

“My first full-time job was at Treasury Casino where I worked as a croupier dealing blackjack. I then completed a Bachelor of Business degree majoring in accountancy. While this may seem like an unusual progression, given that I’ve always had an affinity for numbers it’s actually a pretty natural one.

After that I worked in construction for a number of years as a truss and frame designer. I guess it must be a pretty obscure profession because, when it came to filling out my tax form, there wasn’t a box to tick for what I did.

I joined the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) as part of the 2012 graduate intake. My first rotation was in Financial Services, in financial accounting and strategic management accounting, and I also worked in procurement. I then had the opportunity to do an external rotation in a line agency, in education. There I was offered a contract opportunity at a higher pay level at a time of uncertainty in the job market, so naturally I took up the offer.

Next, a vacancy became available and was offered to me at DPC in the Office of the Deputy Director General – Policy, for a business management role. So it’s been a long and interesting road back to my initial interest—economic policy—enabling me to acquire a breadth of experience and develop my networks along the way.

Networking is crucial in the policy area because it’s about knowing where to get information, knowing who to talk to, knowing how to get things done. And that broad experience I gained early on also helped me to see and understand where we fit in within the department, how the whole area works, how the department functions across divisions, providing essential context. Also, because of the diversity of the work in the department you never know when the skills you are developing today are going to be of benefit in the future, in another role. Nothing is ever wasted.

A definite highlight of my policy career so far has been working with the Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games on preparations for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games. The Games are going to be huge for Queensland with important policy work focusing on maximising

the legacy. This is something that I believe is as important, perhaps more so, than the Games itself, as a good legacy strategy will help ensure that Queenslanders continue to reap the benefits for generations to come.

Policy work is just so varied and draws on many skills including and especially, the ability to succinctly summarise in less than a page, what’s important in a submission. At times you’re condensing hundreds of pages down to just key points, looking at why this matters to Queenslanders, why do we need this policy, what’s going to change for Queensland?

To anyone considering embarking on a career in policy, I’d say what makes this work so satisfying is that you can actually make a difference, even early on as a graduate you get to voice your view. You’re

in a position where you’re writing the summary that sits on top of every single policy submission that is read by the Premier and every member of Cabinet, and what goes into that single piece of paper, the ‘Yellow’ is what helps them make their decisions.

In terms of skills you’d want to take to the table or need to develop, together with written and oral communication skills, analytical thinking is very important as are skills in problem solving and consultation. Vital too is the ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with your colleagues and collaborators in other departments as well as stakeholders.

The career opportunities on offer in policy are rewarding and diverse. For example, I’m currently on a three-month exchange program with a leading professional services firm. It’s a terrific opportunity to transfer my skill set in the private-sector environment. It’s also a chance to expand my networks and just a great opportunity all-round.”

“...what makes this work so satisfying is that you can actually make a difference, even early on as a graduate you get to voice your view.”

Nathan Dummer



Policy Officer—Economic Policy
Tertiary education: Bachelor of Business (Accountancy)



Queensland Government