

Queensland State Budget 2008–09

Western Queensland

Regional Budget Statement



Image courtesy of Tourism Queensland

Porcupine Gorge National Park near Hughenden

Queensland is experiencing the most sustained period of economic and population growth in its history.

In shaping the 2008-09 Budget, the Government has chosen to build tomorrow's Queensland today.

The State's prosperity is generating unprecedented demand for housing, healthcare, schools, transport, other essential services and vital infrastructure throughout Queensland's regions.

The Budget delivers massive injections of funding to our public hospitals and healthcare system. It funds the biggest capital works program in the State's history.



Anna Bligh MP
Premier

It increases services to the regions and delivers vital long-term social and economic infrastructure for the benefit of all Queenslanders.



A centrepiece of this Budget is tax cuts to help Queenslanders purchase their first home.

Queensland's success is built on the success of our regions, from the fast-paced expansion of the south-east corner to the agricultural heartlands, the booming hubs of mining activity and the vibrant growth of coastal areas.

This document sets out the Government's investment commitment to address the changing needs of the Western Queensland region.

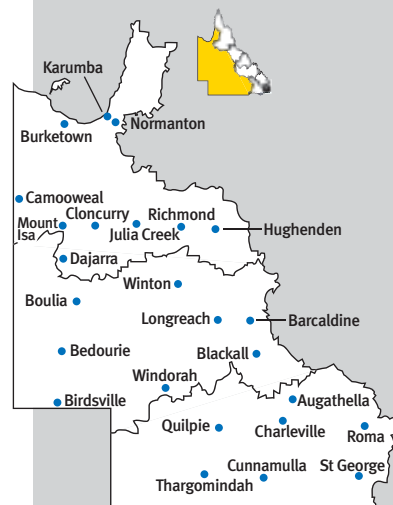
Andrew Fraser MP
Treasurer

State-wide Highlights

Key priorities of the 2008-09 Budget are congestion management, housing affordability, delivering on the Health Action Plan and strengthened community services.

- Tax savings of up to \$9,500 for first homebuyers
- Full abolition of mortgage duty from 1 July 2008
- Record 17% increase in health spending
- Increased rebates and tax breaks for older Queenslanders
- 200 new police officers
- 250 new ambulance officers and 145 new vehicles
- 270 new teachers
- \$100 million boost for school maintenance over two years through the Tomorrow's Schools initiative
- \$20 million for ClimateSmart Home Services
- \$20 million increase to develop community sport and recreation facilities
- \$5.9 million boost to support front-line child protection workers

Western Queensland



Every five years the Census provides a snapshot of Australian society. It measures many characteristics including our age and



birthplace, language spoken and religion, if we need



assistance to perform everyday activities or to participate in community life, the work we do (paid or unpaid) and how we get there.

What did the 2006 Census reveal about **your** community? Take a look below for a snapshot of life in the Western Queensland region.

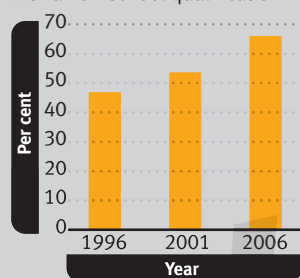
The work we do

Foremen, engineers, mine surveyors, sales representatives, nurses, carers – Western Queensland residents work in a diverse range of jobs. Census data shows almost one-fifth of people living in the Western Queensland region are employed in the agriculture, forestry and fishing industry, while the mining industry accounts for 9.8% of employment. Public administration (9.6%), retail trade (8.8%) and healthcare and social assistance (8.8%) are the other major employment industries in the region.

Our qualifications

Skilled workers are on the increase in Queensland's least populated region. Just over 66%¹ of people living in Western Queensland now hold 'beyond' school qualifications - that's a 19 percentage point increase from the 1996 Census (see graph). Of these qualifications, 18.5% are degree or higher, 10.4% are advanced diploma or diploma and 38.4% are certificate level. One-third of Western Queensland residents who identified with having a 'beyond' school qualification did not indicate the level of education received.

Beyond school qualifications
% of persons 15 years and over with a non-school qualification



How much we earn

We've certainly noticed an increase in the cost of living over the years, and as it rises so too does our income. At the time of the 1996 Census, the median weekly household income for the Western Queensland region was \$623. In 2006 the median weekly income for households in our region was \$1,004 – that's 61.3% more than we earned 10 years earlier³.

¹ Aged 15 years and over with a usual residence in the Western Queensland region at the time of the 2006 Census.

² 'Beyond' school qualification referred to as non-school qualifications in Census data.

³ Based on 2006 Census data.

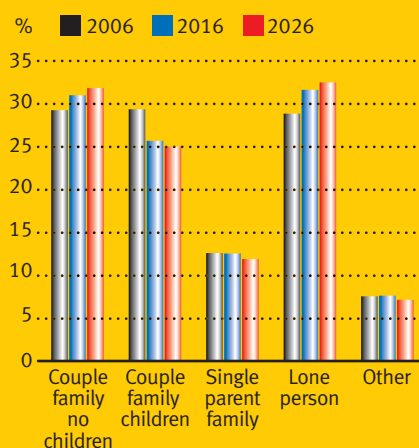
Household projections

Families come in all shapes and sizes and between now and 2026 we can expect to see a lot more of them. But what type of family will occupy most Queensland homes? For the last decade most Queensland households have consisted of couples with children. However household projections forecast that, over the next decade and beyond, the make-up of homes throughout our State will dramatically change.

Throughout our State an ageing population, declining fertility rates among younger couples, and baby boomers becoming 'empty nesters' will result in the number of couples without children and lone person households taking over as the most common types.

Take a look to the right to see how households in the Western Queensland region are likely to change between now and 2026.

Western Queensland
Household composition



Source: Data are based on medium series projections and are sourced from Department of Infrastructure and Planning, Population, Information and Forecasting Unit, Household projections Queensland Local Government Areas 2007.

Covering a whopping 1,002,655 square kilometres or 57.8% of the State, Western Queensland is by far the largest of Queensland's regions – and also our least populous. Home to 1.7% of Queensland's total population, almost 70,900¹ Queenslanders call Western Queensland home.

Blazing heat, vast sweeping plains, a rich pioneering history and a unique natural history are just some of this region's attractions.

A mining hub, Western Queensland's coal production, agriculture, forestry, construction and retail trade industries to name but a few are now driving its economy.

The Queensland Government recognises the role Western Queensland has played in increasing our State's prosperity and sustaining its economic and social growth.

This Regional Budget Statement highlights the Government's commitment to our region and its people.

¹ Population data as at 30 June 2007, Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Regional Population Growth* (cat no 3218.0).

The national Census telling it like it is

Healthy individuals and communities

We are committed to improving and sustaining the health and wellbeing of all Queenslanders by investing in infrastructure and services that will strengthen our public health system, promote healthier lifestyles and enhance confidence and safety in our communities.

As part of the Government's continued commitment to meet the growing needs of the community, in 2008-09, spending on health infrastructure and initiatives in Western Queensland will include:

- \$8 million of the \$65.2 million to expand the emergency department and provide new outpatient and primary and community health facilities at the Mount Isa hospital.
- \$7.5 million for the \$11.4 million upgrade to staff accommodation at Roma Hospital
- \$4 million for new airconditioning at the Mount Isa Hospital
- \$500,000 to redevelop the Dajarra and Burketown Clinics
- replacement and refurbishment of health facilities at Barcaldine and Winton as part of \$35.5 million over three years under the Rural Enhancement Program.

Western Queensland will also benefit from a number of emergency services infrastructure initiatives including:

- \$4.5 million to replace the Charleville Police Station and watchhouse and convert the existing station into a District Office
- \$1.3 million to replace the ambulance station at Clermont
- \$930,000 to replace the ambulance station for Julia Creek
- \$500,000 to complete the Longreach Police Station refurbishment
- \$400,000 for a replacement auxiliary fire and rescue station for Bollon.

The Government will continue its support for those in our community who are most vulnerable with commitments for the Western Queensland region in 2008-09 including:

- \$5.9 million for the Home and Community Care Initiative
- \$2.6 million for community development services including a diversionary centre, community centre-based activities and support services
- \$2.1 million over four years to establish new residential care facilities to accommodate young people with complex and extreme behaviours

- \$2 million for youth development services to build independent living skills
- \$1.2 million to support people with a disability through a range of programs
- \$800,000 over four years to establish additional out-of-home care placements for children in care
- \$200,000 towards for short-term and time-limited respite support for families of people with a disability.

Building infrastructure

Planning and delivering the infrastructure needed to provide essential and efficient services to our rapidly growing communities – now and in the future – is one of our key priorities.

The Government's commitment to the Western Queensland region to secure and enhance the reliability of energy supply in 2008-09 includes investment of \$17 million comprising \$14 million to reinforce the Roma bulk supply point and \$3 million to continue the Windorah PhotoVoltaic Solar Cell Project.

Other key infrastructure initiatives in 2008-09 include:

- \$12.5 million to improve the Mica Creek power station to ensure ongoing reliability and efficiency of electricity supply
- \$10 million towards a \$107 million driver-activated points project along the Mount Isa line to slash travel times in the northern mineral province.

Regional development

Regional development is at the heart of Queensland's economic future and the Government is laying the foundation for future economic growth and prosperity for all Queenslanders by responding to the growth needs of the region. The Government remains committed to delivering key infrastructure and rural economic development initiatives that facilitate the creation of a sustainable, liveable and prosperous rural Queensland.

In 2008-09 we will deliver the following key infrastructure and regional development initiatives in Western Queensland:

- \$8 million to upgrade the Mount Isa terminal reservoir pump station to improve water supply
- \$7.5 million towards replacing the Ward River and Woolshed Gully bridges on the

Diamantina Developmental Road, west of Charleville

- \$480,000 to construct a new lane boat ramp at Karumba Point and an additional lane to the ramp at Norman River
- \$370,000 for stage three of the Hughenden CBD revitalisation through the Rural Living Infrastructure Program
- \$364,000 to improve the reliability and supply of water for the supply augmentation and disinfection of the bore and mains at Roma
- \$320,000 for the St George sewerage treatment plant.

In 2008-09 the Government will undertake strategic infrastructure planning and deliver infrastructure to meet the expected demands of the Queensland coal industry under the Coal Infrastructure Plan of Actions.

Economic growth

Queensland's economic growth is supported by rising productivity and increasing labour force participation. The Government remains committed to expanding the productive capacity of the Queensland economy through initiatives that develop infrastructure, promote education and training and facilitate research and innovation.



Helping Queenslanders under financial pressure

With household budgets under increasing stress from rising interest rates, higher rents and mounting grocery and fuel prices, the Government is committed to taking the pressure off Queensland families.

Each year the Government offers relief to many Queenslanders through discounts, rebates and subsidies to help improve their access to, and meet the cost of, a range of services including discounted rail and taxi fares, reduced car registration costs, exemption from the community ambulance levy and cheaper electricity bills. In 2008-09 these concessions are estimated to have a total value of around \$1 billion.

However the Queensland Government recognises more and more families are 'doing it tough' and is acting on its commitment to help Queenslanders make ends meet.

On top of the existing concessions, the 2008-09 State Budget sees the implementation of a major housing affordability strategy that will provide relief for Queenslanders who are buying or renting their homes.

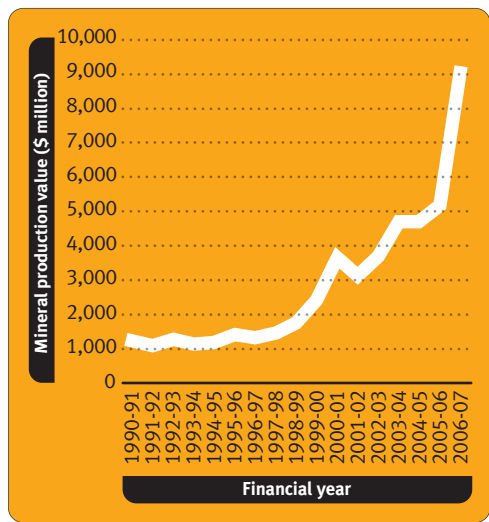
The Government will also spend \$570 million in 2008-09 in further relief as it tackles the rising cost of fuel by ensuring all Queenslanders receive the full 8.354 cents per litre fuel subsidy.



Mica Creek power station

The Government's commitment to the Western Queensland region to secure and enhance the reliability and efficiency of its energy supply includes \$12.5 million to improve the Mica Creek power station.

Value of mineral production 1990-91 to 2006-07



Commitments to Western Queensland in 2008-09 include:

- \$18.2 million to provide over 814,000 hours of vocational education and training, including \$300,000 to provide additional trades training places as part of the Queensland Skills Plan. This is expected to create an additional 430 training places in Western Queensland by 2010
- \$2.7 million to maximise workforce participation opportunities through the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative to provide employment and training assistance to help 190 people into the workforce.

Other initiatives to stimulate economic growth in the region include:

- \$7.4 million to complete widening, strengthening and repairing the Flinders Highway at Jardine Valley, west of Charters Towers
- \$5.5 million to complete paving and sealing the Wills Developmental Road between Gregory and Doomadgee turnoff
- \$5 million to continue paving and sealing sections of the Roma–Taroom Road, north east of Roma
- \$3.1 million for paving and sealing three sections of the Diamantina Developmental Road between Windorah and Bedourie
- \$2.5 million to replace components of the Lake Moondarra pipeline.

Closing the gap with Indigenous communities

The Queensland Government in partnership with the Australian Government, is committed to closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians through innovative programs such as \$3.6 million in grants to 42 Community Justice Groups to empower Indigenous communities to tackle social and justice issues. An additional \$1.7 million to continue a two-year pilot of five Murri Courts, including one at Mount Isa.

The Government is also investing in the health, safety and wellbeing of Western Queensland Indigenous communities through a range of measures including:

- \$12.2 million in grants to build, upgrade and maintain homes in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- \$7.2 million over four years including \$2.7 million in capital funding to strengthen

- child protection services by establishing safe house residential care facilities on Mornington Island and in Doomadgee for children unable to return to their families
- \$4.1 million to build, purchase or upgrade homes and purchase land for future homes for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Rental Program, and to complete construction of 19 homes in Indigenous communities
- \$800,000 State-wide to enhance Indigenous agribusiness development with four initiatives in Western Queensland
- \$600,000 for the Safe Haven initiative on Mornington Island to respond to the safety needs of young people affected by family and domestic violence in Indigenous communities
- the employment of four Indigenous Employment and Training Support Officers to support trainees and maximise employment opportunities for Indigenous jobseekers.

Housing affordability

The Queensland Government is committed to improving housing affordability for those Queenslanders hardest hit by the current economic environment.

In addition to the substantial tax relief to be introduced by the Government in 2008-09 for first home buyers, low-income families and individuals in the Western Queensland region will receive housing services and support in 2008-09 in the form of \$4.9 million to construct, purchase and upgrade public housing and to purchase land for future construction of public housing. This will involve purchasing or completing construction of over 10 homes and commencing a further 19 homes. A further \$1.8 million will be provided for community housing programs and services.



The National Bilby Festival and Threatened Species Week, Charleville

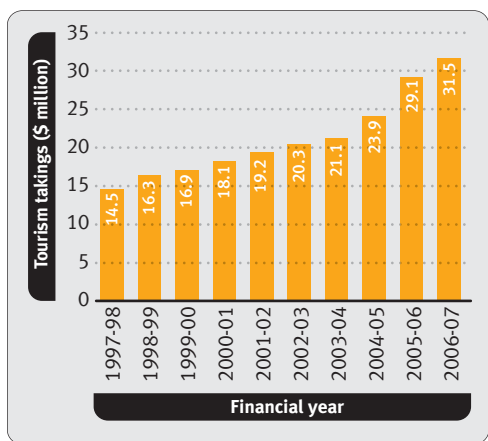
Held in September each year, Threatened Species Week incorporates the National Bilby Festival and aims to raise the awareness of bilbies and other threatened Australian species through educational and fun activities. Above, Frank Manthey and Peter McRae (Cofounders of Save the Bilby Fund Ltd) receive a donation from John Tolmie (Chief Executive Officer, Darrell Lea Chocolates).



Image courtesy of Save the Bilby Fund

Tourism

Takings, 1997-98 to 2006-07



Education and early childhood development

Giving every child every chance to learn in the best possible environment is a priority for the Government. This is reflected in our 2008-09 commitment to the Western Queensland region of an additional \$3.2 million for maintenance programs in schools. A further \$1.95 million will be spent on electrical upgrades and replacement of airconditioners at Spinifex State College Junior Campus and Cloncurry, Cunnamulla, Happy Valley, Julia Creek and Hughenden state schools.

Prevention and early intervention

The Government is focused on developing and supporting prevention and early intervention strategies or initiatives that are targeted to disadvantaged areas, individuals and/or population groups.

In 2008-09 the Government will commit \$1.6 million to support Western Queensland families, including early intervention to improve the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children and their families. A further \$500,000 over four years is committed for a Family Intervention Service which will strengthen child protection services by providing direct support to families in their own home.

Managing climate change and protecting the environment

The Government is committed to minimising harm to the environment by using and promoting modern and effective environmental management techniques. This is reflected in its \$290,000 investment in upgrading the Pyramid campground and day-use area of Porcupine Gorge National Park.

In 2008-09 the Government has allocated \$30 million for new climate change initiatives from the proceeds of the Queensland Climate Change Fund. The first major initiative of the Climate Change Fund will be the ClimateSmart Home Service which will provide Queenslanders with tools to monitor and reduce their energy use to deliver savings in household electricity costs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The Government will also provide \$4.2 million to help primary producers in Western Queensland adapt to climate change and support those impacted by drought in the short term.

Queensland State Budget Highlights 2008–09

Budget summary

Strong economic growth maintains record low unemployment

- Economic growth in Queensland is forecast to strengthen to 4¼% in 2008-09, outstripping the nation for the 13th year in a row.
- With jobs growth again outpacing the nation, the unemployment rate is estimated to fall to a 34-year low of 3¾% in 2007-08 and remain there in 2008-09, taking it below the national rate for the fifth consecutive year.

Strong finances

- A General Government operating surplus of \$809 million is forecast in 2008-09.
- The State's net worth is budgeted to grow from \$123 billion at 30 June 2008 to over \$140 billion by 30 June 2012 – reflecting Queensland's position of holding the strongest balance sheet in the nation.
- Interest expenses in the General Government sector is budgeted at just 1.5% of revenue in 2008-09.

Competitive taxes

- Queensland maintains its competitive tax status, with taxpayers in other states and territories to pay an average of \$274 more state tax each than Queenslanders in 2008-09.
- The 2008-09 Budget provides tax relief to make housing more affordable. From 1 July 2008, the home and first home transfer duty concession thresholds will be increased from \$320,000 to \$350,000. The first home concession threshold will be further increased from 1 September so that no transfer duty will be payable on a first home valued up to \$500,000.
- Mortgage duty will be abolished in full from 1 July 2008 – another saving to those taking out home loans.
- There are also land tax cuts, including specific measures to benefit Queensland's elderly such as exempting aged-care facilities.
- While already having the nation's lowest pay-roll tax rate, further relief will benefit 6,800 businesses in Queensland.

Delivering for Queensland

The 2008-09 State Budget delivers a massive boost to health, with a record Budget allocation of \$8.352 billion.

The Budget funds new hospitals and upgrades at locations across the State. Areas of increasing demand such as emergency departments and birthing services are a key focus.

There is a \$100 million boost to school maintenance to deliver a record program for the next two years – part of the \$6 billion Budget allocation to the Department of Education and Training. This funding includes 270 new teachers and teacher aides to meet enrolment growth and 4,250 additional trade training places to help address skills shortages.

To boost front-line services, 200 new police and 250 new ambulance officers are funded. The Budget also provides for 145 new ambulance vehicles as part of a record emergency services allocation.

A new \$20 million ClimateSmart Home Service will assist Queensland households to meet the challenges of climate change.

An increase in the electricity rebate and other tax breaks will assist older Queenslanders.

With tax cuts to assist Queenslanders break into home ownership, this is a Budget focussed on the future and delivering the front-line services a growing state needs.

Government services in Western Queensland

Aramac

QGAP

Gordon Street
Aramac QLD 4726
Email aramac.qgap@qld.gov.au
Telephone 4651 3014
Facsimile 4651 3000
Opening hours: Monday to Friday – 9am to 1pm then 2pm to 4.45pm

Augathella

QGAP

Augathella Visitors Centre
98 Main Street
Augathella QLD 4477
Email augathella.qgap@qld.gov.au
Telephone 4654 5007
Facsimile 4654 5009
Opening hours: Monday to Thursday – 9.30am to 3.30pm and Fridays 9.30am to 4pm

Barcaldine

QGAP

Barcaldine Court House
Ash Street
Barcaldine QLD 4725
Email courthouse.barcaldine@justice.qld.gov.au
Telephone 4651 1191
Facsimile 4651 2021
Opening hours: Monday to Friday – 9am to 4.30pm

Bedourie

QGAP

Police Station
Merri Street
Bedourie QLD 4829
Email QGAPBedourie@police.qld.gov.au
Telephone 4746 1128
Facsimile 4746 1266
Opening hours: Monday and Friday only – 8.30am to 5pm Closed for lunch 12.30 to 1pm

Birdsville

QGAP

Police Station
MacDonald Street
Birdsville QLD 4482
Email QGAPBirdsville@police.qld.gov.au
Telephone 4656 3310
Facsimile 4656 3312
Opening hours: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday – 9am to 1pm
Closed Tuesday

Blackall

QGAP

Shamrock Street
Blackall QLD 4472
Telephone 4657 4233
Facsimile 4657 4908
Opening hours: Monday to Friday – 9am to 4.30pm

Boulia

QGAP

Boulia Police Station
Herbert Street
Boulia QLD 4829
Email QGAPBoulia@police.qld.gov.au
Telephone 4746 3043
Facsimile 4746 3338
Opening hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday – 9am to 1pm

Camooweal

QGAP

Barkly Street
Camooweal QLD 4828
Email camooweal.qgap@qld.gov.au
Telephone 4748 2025
Facsimile 4748 2026
Opening hours: Monday to Friday – 9am to 5pm
Saturday – 9am to 12pm

Cunnamulla

QGAP

5 Stockyard Street
Cunnamulla QLD 4490
Telephone 4655 1131
Facsimile 4655 1687
Opening hours: Monday to Friday – 8.30am to 5pm
Closed for lunch 1pm to 2pm

Dirranbandi

QGAP

35 - 37 Railway Street
Dirranbandi QLD 4486
Email dirranbandi.qgap@qld.gov.au
Telephone 4625 8411
Facsimile 4625 8433
Opening hours: Monday to Friday – 10am to 4pm
Closed for lunch 12.30 to 1.30

Hughenden

QGAP

65 Brodie Street
Hughenden QLD 4821
Telephone 4741 1735
Facsimile 4741 1412
Opening hours: Monday to Friday – 8.30am to 4.30pm

Injune

QGAP

C/- Injune Library
Hutton Street
Injune QLD 4454
Email injune.qgap@qld.gov.au
Telephone 4626 1546
Facsimile 4626 1099
Opening hours: Mon-Tues – 1.30 to 5pm, Wed – 9am to 1pm, Thurs – 11.30am to 5pm, Fri – 11am to 5pm

Isisford

QGAP

Police Station
St Mary Street
Isisford QLD 4731
Email QGAPIsisford@police.qld.gov.au
Telephone 4658 8153
Facsimile 4658 8183
Opening hours: Wednesday and Thursday – 8am to 5pm

Julia Creek

QGAP

Burke Street
Julia Creek QLD 4823
Email courthouse.juliacreek@justice.qld.gov.au
Telephone 4746 7162
Facsimile 4746 7338
Opening hours: Monday, Tuesday, Friday – 9am to 4.30pm
Wednesday, Thursday – 9am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 4.30pm

Jundah

QGAP

Police Station
Dickson Street
Jundah QLD 4736
Email QGAPJundah@police.qld.gov.au
Telephone 4658 6193
Facsimile 4658 6180
Opening hours: Monday, Wednesday – 9am to 1.30pm
Friday – 9am to 12.30pm and 1pm to 4.30pm

Mitchell

QGAP

Cnr Mary & Dublin Streets
Mitchell QLD 4465
Email courthouse.mitchell@justice.qld.gov.au
Telephone 4623 1106
Facsimile 4623 1510
Opening hours: Monday to Friday – 9am to 12.30pm, 1.30pm to 4.30pm

Mount Isa

Department of Tourism, Regional Development and Industry

75 Camooweal Street
Mount Isa QLD 4825
Telephone 4747 2144
Facsimile 4747 2166
Opening hours: Monday to Friday – 8.30am to 5pm

Normanton

QGAP

Haig Street
Normanton QLD 4890
Email courthouse.normanton@justice.qld.gov.au
Telephone 4745 1177
Facsimile 4745 1393
Opening hours: Monday to Friday – 9am to 4.45pm

Richmond

QGAP

Goldring Street
Richmond QLD 4822
Email courthouse.richmond@justice.qld.gov.au
Telephone 4741 3227
Facsimile 4741 3721
Opening hours: Monday to Friday – 9am to 12.30pm, 1.30pm to 4.30pm

St George

QGAP

The Terrace,
St George QLD 4487
Email courthouse.stgeorge@justice.qld.gov.au
Telephone 4625 3266
Facsimile 4625 3180
Opening hours: Monday to Friday – 9am to 4.30pm

Surat

QGAP

70 Burrowes Street
Surat QLD 4417
Email surat.qgap@qld.gov.au
Telephone 4626 5523
Facsimile 4626 5507
Opening hours: Monday to Friday – 9am to 4.30pm

Thargomindah

QGAP

Police Station
Dowling Street
Thargomindah QLD 4492
Email QGAPThargomindah@police.qld.gov.au
Telephone 4655 3291
Facsimile 4655 3224
Opening hours: Monday to Thursday – 8am to 12pm

Windorah

QGAP

Police Station
Victoria Street
Windorah QLD 4481
Email QGAPWindorah@police.qld.gov.au
Telephone 4656 3171
Facsimile 4656 3172
Opening hours: Monday and Wednesday – 8am to 11am
Tuesday and Thursday – 2pm to 5pm
Friday – 8am to 12pm

Winton

QGAP

Courthouse
59 Vindex Street
Winton QLD 4735
Email qgwinton@transport.qld.gov.au
Telephone 4657 1536
Facsimile 4657 1583
Opening hours: Monday to Friday – 8.30am to 4pm

Other services

Smart Service Queensland

For information on all other Government services call 13 13 04 www.qld.gov.au

State Emergency Service

Telephone 132 500

13 HEALTH

Telephone 13 43 25 84

