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Nearly 30% of Queensland Public Servants Earn \$120,000 or More, Report Reveals

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Queensland's 2025 State of the Sector report reveals that 28.2 percent of public servants earn at least \$120,000 annually, amid 5 percent workforce growth to over 320,000 employees. The report highlights rising salaries and workforce expansion and raises questions about fiscal sustainability and government priorities.

Released on July 28, 2025, the report from the Public Sector Commission shows the state public service now employs around 322,600 workers, up from 308,033 in March 2024, equating to approximately 270,883 full-time equivalent roles. Health sector staff drove

much of this expansion, with full time equivalent nurses and midwives increasing by 6.04 percent, doctors by 8.42 percent, and ambulance officers by 5.19 percent. Employment in corporate areas such as legal services and human resources rose by 3.45 percent, while frontline services such as police, firefighters and teachers grew by 4.02 percent, and frontline support roles like clerks and security officers increased by 7.56 percent.

Notably, 64,500 public servants, approximately one in five, earn between \$120,000 and \$149,999, a 38 percent jump from the 46,753 reported the previous year. Overall, 44.7 percent of the workforce earns at least \$100,000, and the state budget forecasts a \$38 billion wage bill for 2025 to 2026, rising to \$42 billion by 2028 to 2029.

The commissioner defended the growth in staffing and wages, noting these staff deliver essential public services daily. Critics, including taxpayer advocates, argue that high salaries for nearly a third of public servants do not align with economic conditions and may strain public finances. Unions have urged higher pay increases, while the government projects salary growth capped at 3.5 percent annually, a slower pace than union demands and below broader wage inflation forecasts.

This report, the first under the new Liberal National Party government, underscores inherited spending commitments and raises questions about sustainability. With the public service now Queensland's largest employer, the ballooning wage bill has renewed calls for stricter oversight and value-for-money reforms. The budget also includes a targeted \$3 billion savings plan aimed at reducing reliance on external consultants, even as the government plans to add over 6,000 new roles in the coming year.

As the commission commits to annual, more transparent reporting, Queenslanders are asking whether the public service can maintain essential services while ensuring responsible use of taxpayer funds. Ongoing scrutiny and public accountability are seen as key to balancing fair pay with fiscal prudence.