Team. Work groups participate in information sharing forums and meetings and all documents are available on the intranet, with many available to the public via Health's website. Each quarter, Health is required to present Performance Reports to Parliament as result of the 2005 Forster review and subsequent changes to the *Health Services Act 1991*.

However, at all levels of the framework, objectives, strategies and initiatives were generally worded and did not contain specific targets to measure achievement.
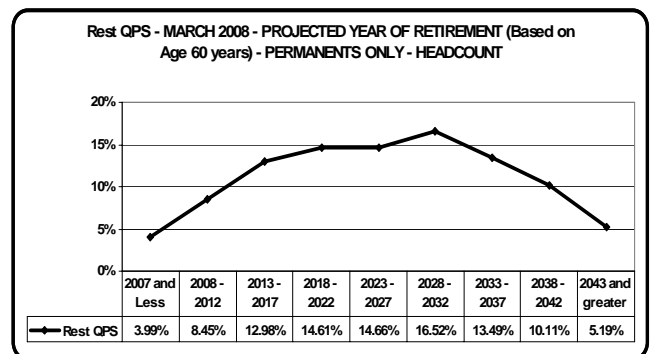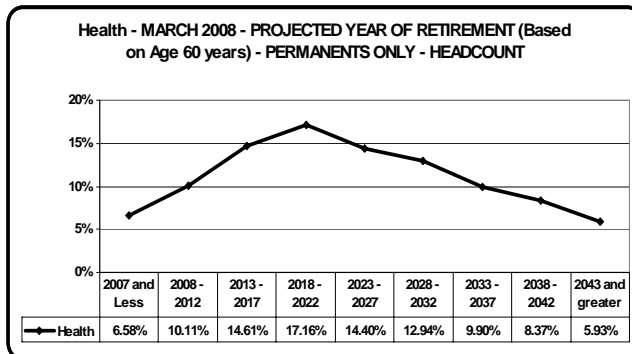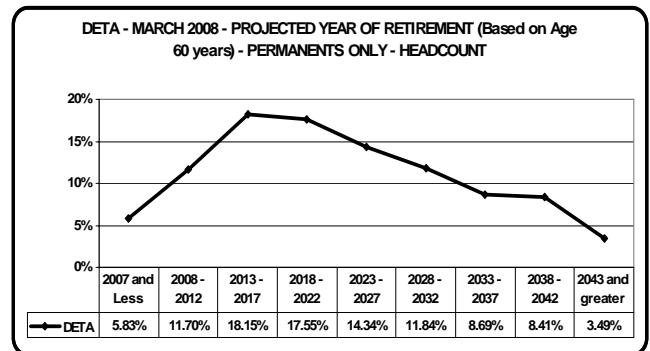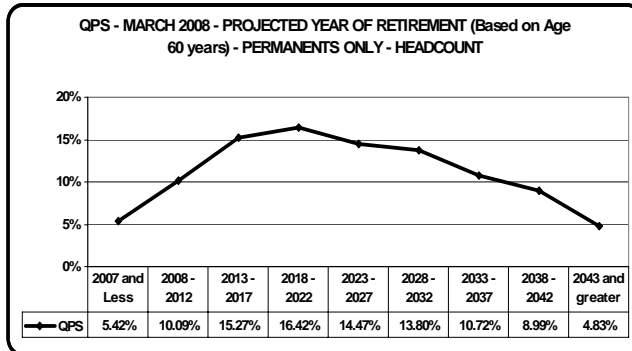
4.4.4 Recommendations for Health

4.   **It is recommended that the Department of Health develop a comprehensive suite of key performance indicators for inclusion in all planning documents, and promote a culture of defining and measuring successes.**

Section 5
Appendices

5.1 QPS projected retirement trends

QPS - MARCH 2008 - PROJECTED YEAR OF RETIREMENT (Based on Age 60 years) - PERMANENTS ONLY - HEADCOUNT

	2007 and Less	2008 - 2012	2013 - 2017	2018 - 2022	2023 - 2027	2028 - 2032	2033 - 2037	2038 - 2042	2043 and greater
QPS	5.42%	10.09%	15.27%	16.42%	14.47%	13.80%	10.72%	8.99%	4.83%

DETA - MARCH 2008 - PROJECTED YEAR OF RETIREMENT (Based on Age 60 years) - PERMANENTS ONLY - HEADCOUNT

	2007 and Less	2008 - 2012	2013 - 2017	2018 - 2022	2023 - 2027	2028 - 2032	2033 - 2037	2038 - 2042	2043 and greater
DETA	5.83%	11.70%	18.15%	17.55%	14.34%	11.84%	8.69%	8.41%	3.49%

Health - MARCH 2008 - PROJECTED YEAR OF RETIREMENT (Based on Age 60 years) - PERMANENTS ONLY - HEADCOUNT

	2007 and Less	2008 - 2012	2013 - 2017	2018 - 2022	2023 - 2027	2028 - 2032	2033 - 2037	2038 - 2042	2043 and greater
Health	6.58%	10.11%	14.61%	17.16%	14.40%	12.94%	9.90%	8.37%	5.93%

Rest QPS - MARCH 2008 - PROJECTED YEAR OF RETIREMENT (Based on Age 60 years) - PERMANENTS ONLY - HEADCOUNT

	2007 and Less	2008 - 2012	2013 - 2017	2018 - 2022	2023 - 2027	2028 - 2032	2033 - 2037	2038 - 2042	2043 and greater
Rest QPS	3.99%	8.45%	12.98%	14.61%	14.66%	16.52%	13.49%	10.11%	5.19%

These projections are based on the age of current permanent employees in 2007 and do not take into account temporary or casual employees.

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5.2.2 Publications

Service Delivery and Performance Commission 2008, *Report on the Service Delivery and Performance Management Review of the Office of the Public Service Commissioner*, Queensland Government, Brisbane.

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5.2.3 Legislation

Health Services Act 1991

Public Service Act 2008

5.2.4 Websites

www.deta.qld.gov.au	Department of Education, Training and the Arts
www.deir.qld.gov.au	Department of Employment and Industrial Relations
www.psc.qld.gov.au	Public Service Commissioner
www.health.qld.gov.au	Department of Health
www.health.qld.gov.au/nahs_workforce/mature.asp	Department of Health, *Maturity Matters* site
www.treasury.qld.gov.au	Queensland Treasury Department
www.abs.gov.au	Australian Bureau of Statistics
www.oecd.org	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
www.jobwise.com.au	An Australian Government site promoting mature age employment

Section 6
Publications

6.1 Publications

Publication	Date released
Annual Report 2008	October 2007
INFORM	
Issue 4 for 2008	August 2008
Issue 3 for 2008	June 2008
Issue 2 for 2008	April 2008
Issue 1 for 2008	February 2008
Guidelines	
Better Practice Guide — Risk Management	October 2007
Checklist for Organisational Change — Managing MOG Changes	September 2006
Checklist — Preparation of Financial Statements	August 2006
Better Practice Guide — Output Performance Measurement and Reporting	February 2006
Better Practice Guide — Strategies for earlier financial statement preparation	December 2005
Other	
Auditor-General of Queensland Auditing Standards	April 2007
Performance Management Systems Audits — An Overview	December 2006

6.2 Auditor-General's Reports to Parliament 2008

Report No.	Subject	Date tabled in the Legislative Assembly
1	Auditor-General's Report No. 1 for 2008 Enhancing Accountability through Annual Reporting A Performance Management Systems Audit	17 April 2008
2	Auditor-General's Report No. 2 for 2008 Results of 2006-07 Audits of Local Governments, including Aboriginal Shire and Torres Strait Island Councils	1 May 2008
3	Auditor-General's Report No. 3 for 2008 Management of Rural Fire Services in Queensland A Performance Management Systems Audit	15 May 2008
4	Auditor-General's Report No. 4 for 2008 Results of Audits as at 31 May 2008	8 July 2008
5	Auditor-General's Report No. 5 for 2008 Protecting Queensland's primary industries and environment from pests and disease A Performance Management Systems Audit	26 August 2008
6	Auditor-General's Report No. 6 for 2008 Follow-up audit of Workforce Planning at Departments of Education, Training and the Arts and Health, incorporating their responses to an ageing workforce A Performance Management Systems Audit	October 2008

Queensland Audit Office publications are available at www.qao.qld.gov.au or by phone on (07) 3405 1100