

Lauren Pearce



“It wasn’t always my intention to pursue a career in public policy but I’m very happy to have found my niche in the Policy division of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet because it is such a dynamic and challenging environment.

I’m never bored, there are always opportunities to work on new projects and I get to work with a diverse range of really great and influential people. They are incredibly passionate people who are effecting real change in our society for the benefit of Queenslanders.

During my twelve months in the graduate program, I had the chance to work in various departments including Queensland Health where I engaged directly with stakeholders acting on behalf of people in rural, remote and Indigenous communities. My role involved coordinating the negotiation of service delivery between the hospital and health services and the Australian Government.

Whatever the department and whatever the policy an officer may be working on, there are some common guiding principles that will apply. Policy requires community engagement, consultation and effective communication.

Community engagement is especially important when it comes to changes to health policy for example, because it’s the consumer who is directly impacted. All of this occurs within a broader, overarching framework of government priorities. It’s not about you saving the world—you’re not a lone crusader. On the contrary, you have to take on a broad range of viewpoints and work with a number of other people with ideas just as brilliant as yours!

One of the more interesting roles I have had involved supporting the Executive Council and the then Governor of Queensland, Her Excellency Penelope Wensley AC. I worked on constitutional matters including swearing-in ceremonies and reviewing petitions for pardon that the Governor received. This was during my time in Constitutional and Administrative Law

Services, in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. I must confess that I enjoyed the ceremonial aspects of this work, the Governor’s signing of documents with special fountain pens, all the protocols and formalities of Government House.

I’ve also worked in the department’s performance and delivery area, monitoring the implementation of government priorities and commitments. Currently, I’m working in Social Policy on the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and liquor portfolios. The latter role has included working on strategies to address alcohol and drug-related violence—a pressing issue in Queensland communities. So, something that I’d argue is important in this field is creativity, because we are leaders in innovation. Policy officers also need to have good analytical minds because you need to think through how the changes you’re proposing will impact people in our communities.

One of the benefits of working in policy in a central agency is the opportunity to network at a high level early on in your career. And then there’s the impact that you are able to have. For example, working as

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part of a team on a piece of work that you’ve put your heart and soul into and seeing that policy or initiative being effective in the real world—that’s incredibly gratifying.

So, you can see that for someone who’s still in the early part of her career, I’ve already had a great range of opportunities and experience, both in terms of the roles and work units, and working across departments. To anyone contemplating a career in policy I’d say, just say go for it. It’s satisfying, you get to effect change for the better in the lives of your fellow Queenslanders, and it offers some of the best opportunities to learn and grow and develop your career.

Whether it’s the Public Service generally, or policy specifically that interests you, aim to enter through our graduate program because you will get opportunities, experience, mentoring and support that you wouldn’t get otherwise. As to my future, I intend to remain in the public sector indefinitely because the work is always interesting and challenging, the people are great, as are the conditions.”

Policy Officer—Social Policy

Tertiary education: Bachelor of Social Science (Health and Society), University of Queensland



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