



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT

Tuesday, 16 August 2016

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TUESDAY, 16 AUGUST 2016

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.



Mr Speaker (Hon. Peter Wellington, Nicklin) read prayers and took the chair.

For the sitting week, Mr Speaker acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land upon which this parliament is assembled.

ASSENT TO BILLS



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from His Excellency the Governor and His Excellency the Acting Governor letters in respect of assent to certain bills. The contents of the letter will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the letter for the information of members.

The Honourable P.W. Wellington MP
 Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
 Parliament House
 George Street
 BRISBANE QLD 4000

I hereby acquaint the Legislative Assembly that the following Bills, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, were assented to in the name of Her Majesty The Queen on the date shown:

Date of assent: 20 June 2016

“A Bill for an Act to amend the Mental Health Act 2016, the Racing Act 2002 and the Racing Integrity Act 2016 for particular purposes”

“A Bill for an Act to amend the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities (Justice, Land and Other Matters) Act 1984, the Electricity Act 1994, the Government Owned Corporations Act 1993 and the Judicial Review Act 1991 for particular purposes”

These Bills are hereby transmitted to the Legislative Assembly, to be numbered and forwarded to the proper Officer for enrolment, in the manner required by law.

Yours sincerely
 Governor

20 June 2016

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 20 June 2016, from His Excellency the Governor to the Speaker advising of assent to certain bills on 20 June 2016 [[1090](#)].

The Honourable P.W. Wellington MP
 Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
 Parliament House
 George Street
 BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Speaker

I hereby acquaint the Legislative Assembly that the following Bills, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, were assented to in the name of Her Majesty The Queen on the date shown:

Date of assent: 27 June 2016

“A Bill for an Act to amend the Duties Act 2001 and the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000 for particular purposes”

“A Bill for an Act to amend the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992, the Public Guardian Act 2014, the Youth Justice Act 1992 and the Acts mentioned in schedule 1 for particular purposes”

“A Bill for an Act to amend the Childrens Court Act 1992, the Corrective Services Act 2006, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the Youth Justice Act 1992 and the Acts mentioned in schedule 1 for particular purposes”

These Bills are hereby transmitted to the Legislative Assembly, to be numbered and forwarded to the proper Officer for enrolment, in the manner required by law.

Yours sincerely

Hugh Fraser


Acting Governor

27 June 2016

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 27 June 2016, from His Excellency the Acting Governor to the Speaker advising of assent to certain bills on 27 June 2016 [[1091](#)].

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF TOOWOOMBA SOUTH

By-Election, Return of Writ

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have to report that the writ issued by His Excellency the Governor on 20 June 2016 for the election of a member to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Toowoomba South has been returned to me with a certificate endorsed thereon by the Electoral Commission of Queensland of the election, on 16 July 2016, of David Carl Janetzki to serve as such member. I table the endorsed writ for the information of the House. I now call the honourable member forward to take the oath of allegiance and of office. I welcome to the gallery the honourable member's wife, Melinda, daughters, Elizabeth and Charlotte, and parents, Dennis and Leone.

Tabled paper: Letter, undated, from the Director-General, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Mr Dave Stewart, to the Clerk of the Parliament, Mr Neil Laurie, enclosing the writ for the election of the electoral district of Toowoomba South [[1092](#)].

Tabled paper: Endorsed writ for the election of the electoral district of Toowoomba South [[1093](#)].

MEMBER SWORN

Mr David Janetzki, having waited at the bar of the House, was invited by Mr Speaker to enter the chamber.


Mr Speaker administered the oath of allegiance and of office to Mr Janetzki, who then subscribed the Roll of Members.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, on behalf of the parliament, I welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Queensland the new member for Toowoomba South.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Confidentiality of Committee Proceedings

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 17 June 2016 I received correspondence from the member for Logan alleging that on 15 June 2016 the member for Indooroopilly had breached standing order 211 during the debate on the Electricity and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. Further, the member for Logan alleges that confidential deliberations of the Transportation and Utilities Committee's consideration of the bill were disclosed by the member for Indooroopilly.

I have referred this matter to the chair of the Transportation and Utilities Committee for the committee's consideration and assessment. I do not wish to pre-empt any assessment by the committee. However, I take this opportunity to remind all members that, under standing order 211, the proceedings of parliamentary committees that may be disclosed to other members and officers are not able to be disclosed in the House or otherwise until the committee has reported those proceedings to the House or published the proceedings.

PETITIONS

The following honourable members have lodged paper petitions for presentation—

Abortion Law Reform (Woman's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill

Mr Seeney, from 280 petitioners, requesting the House to reject the Abortion Law Reform (Woman's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill [[1094](#)].

Withcott, Warrego Highway Crossing

Mr Rickuss, from 82 petitioners, requesting the House to act immediately to find a safe resolution to the Withcott Warrego Highway Crossing [[1095](#)].

Mount Garnet, Return Creek Bridge, Upgrade

Mr Knuth, from 1,807 petitioners, requesting the House to upgrade and widen the Return Creek Bridge, Mount Garnet [[1096](#)].

The following paper petitions, sponsored by the Clerk are lodged for presentation—

Abortion Law Reform (Woman's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill

From 252 petitioners, requesting the House to vote against the Abortion Reform Bill [[1097](#)].

Goombungee Students, School Bus Subsidy

From 146 petitioners, requesting the House to reassess the eligibility for students from Goombungee and surrounding districts to receive a school bus subsidy to attend the Highfields State Secondary College or Oakey State High School [[1098](#)].

The following honourable member has lodged a paper petition for presentation and an e-petition which is now closed and presented—

Coomera and Helensvale Railway Line, Sound Barriers

Mr Crandon, from 251 petitioners, requesting the House to install full and appropriate sound proofing along the section of railway, being 8.2 kilometres of duplication, between Coomera and Helensvale stations [[1099](#)] [[1100](#)].

The following honourable members have lodged e-petitions which are now closed and presented—

Courts, Hearing Assistance Technology

Hon. Hinchliffe, from 43 petitioners, requesting the House to arrange for the introduction and installation of hearing assistance technology in all Queensland Courts to enable the public to clearly hear proceedings [[1101](#)].

Wellington Point, Birkdale and Main Roads, Pedestrian Crossing Upgrade

Dr Robinson, from 105 petitioners, requesting the House to provide the necessary upgrade to the pedestrian crossing at Birkdale and Main Roads, Wellington Point to ensure the safety of pedestrians and motorists [[1102](#)].

Bowen Hospital, Services

Mr Last, from 261 petitioners, requesting the House to investigate the return of services, particularly maternity services, to the Bowen Hospital providing a safer maternity model for Bowen families [[1103](#)].

Home Buyers, Legislation

Hon. Jones, 2 petitions, from 279 petitioners, requesting the House to adopt, in principle, the well-established and effective Australian Capital Territory's Civil Law (Sale of Residential Property) Act 2003 in Queensland to ensure that home buyers are better protected from unscrupulous sellers [[1104](#)] [[1105](#)].

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS

The Clerk informed the House that the following papers, received during the recess, were tabled on the dates indicated—

20 June 2016—

- [1011](#) Overseas Travel Report: Report on a visit to New Zealand by the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries (Hon. Donaldson) to attend the Agriculture Ministers' Forum Meeting Number Four, 19-20 May 2016
- [1012](#) Mental Health Court—Annual Report 2014-15
- [1013](#) Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency—Annual Report 2014-15
- [1014](#) Queensland Mental Health Review Tribunal—Annual Report 2014-15: erratum
- [1015](#) Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service—Annual Report 2014-15: erratum
- [1016](#) West Moreton Hospital and Health Service—Annual Report 2014-15: erratum

22 June 2016—

- [1017](#) Transportation and Utilities Committee: Report No. 19, 55th Parliament—Inquiry into Auditor General Report to Parliament 2: 2015-16 Road safety traffic cameras
- [1018](#) Transportation and Utilities Committee: Report No. 20, 55th Parliament—Inquiry into Auditor General Report to Parliament 14: 2015-16 Financial risk management practices at Energex
- [1019](#) Overseas Travel Report: Report on a Trade and Investment Mission to Indonesia and South Korea by the Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment (Hon. Trad), 15-21 May 2016

23 June 2016—

[1020](#) Response from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills (Ms D'Ath) to an ePetition (2586-16) sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(4) from 23,869 petitioners, requesting the House to honour their pre-election pledges to the people of Queensland stating publicly that they would not weaken our current abortion laws, respect the health and rights of women and the unborn to be protected, and reject the Abortion Law Reform Amendment Bill which removes all safeguards for women and unborn babies

[1021](#) Response from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills (Ms D'Ath) to an ePetition (2532-16) sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(4) from 5,068 petitioners, requesting the House to consider amending the Criminal Code Act 1924 to include cyber bullying, bullying which results in psychological and self-harm, and inciting suicide as offences, and amending the Education Act 1994 to include bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour punishable in accordance with the Act

24 June 2016—

[1022](#) Letter, dated 23 June 2016, from the Speaker, Hon. Peter Wellington, to the Clerk of the Parliament, Mr Neil Laurie, advising of the Speaker's absence from Queensland from 9 to 15 July 2016, to attend the 47th Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference

27 June 2016—

[1023](#) Response from the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef (Dr Miles) to an ePetition (2589-16) sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(4) from 633 petitioners, requesting the House to implement the yellow crazy ant eradication program in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and surrounds as proposed by the Wet Tropics Management Authority

29 June 2016—

[1024](#) Auditor-General of Queensland: Report to Parliament No. 20: 2015-16—Heavy vehicle road access reforms

[1025](#) Right to Information Act 2009 and Information Privacy Act 2009—Annual Report 2014-15

30 June 2016—

[1026](#) Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee: Report No. 21, 55th Parliament—Inquiry into the establishment of a Queensland Health Promotion Commission

[1027](#) Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee: Report No. 97—Review of the Crime and Corruption Commission

[1028](#) Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 25, 55th Parliament—Inquiry into the practices of the labour hire industry in Queensland

[1029](#) Agriculture and Environment Committee: Report No. 19, 55th Parliament—Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016

[1030](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 30, 55th Parliament—Inquiry into a possible Human Rights Act for Queensland

01 July 2016—

[1031](#) Response from the Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment (Ms Trad) to a paper petition (2605-16) presented by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(3) and an e-Petition (2595-16) sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(4), from 304 and 128 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to urgently install pedestrian operated traffic lights between the entrance of the townhouse complex at 50 Castile Crescent Edens Landing and the gate not in use to the grounds of Edens Landing State School

[1032](#) Local Government Electoral Act 2011: Local Government Electoral Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2016, No. 101

[1033](#) Local Government Electoral Act 2011: Local Government Electoral Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2016, No. 101, explanatory notes

[1034](#) Local Government Electoral Act 2011: Document, titled 'Electoral Commission of Queensland—'Electronically assisted voting procedures' for local government elections' (refer to Local Government Electoral Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2016, No. 101)

[1035](#) Electoral Act 1992: Electoral Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2016, No. 103

[1036](#) Electoral Act 1992: Electoral Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2016, No. 103, explanatory notes

[1037](#) Electoral Act 1992: Document, titled 'Electoral Commission of Queensland—'Electronically assisted voting procedures' for elections' (refer to Electoral Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2016, No. 103)

04 July 2016—

[1038](#) Notice of Appointment of Ms Karen Carmody as Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner

[1039](#) Appointment of Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner: Oath of Office

06 July 2016—

[1040](#) Response from the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries (Ms Donaldson) to a paper petition (2604-16) presented by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(3) and an ePetition (2565-16) sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(4) from 405 and 346 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to amend legislation to reduce the number of molluscs (namely pippies) being taken from Queensland beaches to a bag limit of thirty per person up to maximum of 100 per vehicle with a minimum size of 35m

07 July 2016—

[1041](#) Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority—Annual Report 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14

08 July 2016—

[1042](#) Overseas Travel Report: Report on a Trade and Investment Mission to the United States of America by the Premier and Minister for the Arts (Hon. Palaszczuk), 30 May 2016-8 June 2016

12 July 2016—

[1043](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 31, 55th Parliament—Counter-Terrorism and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016

[1044](#) Marine Incidents in Queensland 2015

14 July 2016—

[1045](#) Response from the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence (Ms Fentiman), to a paper petition (2598-16) presented by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(3) from 150 petitioners, requesting the House to continue to provide a Generalist Counsellor to support the Ravenshoe Community

[1046](#) Response from the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply (Mr Bailey) to paper petition (2603-16) presented by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(3) and an ePetition (2534-16) sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(4) from 776 and 425 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to undertake a technical investigation and feasibility study in preparation for a submission to Infrastructure Australia for federal funding to provide a bridge over Burrum River between Buxton and Burrum Heads

15 July 2016—

[1047](#) Response from the Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events (Ms Jones) to a paper petition (2599-16) presented by Mr McArdle and ePetitions (2590-16) and (2563-16) sponsored by Mr McArdle from 1,776 petitioners, 42 petitioners and 172 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to authorise either the gifting of the Mooloolah Valley Community Centre land, located at 43 Bray Road Mooloolah Valley, to the Mooloolah Valley Community Association Inc; or grant a long-term 50-99 year lease to the community association which would allow for capital works to be carried out in the future

[1048](#) Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal—Annual Report 2015-16

[1049](#) Response from the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply (Mr Bailey) to an ePetition (2570-16) sponsored by the Member for Clayfield, Mr Nicholls, from 2,189 petitioners, requesting the House to stop any Government plan to create a taxpayer funded corporation to provide unregulated electrical work in Queensland

18 July 2016—

[1050](#) Committee of the Legislative Assembly: New Forms 1-4—Members' Register of Interests

[1051](#) Manual for the National Tax Equivalent Regime April 2016 (Version 10)

[1052](#) Response from the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply (Mr Bailey) to a paper petition (2602-16) presented by Mr Bleijie, and ePetitions (2551-16) and (2511-15) sponsored by Mr Bleijie, from 202, 720 and 213 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to consider upgrading the road network to better connect Caloundra, Kawana, Mooloolaba and Maroochydore, including Kawana Way, to provide for the expected increase in commuters and growth around the Sunshine Coast Public University Hospital and the broader Sunshine Coast region

[1053](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games (Mr Hinchliffe) to a paper petition (2601-16), presented by Miss Barton, from 289 petitioners, requesting the House to install a GoCard top-up machine at the Paradise Point News newsagency

19 July 2016—

[1054](#) Queensland Ombudsman: An investigation into the current child safety complaints management processes within the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, July 2016

[1055](#) Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011: Nursing and Midwifery Workload Management Standard

[1056](#) Response from the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply (Mr Bailey) to an ePetition (2568-16) sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(4) from 321 petitioners, requesting the House to abandon the plan to establish a publicly funded energy business to offer electrical services in direct competition with existing Queensland electrical and solar installation businesses and instead provide greater support to Queensland small businesses who already provide these and similar services

22 July 2016—

[1057](#) Letter, dated 20 July 2016, from the Auditor-General of Queensland, Mr Andrew Greaves, to the Speaker, Hon. Peter Wellington, advising of the Auditor-General's resignation

28 July 2016—

[1058](#) Mt Gravatt Showgrounds Trust—Annual Report 2015-16

[1059](#) Queensland Local Government Grants Commission—Annual Report 2015

29 July 2016—

- [1060](#) Queensland Integrity Commissioner—Annual Report 2015-16
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- [1062](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 32, 55th Parliament—Australian Crime Commission (Queensland) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016
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SPEAKER'S PAPER

The following Speaker's paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Speaker of the Legislative Assembly (Hon. Wellington)—

[1231](#) Issued Writ for Toowoomba South By-Election

REPORT BY THE CLERK

The following report was tabled by the Clerk—

[1232](#) Report pursuant to Standing Order 165 (Clerical errors or formal changes to any Bill) detailing amendments to certain Bills, made by the Clerk, prior to assent by His Excellency the Governor, viz—

Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015

Amendments made to Bill

Short title and consequential references to short title—

Omit—

'Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2015'

Insert—

'Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Act (No. 1) 2016'

Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016

Amendments made to Bill

Short title and consequential references to short title—

Omit—


'Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2016'

Insert—

'Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Act (No. 2) 2016'

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Achievements

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.38 am): Just over 18 months ago the people of Queensland chose a better way for Queensland. They had given the LNP three years to prove that their style of government is what Queensland needed. They rejected that style and embraced a better way—a more consultative style of government that delivers hope and opportunity without the fights and the arrogance. Already we have implemented 336 election commitments. We have done this in consultation with Queenslanders, taking them with us in the journey. Our jobs agenda has given opportunity and confidence to Queenslanders in the face of tough economic conditions through a \$40 billion Capital Works Program, the first State Infrastructure Plan in three years, the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiatives and our new Back to Work program for the regions. These are just some of the job-generating projects we have embarked upon.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, I am listening to the Premier's ministerial statement. I ask you to allow her to make it in silence.


Ms PALASZCZUK: Through our Accelerated Works Program, we committed to fast-tracking \$367 million in shovel-ready projects to accelerate more than 800 jobs for North Queensland and have boosted school maintenance funding by \$300 million, bringing the total investment to \$763 million over the next four years. We have worked closely with the private sector with more than \$22 billion in private sector investment announcements that will support over 76,000 jobs. In fact, Queensland is leading the nation when it comes to business confidence.

We have also delivered on our promise to diversify our economy with our nation-leading, \$405 million Advance Queensland innovation agenda. We have ensured Queensland stays at the front of the pack when it comes to tackling the impact of domestic and family violence, we have restored fairness to the workplace and our legal system, and we have put a premium on protecting the Great Barrier Reef.

As we promised we would do, we have restored many of the cuts made to front-line services, especially in health and education. In the last financial year alone, we have employed an additional 1,940 nurses, 651 doctors, 479 health professionals, 940 teachers and teacher aides, 300 police, 54 paramedics and 44 firefighters. These are just some of our achievements over the last 18 months.

We know that there is more work to do, but we are determined to do it. We will work day and night to deliver what we promised—a better way for Queensland.

Olympic Games

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.41 am): Over the last week and half Queenslanders have done what Queenslanders always do—carry the rest of Australia through the Olympic Games. It has been an incredible Olympics already for Queenslanders in Rio. There have been ups and downs, triumphs and tragedies, but ultimately Queenslanders have done us proud on sport's biggest stage. To mention just a few: on the opening night it was the Queensland girls—the Campbell sisters and Brittany Elmslie—along with Emma McKeon, who may not be a Queenslanders but who lives and trains here, who won gold and set a new world record in the women's 4 x 100-metre freestyle relay. There have been a swag of other medals won in the pool.


The women's sevens rugby team won the first ever women's rugby sevens gold medal—around half the team hailing from Queensland. We had already had some early success: Ryan Tyack and Taylor Worth won bronze in men's archery. Who could forget the sheer joy on the face of Dane Bird-Smith, who took bronze in the 20-kilometre walk?

I would like to pay special tribute to the great Anna Meares—another medal over the weekend. Anna had her last event this morning and, while the result did not go her way, her courage and tenacity inspired us, as it always has. We know Anna is considering the next step in her career. Anna, the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games is only two years away!

Beyond the medal winners, we have taken so much pride in the daily performances from all our Queensland athletes. As well as the athletes themselves, I would like to pay tribute to the coaches, managers and support staff of our athletes, not to mention their families and friends. It is not just the athletes who make great sacrifices to perform at the highest level; it is the people around them who do everything they can to help them get there. Often, they have been doing it for many, many years—driving our athletes to training, washing their gear, looking after them when they are injured, keeping their spirits up when they face setbacks, making sure they stay focused throughout their successes. Behind every great athlete is a group of incredible supporters.

As we watch the Rio games on TV, the countdown continues to our own games—the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games in 2018. I have no doubt there will be plenty of Queensland athletes switching their focus very quickly towards competing in a home Commonwealth Games. The rest of us—the armchair athletes—cannot wait to get away from the TV and see these world-class athletes live and in our own backyard, but we have a while to wait for that. First things first, congratulations to everyone involved in Rio and to our athletes yet to compete. Just remember one thing—Queenslander!

Herston Quarter


 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.43 am): On Sunday, together with my health minister, Cameron Dick, we announced Australian Unity as the preferred tenderer to develop the site of the former children's hospital at Herston in Brisbane. This announcement

means Queenslanders will benefit from a new \$1.1 billion health precinct, which will include a public hospital, a private hospital, aged care, retirement living, residential and student accommodation, retail and commercial space, child care and new public spaces right in the heart of Brisbane.

This project will create 750 jobs during construction, with hundreds of ongoing jobs. Metro North Health and Hospital Service has identified the Specialist Rehabilitation and Ambulatory Care Centre as a priority for service delivery for patients. Its position alongside Queensland's biggest hospital, the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, means that it will complement the services provided in this hospital and provide staffing efficiencies.

The 132-bed centre will comprise 100 rehabilitation beds, special purpose rehabilitation support areas and a surgical and endoscopic centre with a 32-bed surgical inpatient room, seven operating theatres as well as other much needed medical support services. As such, a key part of this site will be a public hospital providing specialist rehabilitation services and elective surgery to Queenslanders. My government has ensured that the primary purpose of this site will remain, and will always remain, the delivery of health services for Queenslanders.

Institutional Child Sexual Abuse, Motion to Take Note

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.43 am): Today I will be introducing legislation asking this parliament to remove the statute of limitations for victims of institutional child sexual abuse. My government is proposing to remove the time barrier on justice for those Queensland victims of horrifying acts of abuse. The statute of limitations effectively barred these victims from making claims for damages. This was identified by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and it recommended the removal of limitation periods.

The royal commission like the Forde inquiry almost 20 years ago has shone a light on the horrific treatment of many children in institutions. The abuse was done in institutions that purported to offer care for young and vulnerable Queenslanders. I have personally met with many survivors and I thank them for their bravery in sharing their experiences. As part of his healing journey, Dennis Dodt has written a book, and he personally gave me this book to read. His stories of abuse, both physical and sexual, are harrowing to read, and his pain as a small child of around seven years of age is almost inconceivable. This is a short extract from his book—

The effects from the abuse are scars; I will always have them no matter how much I heal. This has been a hard thing to accept. I am slowly dealing with it and after twenty years of healing I am getting dramatically better.

Whereas most people are able to live their lives focussed on their careers and families, people who have been abused don't seem to have that choice. We are forced by the pain and torment of our childhood abuse and neglect to spend most of our lives focussed on healing, just to stay alive.

The report of the royal commission recommended the adoption of guidelines for responding to claims for compensation concerning allegations of child sexual abuse. In Queensland, the state and its agencies act as model litigants under the model litigant principles, but these principles do not address how the state and its agencies handle civil litigation in relation to child sexual abuse claims. The guidelines are intended to ensure a compassionate and consistent approach by government and to make civil litigation less traumatic for victims.

The government has also given a commitment that it will not rely on deeds of release granted to recipients of redress under the Forde scheme. Any payments received will be able to be taken into account by any court, but any deed of release signed will not prevent a survivor from commencing an action in the courts once the statute of limitations is lifted. The government will also release an issues paper to seek stakeholder and community interest in broader civil litigation reform based on recommendations 85 to 95 of the report. Those recommendations include substantial issues of law that require consultation with stakeholders, which is why the issues paper is so important.

The key issues raised in the discussion paper include: whether the commission's recommendation to remove limitations be extended beyond institutions to other settings, including families; whether other forms of abuse, such as physical abuse or related psychological abuse, be included; and whether the current scope of damages is sufficient. I table the issues paper and guidelines.

Tabled paper: Department of Justice and Attorney-General: Issues Paper—The civil litigation recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse: Redress and Civil Litigation Report—understanding the Queensland context, August 2016 [[1233](#)].


Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Whole-of-Government Guidelines for responding to civil litigation involving child sexual abuse' [[1234](#)].

The parliamentary committee process will also afford the opportunity for stakeholders to provide comment on the legislation. My government is determined to open the door to justice for these survivors. The door has been closed for too many for too long. Consultation is important, and this was also highlighted by the shadow Attorney-General recently when he said—

We want to help survivors as soon as possible, but it's also important we get these laws right, so the LNP would consult with a wide range of stakeholders in drafting the legislation, from the legal industry to survivor support groups.

My government will ensure that we make the necessary reforms, but the Australian government must progress a national redress scheme for survivors. I call on the Prime Minister and the federal government to act in the national interest, do the right thing and put in place a national redress scheme. I will be calling on the Prime Minister personally to do this, and I will be raising this subject at the next COAG meeting later this year. I move—

That the House take note of the statement.

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.50 am): I thank the Premier and the government for affording me this opportunity to speak on what is an important issue to me personally and to my LNP team. I should point out from the outset that the opposition has just received the draft legislation and has not yet had an opportunity to consider the discussion paper and my comments are, in general, based upon the government's public statements on this matter over recent weeks.

We feel very strongly about survivors of child sexual abuse having a voice when they have been denied that right in the past simply because of an arbitrary time limitation. We have heard stories from those survivors. We have heard the tales of distraught people—people who have taken an enormous amount of time to come to grips with what happened to them, to establish their own lives and to feel secure enough that they can talk about it to others and, importantly, that they can seek advice and redress from the past. These stories are genuinely heart-rending. When we look at some of our great institutions, I think some of us shake our heads that some of these things were able to take place in the past. Whilst we do not condemn those institutions out of hand, we must do everything we can to make sure we right the wrongs of the past.

I am pleased that the Premier and the government have followed the LNP's policy on this issue and followed our lead in responding to the recommendations in the interim report of September 2015 from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. On 24 July I announced my and my party's intention to introduce legislation concerning these limitations should we be fortunate enough to come to office. We did that because, having heard nothing of the government's plans, we thought it appropriate to signal our intentions to redress these wrongs to the broader Queensland community. Clearly, our initiative galvanised the government into action and we support the government's moves in this respect.

In early August the Premier announced the government's own plans to introduce legislation to remove limitations on the victims of child sexual abuse launching civil actions to recover damages, and I indicated publicly our general support for that course of action. This bill constitutes a step in the right direction as a response by the parliament of Queensland to the tragic circumstances that have come to light in recent years relating to the sexual abuse suffered by children. In particular, I refer to the work of the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry and the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

At its core is an acknowledgement that up until now legislative remedies have failed to meet the genuine needs of victims, have failed to respond to the changing circumstances and, in many cases, have failed to deliver just outcomes. Those responses and we have just failed. While this is a welcome, albeit belated, announcement, we were somewhat dismayed to discover that the government's reforms would extend only to those victims who suffered abuse in institutions. Those who suffered outside an institution—say at the hands of family members or strangers—would still be shackled by the existing limitations. That is why I would urge the Premier and her government, as the Premier has indicated today, to consider whether this bill goes far enough and whether it ought to go further. We believe it should.

The LNP believes that, by restricting the removal of the statute of limitations to only certain cases of child sexual abuse, there is an effective creation of two classes of survivors. That would be patently unfair. How could we as legislators say to a victim of child sexual abuse that they do not deserve their day in court to seek justice simply because of the circumstances of their abuse? That is why I

foreshadow today that through the proper processes of this parliament we will seek to move amendments to the bill that broaden the effect of the government's legislation and extend the range of survivors to whom it will apply. It is not fair to discriminate against people simply because of the circumstances in which they suffered, and we will do what we can to provide a voice for all survivors of child sexual abuse in Queensland.

In government we had a strong record of standing up for victims of crime, whether it be by passing strong new laws or strengthening existing laws, establishing a Child Protection Commission of Inquiry, the review into domestic violence led by Dame Quentin Bryce which led to the landmark *Not now, not ever* report, which we continue to support with the government, increasing funding to victims advocate groups or by enabling victims to read a victim impact statement before a sentence in court. These were fundamental to ensuring that Queensland is the safest place to live, work and raise a family and, importantly, it is a fair place to live, work and raise a family.

The existing legislation—that is, the legislation to be amended by the bill introduced by the Premier—needs amending because it ignores the fact that in many cases psychological damage is neither diagnosed, apparent nor even brought to the attention of the appropriate medical professionals within these time frames. There is now clear evidence that many survivors of abuse find it too difficult to deal with the trauma involved in seeking justice for their abuse until well into adulthood. In many instances, particularly for men, it is not until they have established a family and have children of their own that they can take such action. In such circumstances, it is unfair to deny them the opportunity of legal redress.

This brings me to my next point, which relates to the deeds of settlement that have already been agreed to between parties. In many instances, settlements may have been entered into because there was a statutory time limitation on civil claims being presented to a court. This is another point of contention that we feel strongly about and believe the government has failed to acknowledge and address. If a right of action relating to a personal injury resulting from child sexual abuse was settled, the settlement agreement should not prevent a person from bringing an action under these revised rules unless a court otherwise orders having regard to the circumstances of the case. I note the comments from the Attorney-General on this matter as published in the *Guardian* online on 5 August that—

Any legislative attempt to remove past deeds entered into with private institutions has the potential to have far-reaching and unintended consequences.


Again, I foreshadow amendments to the bill through the proper parliamentary processes that provides for an opportunity for settlement agreements to be voided by the court but subject to any inherent, implied or statutory jurisdiction of the court. The judges with the experience will have the ability to supervise and supervene any such claims.

We will work through the committee process and encourage victims advocate groups to support sensible changes that improve the scheme for survivors of these heinous crimes. If we are going to learn from past societal abuses, it is only right that as legislators we do what we can to ensure that these changes are fair, nondiscriminatory and lawful. That is the aim of the LNP. I again want to thank the Premier for this opportunity to speak on this very important issue. We will be supporting the thrust of the legislation, but we do believe it can be made better. We believe this is the opportunity for all of us to do something that will right the wrongs of the past and ensure a fair day in court for all those who have suffered from past abuses.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Institutional Child Sexual Abuse

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (9.59 am): I am pleased to be able to rise today to tell the House that the Palaszczuk government is addressing a decades-long injustice perpetrated against some of the most vulnerable members of society and to concur with those comments made by the Premier. Over the last few years we have heard countless harrowing tales from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. This horrendous crime has been carried on against the people we are supposed to care for most, often by the people in whom the greatest trust was placed to impart that care. The impact on the victims is something that had instant and appalling consequences, but often it takes many years for the victims to become aware of the significance of what they have suffered. Indeed, the royal

commission found that many victims of child sexual abuse are into their 30s or 40s before they are fully able to comprehend and confront what they have endured, let alone begin the arduous process of seeking justice for those actions.

Until now the Queensland law required that a child victim had just three years from the time they turned 18 to bring a civil action to court. This statute of limitations has been a significant obstacle to these victims finding justice. That will happen no more. The government has been working for months on developing a response to the royal commission recommendations. Legislation to remove the statute of limitations for victims of child sexual abuse in institutions will soon be introduced in parliament. This will ensure greater access to justice for victims of child sexual abuse in institutions by removing the legal limit which can hamper their ability to make claims for damages.

We are calling on the Commonwealth to move towards a national redress scheme for the victims of institutional child sexual abuse and we are releasing an issues paper which will look at the issues arising from recommendations 85 to 95 of the royal commission. This approach is very important to ensure the wider issues are properly dealt with, stakeholders are involved in the policy process and to achieve workable, effective laws in what is a very complex and sensitive area. Those issues outlined by the Leader of the Opposition today—many issues that include going beyond institutions and beyond child sexual abuse to physical abuse or psychological abuse—did not form part of the royal commission's recommendations. That is why it is important that we have a discussion paper that deals with these issues and allows key stakeholders, survivors and institutions to have input into how that should be framed. The issues paper will provide an opportunity to seek stakeholder and community interest in broader civil litigation reforms on a number of issues. We hope for bipartisan support and cooperation from not just the opposition but members right across the parliament.

In addition to those issues outlined by the Premier, the issues paper will go to whether legislation should include a test for what is reasonable care to prevent child sexual abuse in institutions; the financial and other associated impacts with implementing other royal commission recommendations regarding non-delegable duty; whether the reverse onus should apply to all institutions—recommendation 91 of the commission provides that all institutions should be liable for child sexual abuse unless the institution can prove it took reasonable steps to prevent the abuse—what relationships should be captured by a proposed reverse onus of proof; and whether the defendant has a responsibility to nominate an additional related entity with capacity to meet any award of damages or costs. The government is also releasing whole-of-government guidelines for civil litigation to ensure that the Queensland government lives up to these high standards. This is only the start of this process and I, like the rest of this government, look forward to working with them towards achieving justice for those who have suffered so much.


This bill will also contain other elements for which the government is seeking bipartisan support. In relation to class actions, in Queensland persons wishing to undertake a representative proceeding, or class action, are forced to do so in other jurisdictions given the uncertain and unclear current provisions in the Uniform Civil Procedure Rules 1999. The bill will seek to provide a contemporary statutory regime for class actions within the Civil Proceedings Act allowing for class action proceedings to take place in Queensland and will align Queensland legislation with that relating to the Federal Court of Australia, New South Wales and Victoria.

The amendments will form the funding arrangements for all legal assistance, legal professional regulation and law library services to improve certainty and the long-term sustainability of services. We know that over many years the income generated in this way has been declining with the global financial crisis and changes to the way legal firms operate including electronic conveyancing. Under the new arrangements announced in the budget, services will be fully funded from the Consolidated Fund. The amendments enable the transfer of interest revenue earned from the Legal Practitioner Interest on Trust Accounts Fund to the Consolidated Fund to partially offset the increased expenditure. The justices of the peace trial has been operating within QCAT since 2013. The bill will move it beyond a trial to permanently embed the justice of the peace within QCAT and ensure that these provisions continue to be seen in Queensland communities.

I would like to thank the Premier for her leadership on this important issue. I again would like to thank the survivors, stakeholders and members of the legal profession, who have worked tirelessly in this policy reform area. As I said, this is only the start of this process. I look forward to continuing to work with stakeholders and members of this House in delivering this historic reform.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the Deputy Premier, I am informed that we have student leaders from Robina State High School in the electorate of Mudgeeraba observing our proceedings in the gallery.

Infrastructure; BGI

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment) (10.04 am): Over the past 18 months the Palaszczuk Labor government has been focused on delivering our commitments to the people of Queensland and building our economy through innovation, investment and infrastructure. We are working to grow and diversify our economy and supporting jobs right across our state.


In my portfolio we have brought new rigour to infrastructure through Building Queensland and the first State Infrastructure Plan for more than four years. We have backed our plan with a \$2 billion State Infrastructure Fund, delivering new infrastructure and jobs right across Queensland. We are using this investment to fast-track key transport projects like stage 1 of the Ipswich Motorway and the Rockhampton road train access. As well, our Significant Regional Infrastructure Projects Program will support more than 25 projects in regional and rural Queensland, unlocking more than 280 jobs. This investment means we are delivering projects like the Bill Fulton Bridge in Cairns, vital social housing and mental health facilities as well as the renewal of school facilities in Central Queensland.

We have also delivered a new planning act that will drive greater certainty for investment and greater certainty for the community including the reinstatement of community appeal rights. We are delivering the Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct with the project set to support more than 20,000 jobs that will help diversify the city's economy. We are investing more than \$25 million over five years to boost Queensland's international education and training sector on the world stage so we can create an extra 6,800 jobs in this growth industry. To further grow trade and investment, we have opened new trade offices in Chengdu in Western China and will soon open one in Singapore. Both offices will offer new opportunities for Queensland companies looking to expand these important markets and to attract investment in Queensland.

Earlier today I was pleased to join with the Minister for Health and the Minister for Employment to announce the next big step for investment in Queensland. I am pleased to inform the House that one of the world's largest life sciences organisations, BGI, has chosen Brisbane as its research and development and commercialisation headquarters for the Asia-Pacific region. BGI was founded in 1999 and now has 47 laboratories worldwide and employs more than 5,000 people. BGI is at the cutting edge of genome sequencing, which will be central to the future of global health care. BGI has an ambitious agenda to use genomics and related technologies to transform human health with the aim of increasing the average life span by five years and global food production by 10 per cent. BGI's global precision medicine initiative is also seeking improved treatment for cancer, birth defects, cardiovascular and degenerative diseases and infectious diseases. My agency, Trade & Investment Queensland, along with Think Queensland supported BGI in its decision and plans to locate in Queensland. TIQ has also helped BGI establish collaborative links with local partners including CSIRO, Griffith University and James Cook University.

Having an innovative, cutting-edge, tier 1 biotechnology organisation establish its Asia-Pacific regional office here in Brisbane is a significant economic milestone. It demonstrates the practical difference that the Palaszczuk government's Advance Queensland agenda is making to our economy and will translate into new jobs and increased investment right across our state.

Queensland Economy

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (10.08 am): Over the past 18 months the Palaszczuk government has worked hard to deliver on its commitment to advancing Queensland's economy through job-creating innovation, investment and infrastructure. As a result we are forecast to have Australia's fastest growing economy this year and next year. Queensland's economy has experienced nation-leading growth on many occasions over the last few decades.

We have outperformed the Australian and OECD averages since 1992, but we should not take our economic growth for granted. We have seen what can happen when austerity and asset sales become more important than investing in Queensland and our people. Under the former government economic growth nosedived, falling below three per cent and then to just 0.8 per cent in 2014-15 compared to growth of 5.8 per cent when Labor left office in 2011-12. Since coming to government our economic plan has resulted in Queensland's growth in 2015-16 leading the nation at 3.5 per cent. Growth is forecast to strengthen to four per cent in 2016-17. Over the last 18 months there has been a

net 36,600 jobs created. With 3,800 full-time jobs created each month, this equates to around 220 full-time jobs per month. This compares to 12,900 full-time jobs lost under the former government, or around 380 per month.

When you consider Queensland's economic outlook in the national and international context, Queensland's strengthening fundamentals are clear. I was in London last week as part of post-budget briefings and met with a number of institutional investors, as well as our ratings agencies Standard and Poor's and Moody's. I outlined how the Palaszczuk government's strong financial management and whole-of-balance-sheet approach have resulted in general government debt that is \$10.4 billion lower today than it was forecast to be in the LNP's last budget. Amid global uncertainty and events like Brexit, as well as a federal government that has been placed on negative watch, Queensland's economic growth and debt plan are clear positives.

We recognise that much of our growth is export led, but over the last 18 months we have worked hard to further diversify our economy through our Advance Queensland strategy. State final demand, which was negative 2.6 per cent in the final year of the Newman-Nicholls government, has subsequently improved over the last 18 months and is forecast to grow again by 1.5 per cent in 2016-17 before strengthening further to three per cent in 2017-18. The key result of our three key priorities—growing innovation, attracting investment and building infrastructure—is employment growth of around 1.75 per cent per annum over the coming years, while unemployment is forecast to fall to 5.75 per cent over the forward estimates—nearly a percentage point lower than where the LNP left it. In the meantime, we are investing in job creation through our \$40 billion four-year infrastructure plan, by bringing back Skilling Queenslanders for Work and other initiatives such as our \$100 million Back to Work program dedicated to regional Queensland.

The most important measures, however, are those which demonstrate how Queenslanders who buy and sell goods every day believe the economy is performing. The latest Westpac-Melbourne Institute survey shows Queensland's Consumer Sentiment Index rose 3.8 per cent to a reading of 102 in August 2016. This was above the national average and in positive territory for the first time in more than two years on a trend basis, with consumers more optimistic about the state's growing economy. Similarly, the Sensis Business Confidence Index for small to medium businesses in Queensland reached a four-year high in the June quarter 2016 at positive 36 points—double the result recorded a year ago. This follows the NAB Business Confidence Index, which has consistently shown Queensland having nation-leading business confidence over the last 12 months. Even Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull recognised that earlier this year despite the constant negativity of his state colleagues.

Queensland consumers and Queensland businesses are right to feel confident about our future, given the improvements to our economy over the last 18 months and the nation-leading growth still to come as a result of the Palaszczuk government's economic plan.

MOTION

Suspension of Sessional Orders



Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.12 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

- (a) that the Premier be allowed to introduce a bill immediately after question time; and
- (b) after the introduction of the bill has been completed, the order of business shall resume with starting times for all other items in the morning adjusting according to the time spent on the introduction of the Premier's bill.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Reporting Date



Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.12 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the report date for the inquiry into the Hendra virus (HeV) EquiVacc vaccine and its use by veterinary surgeons in Queensland referred to the Agriculture and Environment Committee on 25 February 2016 be extended to 22 October 2016.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Deputy Premier, Business Confidence



Mr EMERSON (Indooroopilly—LNP) (10.13 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House:

1. notes the Deputy Premier and Minister for Planning has proposed to call in the West Village project in her electorate under pressure from the Greens councillor Jonathan Sri after the commencement of on-site earthworks, putting at risk an \$800 million development and up to 3,340 jobs;
2. notes that Queensland business confidence has slumped under this government according to the latest ANZ/Property Council industry survey, the CCIQ Pulse Survey of Business Conditions and the Sensis Business Index;
3. condemns the Palaszczuk government for taking unanticipated and politically motivated decisions amounting to sovereign risk; and
4. calls on the Deputy Premier to give certainty to businesses to invest by reassuring them that she will not consider her own political self-interest as a factor in infrastructure, investment and planning decisions.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Wardill, Mr S; Member for Toowoomba South



Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.14 am): At the outset I formally record the congratulations of the LNP team to Steve and Emma Wardill, who were delivered of a baby daughter, Evie Rose, at 11.11 pm yesterday. Unexpectedly, she has dark hair. They are still questioning where that came from. Both mother and father are doing well, although I am told that the father continues to use the gas. He believes it is very good for him. I am also informed that this is the first time in 10 years he has failed to make a sitting of the Queensland parliament. We wish them the best of luck with Evie Rose.

Ms Palaszczuk: I believe he is watching!

Mr NICHOLLS: I am sure he will be and I am sure he will be tweeting about it too, Premier. I also take this opportunity to welcome the newest member of the House, the new member for Toowoomba South and the LNP, David Janetzki. I want to personally congratulate David for the great results he achieved in the recent by-election. I have followed David's career over many years as a member of the LNP, and both the deputy leader, the member for Nanango, Deb Frecklington and I were present when he was preselected to run for the seat. We were both very keen to support him in his endeavours to represent the people of Toowoomba South. He follows in the footsteps of outstanding representatives such as John McVeigh and Mike Horan, who both contributed to the campaign in Toowoomba South.

David, it is tremendous that you are able to join us here in the Queensland parliament to represent a very important part of regional Queensland—a part, I might say, that those opposite did not even bother to run in. For all the Premier talks about jobs for regional Queensland there seems to be one job that she did not want, and that was someone in your job representing the people of Toowoomba South. That was certainly noticed. Why would they be afraid to run? Because they did not manage to deliver the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing which was delivered by the LNP; they did not manage to deliver the Highfields State School which was delivered by the LNP; they did not manage to deliver the \$45 million ring-road; they were not able to transfer old railways land to the Toowoomba City Council; and they were not able to upgrade the Warrego Highway. Is it any wonder that the Premier did not want a job up in Toowoomba South? They probably would not even know how to get there. David is also joined in the House today by his wife Melinda, and I want to welcome them—

(Time expired)

Herston Quarter; Business Confidence



Hon. CW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (10.18 am): On Sunday the Premier announced Australian Unity as the preferred developer of the \$1.1 billion Herston Quarter project on the site of the former—

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr PITT: I will take that interjection from the member for Brisbane Central—children's hospital in Brisbane. This deal is concrete proof of the strength of the Queensland economy and the positive outcomes of the Palaszczuk government's cooperative approach to business and industry. It highlights the greater confidence that business has to invest in Queensland; confidence that went missing in action under the leadership of the Newman-Nicholls government.

The Palaszczuk government has ensured that the primary use of the five-hectare Herston Quarter site will be health related. Australian Unity's master plan complements existing hospital and health facilities with a private hospital, aged care and retirement living, a residential component, student accommodation, childcare facilities and retail and commercial space.

One-fifth of the site will be open space for the enjoyment of staff, patients, family and visitors to the precinct. Existing iconic heritage buildings in need of significant repair will be refurbished. A new 130-bed public specialist rehabilitation and ambulatory care centre, SRACC, will be built as part of the redevelopment and funded by Metro North Hospital and Health Service. The remainder of the development will be financed by Australian Unity, with no net cost to government.

Construction of the Herston Quarter is estimated to support the equivalent of more than 700 full-time jobs a year over its 10-year development. Hundreds more jobs will be delivered once the facilities are up and running. That is a great outcome for inner-city workers.

Work is expected to start in 2017, with many components being delivered over a three- to five-year time frame. I congratulate the Premier and the other ministers involved on the announcement, as well as officers from Queensland Treasury, Queensland Health and Metro North for the work they have done to bring this project to fruition. It is a great example of the public and private sectors working together to create jobs now and jobs for the future in Queensland.

Recent reports and hard data also provide evidence of the higher business confidence that we have in our economy under our government as opposed to the Newman-Nicholls government. The Deloitte Access Economics Investment Monitor for the June quarter showed Queensland again leading New South Wales and Victoria in the value of major projects underway or in the pipeline. It outlines almost \$183.5 billion in planned or committed public and private sector projects in our state ahead of New South Wales, with \$129.5 billion, and Victoria, with \$78 billion. Western Australia has stayed at the head of all states and territories since the previous quarterly report.

In the 18 months since the change of government we have seen confidence make a comeback in Queensland. The Newman-Nicholls government always thought they knew better. Their slash-and-burn approach saw confidence slump and jobs disappear. By contrast, the Palaszczuk government promised Queenslanders that we would drive investment and create jobs by consulting and cooperating with business. We have done exactly as we promised 18 months ago. That is why major projects like the Herston Quarter will deliver massive investment and jobs—

(Time expired)

Member for Toowoomba South; Clancy, Ms T; Cross River Rail



Mrs FRECKLINGTON (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.21 am): I join with the Leader of the Opposition in congratulating our newest member, the member for Toowoomba South, David Janetzki. I welcome his family to parliament. I know that his two little girls, Elizabeth and Charlotte, were just in the public gallery. It was wonderful to see them as well.

Earlier the Premier listed a number of Olympians. I would like to add to that list by mentioning Kingaroy's No. 1 student Taliqua Clancy. Her very proud grandparents from Kingaroy are celebrating the first Indigenous Olympic beach volleyball player. Taliqua did not start playing beach volleyball until she was 16. Hers is an amazing achievement for a Kingaroy girl.


It is interesting to note that it is some 55 days since the Palaszczuk cabinet endorsed the failed business case for Cross River Rail. That failed business case outlined the six sneaky new Labor taxes inserted by the Deputy Premier. For the benefit of all of Queensland—I am quite sure most people have no idea about all of these new sneaky taxes that the Palaszczuk government is planning to bring in—I will read them out. They are: the congestion tax, paid for by motorists, that was going to raise about \$1.2 billion; the motor vehicle registration levy, paid by all Queenslanders, of about \$1.2 billion; the land tax on nearby property owners, \$1 billion; the public transport infrastructure tax, paid for by property owners, of about \$2.6 billion; a ticket surcharge for public transport users of about \$1 billion; and, finally, higher rates, paid for by nearby property owners, of just under \$300 million. That amounts to around \$7½ billion worth of potential taxes to be paid by Queenslanders.

After about 20 days of pressure from the opposition, the Deputy Premier ruled out only two of those taxes. How could we forget the estimates hearing? Bearing in mind that she was not able to rule out those other taxes, the Deputy Premier announced that the business case did not even include the cost of trains. The Palaszczuk Labor government says that its No. 1 infrastructure project is to cost

\$5.4 billion, but when you look at the whole business case you see that it amounts to about \$16 billion and does not even include the cost of new trains and does not talk about the cost of ongoing maintenance of the track and all of the add-ons. When is the Premier going to rule out all of these extra taxes?

(Time expired)

Personalised Transport Industry

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (10.24 am): I welcome the member for Toowoomba South to the chamber. On behalf of the government I warmly congratulate a proud Queensland Rail employee, Emma Wardill, on the birth of her daughter. I understand that the father works somewhere in the precinct. I congratulate him, too.

Last Thursday I announced the Palaszczuk government's reforms to Queensland's personalised transport industry to create a new level playing field—a new level playing field to allow existing and new industries to compete fairly and safely under the same rules, a new level playing field that drives more competition, more choice and more services and ultimately puts downward pressure on fares.


The world is changing, and the expectations of customers are changing along with it. The government could not stand by and watch wave after wave of change sweep over the existing taxi industry without acting. Whether we liked it or not, change was being thrust onto the taxi industry. This government made the tough decision to remove the yoke off the back of the industry, and from 5 September this year, on this new level playing field, our great Queensland taxi industry will finally be able to compete. That is why this policy is informed by Labor values. It delivers innovation and competition with fairness—fairness by retaining exclusive access to the rank and hail markets; fairness by removing 80 pieces of regulation; fairness by waiving annual fees; and fairness by providing transitional payments.

These changes mean more jobs and business opportunities for Queensland. That is why I have been so pleased to see the announcement by Australian company GoCatch that they will commence operations in Queensland because of our government's reforms. I look forward to meeting with the CEO of GoCatch later this week in Brisbane to discuss their operations, which they intend to commence in Brisbane in the first instance. In fact, this morning GoCatch informed us that they had already registered over 600 drivers for the Queensland operation—a stunning demonstration of confidence in our reforms delivered by an Australian company.

I have been pleased to see the support of the community and business for these reforms as well. The RACQ said the reforms were 'a win for common sense' and highlighted the benefits for our tourism industry. The CCIQ said 'state government has reacted with balance in finding a compromise for the personalised transport industry' and that 'this is a win for customers and small business'. I note also the editorial support of the *Courier-Mail*—'Uber plan strikes right balance for industry'—the *Gold Coast Bulletin*—'it produces better end results for consumers than a monopoly'—and the *Townsville Bulletin*—'the government has responded to the public's wishes, which is at the heart of what it was elected to do'.

The government is committed to ensuring that Queenslanders have access to safe, reliable and affordable personalised transport services. That is what we have done and that is what we will continue to do. That is at the core of this government's position on any number of issues that we have to confront—that we confront them and deliver fairness to the community and balance.

Child Protection

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (10.27 am): Eighteen months. That is all it has taken for this Labor government to run Queensland's child safety system into the ground. Eighteen months is the time taken for abuse investigation backlogs to blow out. Some 343 suspected abuse cases were not actioned within the required 24 hours. That is a 22 per cent increase in just three months. Ten per cent of children whose cases should have been commenced in 24 hours remain at risk right now. Seventy-one per cent of all children whose cases should have been seen in five days are not being seen in that time, according to the most recent March data. These sorts of figures have not been seen since before the Carmody inquiry and subsequent reform agendas began. Eighteen months is the time taken for investigation completions to blow out, with almost 50 per cent now taking more than the allowed two months to complete. Eighteen months and now we have more than 9,000 children in out-of-home care.

It pains me to have to raise these statistics but, as I do, we should remember that behind every number there is a child at risk of abuse or a family in crisis right now. Not since 2011 have we seen the number of investigations not started sitting unallocated—a clear sign of a government trying to cook the books on response time blowouts. That is 3,200 suspect cases of abuse sitting with no evidence either way that they have been commenced in required times, when all the while the minister sits on their release for four months. Four months to release data that is entered in a real-time basis every day by child safety officers is simply unacceptable given recent events and given we are not just talking about figures; these are children in danger.


Between 2013 and 2015 the LNP began to turn the child safety system around, response times were improving and things were on the mend. The system was far from perfect, but we were working on it and we were getting results. Sadly, in just 18 months this asleep-at-the-wheel Labor government has let the situation go from on the mend to stretched to the limit. We have a minister who refuses to accept responsibility for the protection of children and a government that is more concerned with reviewing than actually doing. Not since the dark days of the Beattie-Bligh era have we seen the child safety system in such dire straits. The reality is that it has taken the death of toddler Mason Jet Lee to shine a light on the rapid meltdown in Child Safety under Labor's watch. It is time for this Labor government to stop hiding behind reviews and come clean on how the system failed this little boy to ensure it does not happen again. It has now been six weeks since the latest full quarter for Child Safety reporting and a close to the financial year. The minister needs to come clean on the true number of investigations not commenced in the last year. This government needs to claim responsibility.

(Time expired)

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Question time will finish at 11.30 am.

Child Protection

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (10.30 am): My question is to the Minister for Child Safety. Can the minister reassure this House that the children for whom the key to this cipher has been provided to the Clerk have not been subject to harm prior to entering into care?

Ms FENTIMAN: Sorry, but could you repeat your question please, Leader of the Opposition?

Mr NICHOLLS: Can the minister reassure this House that the children for whom the key to the cipher has been provided to the Clerk have not been subject to harm prior to entering into care?

Ms FENTIMAN: I will have to take that question on notice and I will provide that answer directly to the Leader of the Opposition.

Minister for Child Safety

Mr NICHOLLS: My question is to the Premier. Premier, given the ongoing crisis within the department of child safety, does the minister retain the Premier's confidence?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. First and foremost, let me say this very clearly: the issues surrounding Child Safety are extremely complex and Child Safety is one of the most difficult portfolios for any minister of any government to hold. Secondly, under a lot of questioning during the estimates process, the Leader of the Opposition, as I recall, asked several questions to the children's and family commissioner, Cheryl Vardon, about whether or not she perceived the system to be in crisis. She said that it was not a system in crisis. That is the independent family and children's commissioner stating that on the public record for the opposition. What we do know is that it is crucial that there are front-line staff in relation to Child Safety out there in our communities, and that is something I have said time and time again. My government was elected to restore front-line services. What we do know is that under the former government unfortunately Child Safety Services staff were cut by 225 full-time equivalents.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: No. Let me be very clear. Those opposite come in here with all of these allegations. Let us put it on the public record.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, one moment. Order!

Ms PALASZCZUK: Let us be very clear.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, I do not want to have a debate. Can you come back to the question please?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes. There were cuts to child safety non-government organisations by the former government of \$30 million a year.

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order. The question was very directly about whether the Premier had confidence in her minister. I do not think a history lesson is part of an appropriate answer to that question.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Callide. Premier, I would ask you to come back to the question in relation to the competence of your minister.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. As we do know in relation to issues that are subject before the court, I have asked the children's and family commissioner to investigate those matters and I have said very clearly that if there is action that needs to be taken action will be taken. I am not going to prejudge at all that investigation and nor should anyone in the House judge that, but I come back to the main point. I will tell members what I do not have confidence in—the way that those opposite operated the government. That is what I do not have confidence in, because what we saw were cuts to front-line service staff. That is what we saw.

Goods and Services Tax

Mr WHITING: My question is to the Premier and Minister for the Arts. Will the Premier update the House on the Queensland government's position on proposals being flagged by the Prime Minister to change the way GST revenues are distributed?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Murrumba for that question. Over the weekend we have once again seen another thought bubble from our Prime Minister in terms of how the GST should be distributed across the states. As the Treasurer of this state clearly put it, it was nothing more than a thought bubble. What we have seen is essentially the Prime Minister of our country—the Prime Minister of our nation—saying that he unilaterally wants to make a decision on how Western Australia is granted its share of GST. Let me make it very clear: I will not under any circumstances allow the Prime Minister to unilaterally make a decision without being provided with the opportunity to discuss that. There is an independent Grants Commission that decides how the GST is carved up. It has been accepted for numerous years.

Mr Pitt: That's right, an independent umpire.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is an independent umpire, as the Treasurer said. Now we see Malcolm Turnbull once again wanting to change the way the tax system is carved up. I understand that other premiers share my views and we will be raising this at the next COAG meeting, which will be held at the end of the year. I make it very clear: what we have seen the federal government do is try to bail out the Western Australian government by giving it a \$1 billion one-off infrastructure investment fund to the detriment of Queensland when Queensland was not allowed to access the Asset Recycling Fund because the people of Queensland stood up and said, 'We don't want the assets sold.' Now we see the debacle that is happening in New South Wales. It is the same tangent that the Leader of the Opposition wanted to go on to sell our state's assets. Look what has happened there. Scott Morrison has stepped in and said no to the Chinese investing in the New South Wales electricity grid. If members want to talk about business confidence, have a look at what is happening in New South Wales at the moment. What we have seen very clearly is a clear result of what happens when you go down a path that the public simply do not like.

In conclusion, I just reiterate that under no circumstances will Queensland accept what the Prime Minister is trying to do. I also want to put on the public record that we need to make sure that the premiers and the first ministers are provided with information about—

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I am informed that we have students and teachers from Aquinas College in the electorate of Southport observing our proceedings from the public gallery. Welcome.

Minister for Child Safety

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier explain why she approved leave for the Minister for Child Safety to attend Splendour in the Grass at Byron Bay while her department was in crisis? Did any other ministers attend the music festival as well?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition can advise the House why he took a couple of weeks leave before the federal election. He did not want to be around when Malcolm Turnbull was in town. I am quite sure he was missing in action. At the time the federal election was around, he was nowhere to be seen. There were no joint press conferences that I can recall. Perhaps he can explain how much leave he took.

On a serious note, I have had discussions with the Minister for Child Safety. She assured me that on that day it was a prearranged family event and she spent the entire next day in the office, as I expect my ministers to do, preparing for estimates—unlike the former premier who took one week or two weeks off before his estimates appearance. I am satisfied with the minister's answer when I questioned her.

Connecting with Asia Forum

Mr CRAWFORD: My question is to the Premier. What are the objectives of the inaugural Premier's Connecting with Asia Forum to be held next week in Cairns?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I would like to thank the member for Barron River very much for that important question. Next week, the Minister for Tourism, the member for Barron River and I will be in Cairns supporting the very first Advancing Queensland Tourism getting ready for China engagement forum. It is absolutely critical that we provide the opportunity for councils and tourism operators to understand the impacts that we will see from the growing demand of Chinese tourism in our state. Over the last year, we have seen in excess of 400,000 Chinese tourists coming into Queensland. The flow-on benefits for not just the South-East Queensland economies but also regional economies throughout our state are absolutely crucial. The flow-on benefits for small business, for tourism operators, for the public, for the restaurants are all a direct result of this increase in tourism numbers.

I want to thank the Minister for Tourism for helping to drive tourism in this state—perhaps one of the best tourism ministers we have ever seen. I also want to acknowledge that the consul general will be in attendance next week. I want to thank him and his team very much for agreeing to come along to this very important event.

We also know that the growing Asian middle class has the potential to drive significant growth in visitor numbers to Queensland. That is why my government has proceeded with a new trade office in Chengdu. I want to thank the Deputy Premier for acting so swiftly in relation to that matter. That is why my government committed an extra \$33.5 million in funding over four years to grow tourism and make Queensland the No. 1 destination for millions of Asian visitors. The Advance Queensland Connecting with Asia Forum will target key emerging markets in Asia for specific regional Queensland destinations. The program aims to secure more international air routes, create innovative tourism products, build stronger relationships with targeted Asian cities, build the digital capability of Queensland tourism businesses to secure more Asian businesses and grow awareness of Queensland experiences.

We want to link with councils. Councils are the key here, because we want the flow-on impacts of people coming into the major destinations of Brisbane, the Gold Coast and Cairns and then flowing on to other communities, whether they be on the coast or in regional Queensland. I look forward to welcoming the number of people who will be coming to this event next week. I pay tribute to China Eastern, which will begin its direct flights from Shanghai to Brisbane in December this year. We look forward to welcoming the first flight.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Mudgeeraba, I am informed that we have students from Eumundi State School in the electorate of Noosa observing our proceedings from the gallery. Welcome.

Mason Lee

Ms BATES: My question is to the Minister for Child Safety. Can the minister explain why Mason Lee was discharged from Lady Cilento hospital without child safety officers having first attended to his safety?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for the question. Like all Queenslanders who are reading about the tragic case of Mason Lee, I am deeply affected by this tragedy. It is shocking, it is appalling and I know that Queenslanders want answers—and so do I. That is why we will have an independent expert panel review every aspect of this case, including reports from doctors and discussions that happened at SCAN team meetings. We will go through every file to determine what went wrong here.

I will tell the member for Mudgeeraba what I will not do. I will not make any comments that will prejudice getting justice for this little boy, because that is too important. We have to let an expert independent panel make its findings and make recommendations to the government. I have already committed to implementing each and every one of those recommendations to ensure that this does not happen again.

I can tell the member what we are doing in Child Safety. We have 166 more front-line and front-line support staff than there were two years ago. Under the LNP, 225 full-time staff were ripped from the department of child safety.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. I am listening to the minister's answer.

Ms FENTIMAN: Those cuts to staff are still having an impact today. When the LNP was in government, when the Leader of the Opposition was treasurer, not only did they cut 225 full-time staff but also they ripped three quarters of a million dollars from our childcare peak agencies: Foster Care Queensland—

Ms BATES: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I asked a very simple question about why Mason Lee was discharged from Lady Cilento without ever having been seen by a child safety officer.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, I am aware of your question. Minister, can I ask you not to debate the question. Do you have anything further to add?

Ms FENTIMAN: Mr Speaker, I want to say that I am determined to get to the bottom of what happened here but, as I have said, I will not be saying anything in this place that jeopardises getting justice for this little boy. It is now a matter before the court. We have to let the police, the courts and the independent experts do their job. As I have said already, I am absolutely determined to implement each and every one of the recommendations of the expert panel.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. I urge members not to stray into matters that may be before the courts, which are sub judice. If you have any concerns about potential sub judice matters, please take them up with the Clerk.

International Students

Ms FARMER: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Trade. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on the outcomes of the Best Semester Abroad competition and advise how the program has promoted Queensland as a destination of choice for international students?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Bulimba for the question. In fact, the member for Bulimba pulled me aside yesterday afternoon to talk particularly about this program and how we can bolster international education in Queensland on the world stage. I know that, on this side of the House, we believe in trade and investment, we believe in education and we even believe in science.

Let me talk about international education and investment. We know that investment brings jobs to Queensland. One in five jobs in this state is created through investment. That is why we are determined to drive investment into Queensland as one of the key cornerstones of our economic diversification strategy. Around 19,000 jobs in this state are derived from international education. That makes it the second largest service export industry just behind tourism. It is very important to our state and it is very important to regional communities. We know that if we have a strategy and dedicated resources—we saw in this year's state budget an additional \$25 million—we can grow this sector and drive more than 6,800 additional jobs in the next 10 years with our dedicated strategy and additional resources.

The Best Semester Abroad campaign has been initiated by this government to further catapult Queensland onto the international education stage. On 29 July I announced 20 winners from 10 countries. These winners will each experience a semester studying in Brisbane, on the Gold Coast or Cairns with tuition costs, accommodation costs, and holiday experiences paid for through in-kind sponsorship. Students from Chile, Mexico, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Italy and Spain will be here, tweeting and promoting Queensland as excellent ambassadors, telling their cohorts back home that this is the place they should come and stay at because of our excellent institutions, our fantastic climate and our beautiful environment.

Over the last three years we have seen a nosedive in the number of foreign students coming to Queensland to study because those opposite took their foot off the pedal. Under the watch of the former treasurer, now opposition leader, who was the minister for trade, we saw numbers decline every single year. There were cuts to the Public Service, a decline in foreign students and a decline in trade. Only Labor can be trusted with the Queensland economy.

Mason Lee

Mr LANGBROEK: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. Can the minister advise if the Queensland Police Service was advised by Queensland Health of suspected physical abuse of baby Mason Lee prior to his being released from Lady Cilento hospital in March this year?

Mr DICK: I have made public comments on this matter. I know the opposition is very keen to politicise the issue notwithstanding their earlier comments that they believe this is above politics and that the protection of children was the paramount aim of all of us in this parliament. Notwithstanding that commitment we see what is happening today.

I have made my public comments very clear about this: I sought advice from the director-general of the Department of Health on the conduct of various individuals employed by hospital and health services who may have had interaction with the child concerned. The advice I received is that the relevant doctors in particular, as well as the staff of those hospital and health services, complied with their reporting obligations under the relevant legislation applicable to them. The matter is the subject of a number of inquiries now. The Queensland Police Service, as you have indicated, Mr Speaker, is continuing its inquiry. Individuals have been charged. There is also an inquiry being conducted by the Family and Child Commissioner which is very important, and no doubt there may be other inquiries, including a coronial inquiry. As I have made clear publicly, as well as those comments, the Department of Health, hospital and health services and any other individual in the health system in Queensland will comply fully and completely with those inquiries to ensure the truth of the matter is ascertained and any recommendations, as indicated by the Premier and the Minister for Child Safety, are properly and fully implemented.

Sale of Public Assets

Mr SAUNDERS: My question is for the Treasurer. I refer to the comments of the ACCC chairman Rod Sims on Tuesday, 26 July at the Melbourne Economic Forum about privatisation of public assets. How do the comments of Mr Sims reflect on the government's determination to keep public assets in public hands and any other alternative policy approaches?

Mr PITT: I thank the honourable member for his question. I can say with certainty that the comments provided by Mr Sims certainly got the hares running. A few snippets from his speech, as reported by Fairfax Media, should be recorded and repeated for *Hansard*. Mr Sims said—

I've been a very strong advocate of privatisation for probably 30 years; I believe it enhances economic efficiency.

...

I'm now almost at the point of opposing privatisation because it's been done to boost proceeds, it's been done to boost asset sales and I think it's severely damaging our economy.

...

Of course you get these lovely headlines in the *Financial Review* saying 'Gosh, what a successful sale, look at the multiple they achieved.

...

Well of course they bloody well did: the owners factored in very large price rises because there's no regulation on how they set the price of a monopoly. How dopey is that?

...

When you meet people in the street and they say 'I don't want privatisation because it boosts prices' and you dismiss them ... recent examples suggest they're right.

I table that article.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Sydney Morning Herald* online, dated 15 August 2016, titled 'Privatisation has damaged the economy, says ACCC Chief' [\[1235\]](#).

For the fanatical proponents of privatisation these comments by Mr Sims must be absolutely devastating—fanatics such as the member for Clayfield and the member for Indooroopilly. Mr Sims said that selling off assets such as ports and electricity infrastructure can create unregulated monopolies

that damage productivity and the wider economy. These comments vindicate the position that this government has taken in terms of keeping public assets in public hands for the public good. The No. 1 official in the country responsible for economic efficiency has tolled the bell on privatisation.

Will those opposite finally come forward with their plan? Queenslanders deserve to know the position of those opposite, particularly the member for Clayfield, the former treasurer, who wants to be the alternative Premier in this state. It is very simple: the LNP under Tim Nicholls either support asset sales or they do not. We should have heard the answer from Mr Nicholls by now. Since he became leader on 6 May he has kept very quiet on this. Before the 2012 election in opposition he certainly had no problem opposing privatisation. Before then he was opposed to asset sales. Then he spent nearly three years telling us that it was the smartest and strongest choice for Queensland. During that time he spent around \$100 million of taxpayers' money to relentlessly tell us that. Since 24 May the opposition leader has kept his position very quiet and that includes in his budget reply speech in which he did not come clean. Maybe he should be asking Mike Baird who is seeing an embarrassing \$520 per household electricity price rise which will happen as a result of their asset sales. He can ask how asset sales were disrupted by the Turnbull government in terms of the state grid Chinese bid. Asset sales are not the panacea for all ills and those opposite have to come clean.

Child Protection

Ms DAVIS: My question without notice is to the Premier. It has now been six weeks since the cut-off for reporting on the June quarter Child Safety data, and I ask: will the Premier commit to releasing that data now given 80 per cent of Queenslanders now believe the child protection system is either in crisis or under pressure?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. Before I answer that question I have heard some people interjecting over there. Let me make it very clear that I have confidence in every single minister sitting here working hard to deliver for the people of Queensland.

My understanding is that these reports come on a quarterly basis and they are due to be published in October. They will be published in October publicly.

Mental Health, Services

Mr STEWART: My question is to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. I refer to the recently released report of the Barrett commission of inquiry. What is the response of the government to the recommendations in relation to residential youth mental health care and what has been the response of other relevant groups?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for his question. He knows firsthand the important role government has to play in investing in mental health services, particularly for young people, which is exactly what we are doing in Townsville. That was one of our election commitments and we are delivering on it. I assure the House that the government is committed to implementing all six recommendations of the Barrett Commission of Inquiry. This government will build a new residential mental health facility for young people facing serious mental health issues.

I can advise the member for Townsville that we are going to implement those recommendations in close consultation with the families of young people affected by mental health. That will include families of children who were patients at the Barrett Adolescent Centre. Of course, those families were terribly affected by the decision of the Newman-Nicholls government to close the Barrett Adolescent Centre and not to replace it. I inform the House that tomorrow those families will meet with departmental officials from Queensland Health to be updated on our progress. Many of those families will come from outside Brisbane. At that meeting, families will be offered opportunities for further involvement as we implement the commission recommendations. We know that for many families nothing can take away the terrible pain they endured as a result of the catastrophic decision of the Newman-Nicholls government to close the facility without replacement.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister, one moment. Pause the clock. Minister, please resume your seat. Member for Surfers Paradise and member for Brisbane Central, you will be warned if you persist with your debate across the chamber.

Mr DICK: Of course, the first response from the members opposite was not to apologise, not to show contrition, not to show sympathy, not to show empathy for those families; it was for the member for Surfers Paradise to say that the commission of inquiry, headed by a very senior and respected former judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland, was a political witch-hunt.

Mr Langbroek: Well, it was.

Mr DICK: That is the first thing that he says. I take his interjection, 'It was'. They are in complete denial because of their responsibility. We know that the then treasurer required the health minister to deliver between \$100 million and \$120 million in savings from the health portfolio in three months. That was one of the drivers that resulted in the closure of the adolescent mental health facility.

Let us address this furphy, this falsehood, that we did not replace the centre. The commission of inquiry makes it very clear that, while there were difficulties in relation to the construction, there was no decision to delay or not replace it by the Labor government. The only government that made a decision not to replace Barrett was the Newman-Nicholls LNP government. That is the outcome of this commission of inquiry.

We will work with the families, we will work with mental health leaders and we will work with the community.

Mr Springborg: You went on a witch-hunt but couldn't find any witches.

Mr DICK: If I was the member for Southern Downs, I would not be interjecting at all on this issue. He should apologise—

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Minister, resume your seat. Member for Mount Ommaney, resume your seat, please. Member for Southern Downs and member for Surfers Paradise, if you want to ask a question get on the speaking list. There is an opportunity for you to ask questions of the minister during question time this morning.

Mason Lee

Mrs SMITH: My question is to the Premier. With reference to the testimony of the Queensland Family and Child Commission Principal Commissioner to the 2016 Finance and Administration Committee estimates hearing, can the Premier advise when she expects the commissioner's report on the reviews being conducted by the Department of Health and the department of child safety into the tragic death of Mason Jet Lee will be handed to the government for consideration?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member very much for the question. As I have made very clear, I have written to Cheryl Vardon, the Family and Child Commissioner, about conducting a review. I am not going to pre-empt her. She will be doing a completely thorough review, as she did with the previous review into Tiahleigh Palmer. She will have whatever resources she is required to have. I believe she will conduct that review with extreme due diligence. I also make this commitment: as with the report into Tiahleigh Palmer, we will make this report public.

Child Safety, Staff

Ms PEASE: My question is to the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence. Will the minister please inform the House how the Palaszczuk government is supporting front-line and front-line support child safety staff?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for the question. The safety of Queensland children and the wellbeing of our families is one of our highest priorities. As I said earlier, today we have 166 more front-line and front-line support staff than we did two years ago. That is in contrast to when the LNP was in government, when they cut 225 full-time staff—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Mount Ommaney and member for Aspley, you are now warned under standing order 253A for your interjections.

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order. If the minister attacks members on this side of the House, they can hardly—

Mr SPEAKER: Resume your seat. There is no point of order. Resume your seat, member for Callide.

Ms FENTIMAN: There is no doubt that those cuts are still having an impact today. I take this opportunity to thank our hardworking child safety staff, who I think have one of the toughest jobs in Queensland. I thank them for their dedication as we embark on a 10-year overhaul of the child safety

system. We are three years in to a 10-year program of reform. We are rebuilding the child protection system. This year we have a record \$1 billion investment in child and family services. We are continuing to focus on taking action earlier to support our families earlier, before small problems become big problems. We need to make sure that our families get the help they need when they need it.

In addition to supporting Queensland families, of course we are supporting the dedicated child safety officers. I am pleased to say that there are more of them and they are better trained than ever before. Last financial year alone, 150,000 hours of training occurred for our front-line child safety staff and the staff working in our non-government agencies. That was delivered to 3,750 child safety officers and family support staff. This level of professional development and investment in our front-line staff is unprecedented. It is an investment that will pay dividends.

We are rolling out our specialist investigation teams to drive better response times. We are also putting in place family group convenors and coordinators, which means that families can work with the person who is right for them. Just last week, I was very pleased to stand with the president of Foster Care Queensland and announce additional funding for Foster Care Queensland, whose funding was cut under the former LNP government. We are also bringing forward one of the key recommendations of the Child Protection Commission of Inquiry, putting in place \$4.5 million to transfer our foster-carers to the non-government sector so that the time of our hardworking child safety staff can be freed up to make sure that they are doing what we need them to do, that is, supporting the nearly 9,000 children who are unable to live safely at home with their parents. I thank the hardworking staff of—

(Time expired)

Child Protection

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the Minister for Child Safety. Can the minister advise what percentage of five-day notifications were not commenced in the required time frame for the year ending 30 June 2016? If not, when will she release the data?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for the question. Of course, our child safety data is released every quarter on our website, but it is released three months after the end of the reporting period, which has been happening for years. Data from December—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, Minister. Member for Mudgeeraba, you are already on a warning. This is not an opportunity for debate, which is clearly the tone of your comments. This is not an opportunity for debate. Member for Glass House, if you want to ask a question, get on the speaking list.

Ms FENTIMAN: Data from December is released in April. The March data was released on schedule in July. The next round of data will be released and put on the department's website, as it always is, in October of this year. This government absolutely welcomes transparency and accountability. I have to say that there is no room for politics when it comes to child safety. We have heard from those opposite that this is a subject matter that is, quite rightly, above politics. It is a shame that those members opposite seem to be walking away from the bipartisan approach that we have had in implementing the recommendations from the commission of inquiry.

The latest March data shows some positive trends. The number of notifications are down. The number of substantiations of child harm are down. It does also show that there is more work to do when it comes to investigations and assessments. I have been very up-front and clear that that is not where it needs to be. That is why we are reallocating front-line staff to high-demand service centres. That is why we are rolling out specialist investigation teams to drive better responses. This government is absolutely committed to transparency and accountability and driving better reforms.

In the last few weeks I have been to a number of child safety service centres and I have spoken with staff who have told me that our new reforms are allowing them to spend even greater time with families in the investigation phase. Investigations are taking longer because our front-line staff are spending more time with families to connect them earlier to the services they need. Recently child safety staff at Forest Lake told me that these new reforms have actually given them permission to use their skills and qualifications to connect families with the services they need.

In the latest round of data more than 9,000 families have accessed our early intervention family support services. Foster Care Queensland put out a media release saying that that was an incredibly positive sign of the importance of these reforms and called on this government to continue its good work with families in implementing the reforms from the commission of inquiry.

As I have said, our front-line child safety staff have one of the toughest jobs in Queensland. I want to thank them for their hard work and dedication. I commit to this parliament that they will continue to release statistics on child data to make sure that we are transparent and accountable to the parliament.

(Time expired)

State Schools, Class Sizes

Ms LINARD: My question is to the Minister for Education. Over the last 18 months the Palaszczuk government has begun employing 875 extra teachers above growth in Queensland state schools. Can the minister inform the House how this investment is helping reduce class sizes in state schools?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for the question. It was wonderful to be in her electorate last week at Virginia State School where the Premier and I announced the best ever NAPLAN results for schools in Queensland. It was also great to be at Virginia State School because they are seeing the benefits firsthand of the 875 additional teachers that our government is putting back into classrooms.

At Virginia State School they have 100 per cent of their classes either at class size targets or below. Virginia State School is an example of where our additional teachers are making a real difference to class sizes. We know that class sizes matter. We listen to teachers when they tell us that they understand that that makes a real and tangible difference to providing the differentiated learning that every child deserves.

This is in stark contrast to what the LNP did when they were in government. What we saw was the LNP cut 500 teachers from Queensland state schools. This had a real and genuine impact on class sizes in Queensland. When Labor left office in 2012 some 92 per cent of our prep classes were at or below the target and 95 per cent of our year 4 to year 6 classes were at or below the target.

What happened under the LNP's watch was a blowout in class sizes. When they cut 500 teachers from classes, that made a difference. We saw in the final year of the LNP prep fell to just 87 per cent and year 4 to year 6 fell to just 89 per cent. I have great news for Queensland. We are seeing that the additional teachers that we are putting into classrooms are making a real difference to class size targets. Already under our watch we have seen that year 4 to year 6 is now back up to 95 per cent—that is, up from 89 per cent under the watch of those opposite—and up to 92 per cent in prep.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Ms JONES: I thank the member for Nanango for her interjection. Thank you for welcoming the significant investment we are making. I thank you for stepping outside the very partisan approach this morning and endorsing the major investment that we are making.

Now that the member for Nanango has started making interjections, let us see what this morning was all about. We are making a real investment in front-line services that is changing the lives of Queenslanders. What the LNP seem unable to comprehend is that their cuts to Child Safety, their cuts to the Barrett centre, their cuts to teachers in our classrooms has hurt Queenslanders. That is why at the ballot box they rejected you after 2½ years. Do not come in here and lecture us when you cut 200 people from front-line services in Child Safety.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms JONES: I am upset about it. I am upset—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, resume your seat! You will be warned if you persist. I remind the member for Aspley that once you are warned you have to be very careful in terms of your actions and comments.

Child Protection

Mr POWELL: My question is to the Minister for Child Safety. I refer to the minister's answer to the question asked by the member for Maroochydore and to comments made by her director-general at last year's estimates stating that there is a 'two-month lag in data reporting'. When did the minister change this to three months and why?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for the question. If the member looks back over the last five years at when data is released on our website, there is a lag of two to three months to allow staff—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms FENTIMAN: But in the last two years it has averaged three months, including under your government. Including under your government there was a three-month period to release data.

Mr Powell interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock! Member for Glass House, you are warned under standing order 253A in relation to your interjections.

Ms FENTIMAN: I am happy to stand here for all of question time and answer questions from the opposition about the health and robustness of our child safety service system. If they want to quibble about time lines for when important data is put up on the website when it has been routinely released two or three months, and sometimes four months, after the data is released, I am happy to stand here and do that too. The point is the data is released. It is up on the website. It will be up on the website routinely, just like when it was released on schedule in July.

M1 Upgrade, Funding

Mr KELLY: My question is to the Minister for Main Roads. Will the minister update the House on whether there has been any correspondence from the Prime Minister to the M1 task force regarding the federal funding commitments made to upgrade the M1?

Mr BAILEY: I thank the honourable member for Greenslopes for his question. I know when making representations he has at heart the motorists who use the M1. The M1 is the most trafficked road in Queensland, with 148,000 vehicle movements a day, including 12,000 heavy vehicles. It is very important to our economy in South-East Queensland. It is part of the National Land Transport Network. I table a map indicating that.

Tabled paper: Map, undated, of National Transport Network Road Corridors—Queensland [[1236](#)].

It is also one of the great unfunded priorities on our road network thanks to the federal government's ignorance and the inaction of the previous Nicholls-Newman government. The Turnbull government will not commit to the M1 based on their own model of funding. Despite the fact that they fund the M1 across the border on an 80-20 basis, they refuse to fund the M1 between Brisbane and the Gold Coast on the same basis. I table a document from former deputy prime minister Mr Truss and Jamie Briggs on 11 December 2014. It states—

The Australian Government has reintroduced the traditional 80:20 funding split for new road and rail projects on the national network outside of metropolitan areas.

Tabled paper: Media release, dated 11 December 2014, from the Hon. Jamie Briggs, titled '2014: Building the infrastructure Australia needs' [[1237](#)].

The task force met with the Gold Coast mayor, the mayor of Logan, as well as with CCIQ, RACQ and the Queensland Trucking Association—a very broad group. We wrote to the Prime Minister requesting a hearing to talk about these issues on the M1 and to get both projects funded. What did we get? We got no reply from the Prime Minister. He refused to reply to the delegation's representations. We got a reply from the assistant minister, Mr McGrath. I table both our letter to the Prime Minister and the reply, although not from the Prime Minister, refusing a meeting with us. I think that is a disgrace.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 15 July 2016, from the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply, Hon. Mark Bailey, to the Prime Minister, Hon. Malcolm Turnbull, regarding upgrades to the M1 [[1238](#)].

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 4 August 2016, from the Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister, Senator the Hon. James McGrath, to the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply, Hon. Mark Bailey, regarding upgrades to the M1 [[1239](#)].

The Prime Minister should be backing the Gold Coast and Logan City and their needs in Queensland. He does not understand Queensland. It gets better. We are inheriting this issue because there was no funding by the previous Nicholls-Newman government under the national partnership agreement for the M1. The Gold Coast mayor has written to the member for Currumbin and said—

Some might question the effectiveness of their representation since you have held positions of serious influence for many years now and have had more than ample opportunity to not only make this issue part of a conversation but, indeed, the talk of the town—why do you think this has not happened?—I am very mindful of your years as cabinet minister in the Newman Government which provided you with extraordinary opportunity to exercise influence to achieve the desperately needed commitment to overhaul this section of the M1. Unbelievable!

I table that letter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 29 July 2016, from the Mayor of the Gold Coast City Council, Mr Tom Tate, to the member for Currumbin, Ms Jann Stuckey MP, regarding her concerns about the Varsity Lakes to Tugan section of the M1 [[1240](#)].

We need action on the M1 and we need a fair funding deal from the federal government.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Moggill, I am informed that we have more students from the Eumundi State School in the electorate of Noosa in our public gallery. Welcome, students.

Child Protection

Dr ROWAN: My question is to the Minister for Child Safety. Minister, I refer to chapter 10.6 of the department's Child Safety Practice Manual, which refers to when to seek to downgrade or delete an approved notification, and I ask: can the minister categorically rule out that the downgrading of abuse notifications is occurring or has occurred in the last 12 months?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for the question. I am happy to take that question on notice and get back to the member directly.

Ipswich, Sinkhole

Mr MADDEN: My question is to the Minister for State Development and the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. Will the minister please update the House on the status of the sinkhole that opened up at Basin Pocket in Ipswich in early August?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Ipswich West for his question. I would also like to take the opportunity to commend the member for Ipswich for her hard work and valuable contribution in resolving this matter—very well done indeed. I would also like to thank the residents of Basin Pocket where the sinkhole appeared for their patience during a testing time.

I met Lynn and Ray McKay when I visited their home a couple of weeks ago in order to assure them of the government's support and resolve to fix this problem. They are a wonderful couple and their fortitude and good humour is something for us all to admire.

When the sinkhole developed on 2 August, officers of my department arrived on site and worked closely with the Ipswich City Council to make the site safe. The remediation work was led by the shaft repair specialists from the Abandoned Mines Unit. After draining the sinkhole, it was then excavated to reveal an old coal exploration shaft at the bottom of the hole. It appears that what has happened is that there was an old cap and the old cap had simply given way and the soil from the top went down to the bottom and the water from the bottom came up. The mine shaft was then plugged with rocks and clay and the sinkhole was backfilled with general fill to ensure a stable and permanent seal.

Our prime concern was to get Lynn and Ray back in their home as soon as possible, as that was their express wish. I am pleased to inform the House that Lynn and Ray returned home on Friday, 5 August. All the remediation work is complete and funded through our abandoned mines program at no cost to Lynn and Ray at all. Our abandoned mines specialists will continue to monitor the site.

The need to respond to occurrences like this highlight this government's sound budget decision not only to meet our election commitment to maintain funding but also to further boost funding for this program to \$42 million over five years. I also commend my department's team on their quick response and the quality of their work in fixing this problem. Those opposite say we have hired far too many public servants. I say to them: who would you sack if you were back in government—the abandoned mines team who helped fix Lynn and Ray's problem?

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Hinchinbrook, you are warned under standing order 252. If you persist, I will take the appropriate action.

Ipswich Hospital, Security

Mr MANDER: My question is to the Minister for Health. Will the minister confirm that nurses at Ipswich Hospital continue to work in fear after the recent alleged sexual assault of a colleague and that the hospital was security lax in the weeks leading up to the attack?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for his question. As he knows, the government has been very firm in its response to ensuring that all health workers—be they paramedics, nurses, doctors, allied health professionals, administrative staff, anyone working in hospital and health services—are provided with appropriate security. This is the first time the honourable member has raised this with me. Of course, security at hospitals is the responsibility of hospital and health services. In this case it would be the West Moreton Hospital and Health Service that would be responsible for that matter. I am sure that they deal with these matters very seriously, as I know they have dealt with such matters on the Gold Coast.

I know that the member for Mudgeeraba, the member for Surfers Paradise and others on the Gold Coast have raised alarmist concerns in the community about security. As an example of what has happened, the member for Mudgeeraba has raised issues about security guards at Robina Hospital. The number of those security guards under our government has increased. Six additional security officers have been placed in that hospital because of the good work of the hospital and health service on the Gold Coast. I am confident that West Moreton will take this seriously.

After three years of a lack of action by the Newman-Nicholls government—very little happened in this space; indeed, nothing happened in this space—we recently released a report in relation to occupational violence in hospital. It was a very important, high-level report. I think there were 18 recommendations or thereabouts in that report that we are now working through. The report identifies that there are many reasons for violence in hospitals—some caused by patients themselves, some caused by individuals coming in to support patients who lose control or otherwise act in a violent fashion, some caused by unprovoked violence. Those issues are being worked through. We will work through any issues related to violence impacting on staff in our hospital and health services across Queensland.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work

Mr BUTCHER: My question is to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills. Will the minister please tell the House about the Palaszczuk government's successful Skilling Queenslanders for Work program and how it is assisting the young people in the electorate of Gladstone?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. I know the member is a strong advocate for his community and I recognise his strong interest in providing people in his electorate with meaningful training pathways.

Overall, this \$240 million initiative aims to support up to 32,000 unemployed, underemployed or disadvantaged people to gain the skills and training to enter the workforce. I was pleased to see the Premier announce the successful applicants for round 1 for 2016-17 during estimates. This will result in \$33.3 million in funding to go to 192 projects across Queensland that will assist up to 7,540 disadvantaged Queenslanders become job ready. This was the third round to be announced—a sign of clear dedication to skills and training in our first 18 months.

If we look specifically at the electorate of Gladstone, I am pleased to inform the member that four organisations were successful in this round, with a total of \$495,100 that will assist up to 144 local residents. The projects being delivered by these groups are specifically targeted to align with identified needs in the area and will provide a broad range of skills to the participants that take part in them. These programs are as diverse as the Certificate III in Individual Support being delivered by Building Employment Skills—Gladstone in conjunction with Central Queensland University to the Certificate I in Conservation and Land Management being delivered by Gidarjil Development Corporation and CQU.

I am particularly pleased to inform the member for Gladstone about the Get Set for Work program that will be delivered through the Gladstone PCYC. This program will engage with young school leavers and disadvantaged young people to deliver intensive employment and training assistance with outcomes including certificates in warehousing, community services or retail services. This is in addition to the funding that the Gladstone PCYC received in round 1 in 2015-16. A number of these participants come from highly disadvantaged backgrounds where they were at risk of developing regular patterns of interaction with the youth justice system and the justice system.

These initiatives are just one part of the wider support and assistance measures that the Palaszczuk government has put in place after being cut by the former government. I note that a number of those opposite supported the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. I hope that they join this side of the House in recognising the opportunities that this program provides. When those opposite talk about jobs, maybe they should attend—

Mr Bleijie interjected.


Mrs D'ATH:—some of the graduation ceremonies and see how many of these people are going into jobs.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Kawana, if you persist you will be warned. Question time has expired.

LIMITATION OF ACTIONS (INSTITUTIONAL CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (11.30 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Civil Proceedings Act 2011, the Legal Profession Act 2007, the Limitation of Actions Act 1974, the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act 2002, the Personal Injuries Proceedings Regulation 2014, the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009 and the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Regulation 2009, for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Limitation of Actions (Institutional Child Sexual Abuse) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 [\[1241\]](#).

Tabled paper: Limitation of Actions (Institutional Child Sexual Abuse) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016, explanatory notes [\[1242\]](#).

This is a historic occasion. Today I am pleased to introduce the Limitation of Actions (Institutional Child Sexual Abuse) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. The purpose of this bill is to finally take the necessary steps to provide increased access to justice for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse. We will do this by retrospectively removing the limitation period for when a legal claim can be made. My government understands the injustices wrought upon child sexual abuse survivors by current limitation periods which only provide three years from when a survivor turns 18 years of age to lodge a claim.

I have personally heard from survivors who have been brave enough to tell their stories and discuss their anguish. I want to pay tribute to all of those people who have spent time raising these issues not just with me but also with other members of my cabinet. I want to specifically acknowledge and thank not just Micah and the Historical Abuse Network but also Allan Allaway—who has been a friend for many years and whose personal stories have touched my life—and members of the Grammar network. Having had the opportunity to sit there and personally hear their stories has had a deep and lasting impression upon me. I have conveyed those views to my cabinet and to caucus, and I understand that they have also been willing to share their stories with other people. What I say today is that your government is listening; your government has heard your voices.

Over and over again I have been told that this period of time is woefully inadequate to allow victims of childhood sexual abuse to even come to terms with their abuse on a personal level, let alone to find the enormous strength needed to address their pain to move forward and to commence the daunting and often arduous task of commencing litigation in the courts. We have prioritised this reform to recognise that there is no time limit on suffering and to ensure that survivors have the time they may need to come forward to talk about their abuse. This will give them the opportunity to argue their claim in a time frame that will accommodate the hardships they are already facing. The changes we are making will remove one of the barriers to justice that many victims have felt has let them down.

I am so proud to be a small part of that change, and I acknowledge the bravery and sheer resilience shown by those people who have approached government after government until they have finally been able to witness this reform being brought before the House. The amendments to the limitation period recognise the program of work and the significant degree of consultation already undertaken by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and, in particular, its recommendation that the removal of the statutory limitation period for institutional child sexual abuse should occur as soon as possible.

We also recognise that for many survivors this is an important starting point, and other civil litigation issues relating to limitation periods and raised by the commission's recommendations also need to be worked through. My government has also committed to further public consultation on the scope for the removal of the statutory limitation period, including in the context of child abuse that is not of a sexual nature and not in an institutional context, and other civil litigation recommendations of the royal commission relating to the duty of institutions and the proper defendant. While New South Wales and Victoria have enacted legislation to remove the limitation period for actions relating to child abuse more generally and do not limit claims to institutional abuse, this followed considerable consultation on these issues. It is important for my government to fully consider what broadening the scope of these recommendations would mean for Queensland, and consultation with the community and key stakeholders will inform that consideration. We are introducing this bill very promptly and, subject to this House, I would hope that the removal of the limitation period for institutional child sexual abuse actions could be in place in the first half of 2017.

The bill will also establish proceedings for class actions in Queensland. This is an issue that has been called for by legal stakeholders and consumer groups alike for many years in Queensland. We have seen causes of action being commenced in other jurisdictions because of the lack of a contemporary representative action regime in Queensland. My government felt that, if we were making changes to allow victims to bring legal action, they might be a hollow change if not accompanied by practical changes that provide for such a representative action regime. This bill will also make changes to the Legal Practitioner Interest on Trust Accounts Fund and permanently establish the trialled Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal justices of the peace jurisdiction. I will now discuss these matters in further detail.

The bill amends the Civil Proceedings Act 2011 to create a comprehensive legal framework for representative proceedings, commonly called class actions, in the Queensland Supreme Court. Class actions are a legal process whereby one person can bring an action on behalf of a number of people whose claims relate to similar or related circumstances and give rise to a common issue of law or fact. As the law currently stands in Queensland, the Uniform Civil Procedure Rules 1999 contain some representative party provisions. However, these are quite limited and do not provide the necessary framework for the effective conduct of class actions. The amendments contained in this bill will address this obstacle to justice by establishing new laws that clearly set out the relevant matters for commencing and undertaking class actions.

The amendments will create a greater degree of certainty and promote transparency, efficiency and consistency in the conduct of class actions in this state. These amendments will also strengthen access to justice by overcoming the cost barriers and the lack of knowledge that might otherwise deter affected Queenslanders from pursuing a legal claim. The proposed new class action regime is modelled on similar legislative schemes in place in the Federal Court of Australia, New South Wales and Victoria. The introduction of this similar legislation in Queensland will ensure that Queenslanders are no longer burdened by being forced to commence costly litigation interstate. Furthermore, this will allow for class actions that are relevant to Queensland to be dealt with in our state by our judges and lawyers who know Queensland best.

The bill amends the Legal Profession Act 2007 which provides for how interest from solicitors' trust accounts is dealt with. This includes the payment of that interest into the Legal Practitioner Interest on Trust Accounts Fund, which is then distributed from the fund by way of payments for various purposes including legal assistance, legal profession regulation and law library services. The need for legal assistance has been increasing in Queensland, and the earnings from the interest on solicitors' trust accounts has not kept pace with that growth. There is a growing need to ensure stability of funding sources for those needs, and the government has acted to ensure those payments will come from consolidated revenue.

Under these revised arrangements to ensure sustainable long-term funding for current recipients of Legal Practitioner Interest on Trust Accounts Fund distributions, the bill will repeal all provisions in the Legal Profession Act relating to the fund and enable the transfer of revenue received from the fund into the Consolidated Fund effective from 1 January 2017. Future funding for these purposes will come from the Consolidated Fund, and interest on solicitors' trust accounts will be paid to the Consolidated Fund.

The bill will also simplify and improve the administration of solicitors' trust account arrangements under the Legal Profession Act by requiring solicitors to keep only a single general trust account, removing the requirement for a special deposit account and it will make other improvements of an administrative nature.

The bill also amends the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009 and the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Regulation 2009 to provide permanency for the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal justices of the peace model that has been trialled in a number of Queensland communities since June 2013. Under the trial, a panel of two JPs, one of whom must be legally qualified, hears and decides certain minor civil disputes. Legislative amendments extended the trial earlier this year for a further six months to 13 November 2016. The trial has provided many benefits to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal including improved clearance rates and improved time-to-trial rates in the minor civil disputes jurisdiction. Importantly, it also provides JPs with a valued professional opportunity to enhance their role and their recognition in the community. Accordingly, we are looking to make this trial permanent, and the bill removes provisions for expiry. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (11.40 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.


Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Member for Toowoomba South; Treasurer

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.40 am): While I was welcoming the new member for Toowoomba South and extolling the lack of interest in Toowoomba South by those opposite, I neglected to properly acknowledge his wife, Melinda, his daughters, Elizabeth and Charlotte, and his parents, Denis and Leone, who were in the chamber at the time of his introduction but, for those who do watch a certain blog about this place, had actually departed before question time started. I certainly say to David's family, also somewhat belatedly: welcome to the family of parliament; you are going to be in for an interesting time.

David's wife, Mel, and two young daughters were instrumental in his campaign as well. They worked almost as hard as David did, lost almost as much sleep as he did and were very much a part of the team that won Toowoomba South, extolling the virtues for which the LNP is known in terms of representatives who come from their electorate and who reflect the values of their electorate so very well in this place. To them I also say thank you.

We have also listened this morning to the Premier somewhat belatedly give her half-term scorecard in this place to try and gee up the troops, who obviously all were sent the message beforehand to cheer at any statement that was made whether or not it was factual and to stand up and push it on. What is really the case? What have we seen and what has been exposed over the last couple of months? What has been exposed in estimates? Firstly, in estimates it was exposed that we do have a 'Captain Risky' Treasurer here in Queensland. We have a Treasurer who seeks advice, gets the advice, does not like the advice and then changes the rules about which the advice is given and seeks to change the rules in relation to something as important to the public servants of Queensland as their superannuation that has been put aside by governments of all political persuasions for some generations. He did not even have the guts to go out and ask the public servants what they thought about it. He and his Under Treasurer just issued an edict from on high to change the rules.

Instead of taking nothing, which would have been the proper thing to do from a proper prudent government, he raided the fund. However he did not raid the fund for just the amount that was recommended by the State Actuary; he raided it for twice as much, for \$4 billion. Then he compounded the riskiness by saying, 'Oh no, the State Actuary actually said we could take \$4 billion out of the fund.' When the State Actuary was asked about that in estimates he clearly said, 'No, I certainly did not make that recommendation.' That is risky business undertaken by the 'Captain Risky' of all Australian Treasurers.

Then in a further blow to business confidence he changed his mind about taxes. He went to the last election saying there will be no new taxes in Queensland. What has he done? A year after promising that he will not change the tax on property transactions, he whacked it up on foreign purchases of properties here in Queensland. At a time when the property industry is screaming out for people to invest, at a time when the property industry is screaming out for certainty to make investment decisions, what does this Treasurer do? What does this 'Captain Risky' do? He risks the entire reputation of Queensland and the certainty of the development industry, one of the pillars of the Queensland economy that is actually propping up jobs and employment.

What else have we learnt over the past two months? We have certainly learnt that we have a minister hopelessly out of her depth when it comes to the child safety sector, and we saw that today. It took half an hour for the Premier to express confidence in the minister, despite being given a full three

minutes and a point of order to do so. It was only after half an hour and, I suspect, after reading the online messages and the social messages that the Premier reacted and finally said she had confidence in the minister. The question is: why should she have confidence in this minister?

One can understand the Premier's reticence about having confidence in a minister. This is a minister who twice in one hour of question time was unable to answer questions, was so completely out of her depth that she could not answer questions, was so hopelessly out of her depth that even if she did not have the exact data and facts in front of her, she was unable to explain what her department was doing and how it was doing it. She was unable even to take a question for three minutes. I have been in this place for nearly 10 years now and I do not recall during my time in this place a minister of the Crown, well briefed with all the resources of their department, unable to take two questions and put them both on notice in question time. It is clearly the case that we have a minister who is out of her depth.

As if having an incompetent minister is not bad enough, as if having a minister who cannot answer questions in this place is not bad enough, what we have is a minister who is not delivering the services and making sure the system works to protect the most vulnerable in our state. That is the shame of what has happened. We have a minister who does not know the answers to questions that she should know if she was across her brief and her portfolio about protecting young children.

We have unanswered questions about what happened in the three days after Mason Lee was seen. We have unanswered questions from the health minister about what the health department did to ensure the police were notified about it. We have unanswered questions about how long it is taking for statistics and data relevant to the delivery of services in that department to be provided if at all. We have obfuscation and we have concealment and we have cover-up by this department. Now we have three separate investigations into the tragic circumstances surrounding Mason Lee and the operations of the department, and we have no time frame for the delivery of the answers and the delivery of those reviews.

That is not the case when the government wants to investigate something like the Barrett centre; that is not the case when they want to investigate something like Uber; that is not the case when they have other investigations that suit their political purposes, but in this case there is no time frame for delivery of the reviews that are being undertaken. How much longer does the Queensland child protection system drift afloat on a sea of incompetence by Minister Fentiman?

For as long as it drifts afloat in a sea, so too does the Queensland economy. The jobs rhetoric from the Premier does not reflect reality. With every passing week, the government is taking decisions that are costing Queenslanders their jobs and risking Queensland's reputation as a safe place to do business. We have the Deputy Premier motivated by political fear of the greens movement in her electorate responding to requests, demands and protests to actually stop a project that had been approved, a project that had spent months, if not years, going through a full approval process where bulldozers had moved onto the site and were actually moving dirt, where the Deputy Premier herself said in March there were no grounds for state intervention.


Yet what has she done in a politically motivated way? She has called in this project, the bulldozers have stopped and the jobs have finished. Everyone is sitting in limbo waiting for the Deputy Premier to work out whether she has the best interests of Queensland at heart to get this project going again or whether indeed it is the best interests of the Australian Labor Party and the threat from the Greens on their left.

It does not matter whether it is the decision around the cruise ship terminal at the Gold Coast; it does not matter whether it is the decision around the Cairns shipping terminal improvement; it does not matter whether it is the Treasurer's failure to advance the Aquis resort in North Queensland; and it does not matter whether it is the Deputy Premier's or the Minister for State Development's decision on Great Keppel Island—they cannot seem to work out who is responsible—they cannot make decisions. They cannot get projects going. We are still waiting for the Minister for State Development to tell us what he thinks about Acland. How long has that been going on? Jobs are missing, exports are not being earned and Queensland's economy is suffering.

It is about time this government tried to do more than just soft 'fluff' pieces for the camera. It is about time this government stood up and took decisions that are in the best interests of Queensland and explain those decisions to the people of Queensland, because since the beginning of this year 20,000 full-time jobs have gone south, 20,000 full-time jobs have not been created and Queensland's unemployment rate has risen to over 6.5 per cent. It is only the LNP—

(Time expired)

Townsville Electorate, Innovation

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (11.50 am): I rise today to make members of this House aware of the outstanding work that is happening in Townsville in the innovation space. This past week I had the pleasure of attending the launch of Innovation IQ—or iNQ—a not-for-profit association that is led by industry experts and innovators who have created a centre that is focused on supporting and nurturing future innovators and entrepreneurs. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Minister for Science, Innovation and the Digital Economy, the Hon. Leeanne Enoch, for coming to my beautiful city and supporting this launch. iNQ is emerging in the Townsville innovation ecosystem as an important catalyst site for economics, knowledge and social growth. Importantly, it has the support of key local innovators and business leaders Sister City Partners and Honeycombes Property Group. The association is also an Advance Queensland Hot DesQ program host location. Hot DesQ is an innovative program designed to attract international and interstate start-ups to Queensland, bringing their experience and international connections to Queensland's ecosystem. The Hot DesQ start-ups visit for at least six months to pursue their businesses and help grow the entrepreneurial sector in the state.

Innovation IQ started as a brainstorming session with a range of groups and city leaders in November 2015 led by Joe Hoolihan and Warwick Powell. These two men took those initial ideas and turned them into a centre that now supports, nurtures and mentors new ideas. It is through great ideas and innovation like this that the Palaszczuk government committed an additional \$6 million to support regional innovation hubs. This new \$6 million fund will provide grants to support a range of activities to build innovation ecosystems across Queensland just like the one in Townsville. This funding will be used to help create the 'glue' which builds and strengthens local networks and helps everyone locally work together and turn ideas into new products and services and, ultimately, local jobs.


The official launch was a star-studded event and was attended by our very own *Shark Tank* member Glen Richards, who took Greencross Vets from a successful local business and turned it into an international venture. Perhaps one of the most inspiring people at the launch was Hamish Finlayson, who has developed four apps already. Two of his apps teach people of all ages to think about the waste they throw into our oceans and the impact this has on marine life, particularly turtles. One of his apps, entitled Awesome Foundation App, helps young people with ASD cope with, and provide solutions to, sensory overload. Hamish is an entrepreneur who attracted \$16,000 in crowdfunding in his first attempt to seek funding sources online to support his app development and marketing, but it does not finish there. Hamish won a scholarship to attend the Global Summit on Education, or GSE2016, in the USA. He was one of only nine Australians in the 700-strong group from around the world who had the opportunity to pitch their ideas to 300 international investors. Hamish is 11 years old.

Innovation IQ as a business incubator hosts SafetyCulture, which is another example of a homegrown success with the ability to scale globally. SafetyCulture's CEO, Luke Anear, has recently opened an international office in Manchester, England, yet his head office is still based in Townsville, North Queensland. The Palaszczuk government wants to work with people like Glen Richards, Luke Anear and Hamish Finlayson because we are committed to fostering a climate of innovation in our state to ensure we are prepared for the economy of the future. Our government understands the opportunities that innovation presents for growth in both new and existing industries right around our state, which is reflected by the commitment of \$405 million to our whole-of-government Accelerating Advance Queensland innovation initiative. It is the centrepiece of our government's agenda to stimulate the economy and create an environment which encourages innovation to drive business growth not only in Townsville but across the state.

The Palaszczuk government is also investing in existing companies to help them develop their innovative ideas to take local, national and global markets. Townsville Engineering Industries, a 50-year-old company, is embracing innovation by developing new sensor technologies for the mining and sugar industries and has been provided funding through the government's Knowledge Transfer Partnerships program. Advance Queensland is making a tangible difference in Townsville, and I believe it will be—

(Time expired)

Child Protection

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (11.55 am): Today in question time we saw an embattled minister once again refuse to accept any responsibility for the failings of her department and the failings of this government to protect a little boy. Not only that, but when asked the Premier refused to endorse

the minister or say that the minister had her confidence. With no vote of confidence from the Premier, this Minister for Child Safety should finally accept the system failure that has occurred under her watch. This government should hang its head in shame over its handling of the child safety system failure to protect little Mason Lee. Today we have not seen the minister or anyone in this government apologise for this complete failure.

As each day passes we learn more and more of how this government failed this little boy. The questions over how the system failed grow. The facts now show that it took four months for Child Safety to visit the mother of Mason Lee. They never sighted Mason and no investigation was ever commenced. Four months is how long it took this minister to release the March Child Safety performance data, and we wait for the minister to release the June data in light of the ongoing blowout in investigation backlogs. I want to remind the House that during the 2015 estimates the director-general for Child Safety said—

One of my priorities is to ensure we actually have best quality data entered as quickly as possible so that we can be very clear that we are not missing any child at risk who requires investigation or assessment ...

He went on to say to say in that same response—

One of my priorities—and I have recently met with my senior staff—is to make sure that we continue to impress on our service delivery staff the importance of making sure that that data is contemporary and that we are checking that to ensure every single matter is followed up.

Why does the minister now hide behind secrecy and spin? I am not alone when it comes to a complete lack of confidence in this government's handling of child safety because 26,000 people have expressed their lack of confidence in the minister and this government, calling for more accountability in the wake of Mason Lee's death. That is 26,000 people who have no confidence in the system under this minister's watch. As I have said today already, 18 months is all it has taken for this Labor government to run the child safety system into the ground. When will the minister finally accept responsibility for the failures that have occurred under her watch to protect children like Mason Lee? Why does the Premier continue to protect this embattled minister despite the complete failure of the system to protect children like Mason Lee?

The reality is that it has taken the death of toddler Mason Jet Lee to shine a light on the rapid meltdown in Child Safety under Labor's watch. It is time for this Labor government to stop hiding behind reviews and come clean on how the system failed this little boy to ensure that it does not fail again.

It has now been six weeks since 30 June, the latest full quarter for Child Safety reporting and a close to the financial year. Today we heard excuses for not releasing the most up-to-date data. We can only surmise it is worse again than the March data. The minister needs to come clean and tell Queenslanders the true number of investigations not commenced in the last year. For a government that claims to be open and accountable, that clearly does not extend to Child Safety.

The minister needs to take responsibility for the system that failed little Mason and start acting on the growing crisis in investigation delays. Child abuse response times continue to blow out because Annastacia Palaszczuk and her minister refuse to act immediately to provide extra resources to front-line child safety officers to protect at-risk children. We know for a fact that back in October last year the minister was briefed about worrying response times, but she still has not deployed specialist investigation teams since being advised.


Too many Queensland children are being left in dangerous situations for too long. We need immediate action to ensure our kids are protected. Ten per cent of Queensland children deemed to be in the most danger are not being seen within the recommended 24-hour time period. What will the June data show? Seventy-one per cent of kids that are supposed to be checked on within five days are not being seen in that time frame. Again, Queenslanders need to know what the June data is going to show.

There can be no hiding from the fact that under this minister's watch almost half of all child abuse investigations are now taking longer than two months to finalise, since Labor came to office 18 months ago. This is a damning result, despite investigations being required to be finalised within 60 days. Not only are children at risk of abuse languishing in investigation backlogs waiting to commence; more and more children are waiting for action as investigation times blow out. The more we look at the performance of Child Safety under this minister, the more concerned we become.

(Time expired)

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Linard): I take this opportunity to welcome another group of students and teachers from Eumundi State School in the electorate of Noosa.

Innovation; Advancing Education

 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (12.01 pm): It is 18 months since the Palaszczuk government came to power, and I have to say that I could not be more proud of what we have achieved in that time. Already we have implemented 336 election commitments. We are rebuilding front-line services since the mass sackings of the Newman-Nicholls government, tackling domestic violence, restoring fairness to the workplace and our legal system, and putting a premium on protecting the Great Barrier Reef. Our jobs agenda has given opportunity and confidence to Queenslanders in the face of tough economic conditions. Queensland is leading the nation when it comes to business confidence and, importantly, Queenslanders, after three years of disrespect under the Newman-Nicholls government, are finally feeling that government values their opinion.

What I particularly want to talk about today is the way we have delivered on our promise to diversify our economy with our nation-leading \$405 million Advance Queensland innovation agenda. One of the reasons our economy is the fastest growing in the country is that we are diversifying, and the nurturing of knowledge based industries is a critical part of that agenda.

I know the excitement Advance Queensland has engendered in my electorate and how well our area is represented in the tranche of innovators now being launched on the world. On just one day in Murarrie, for instance, I spent the morning with the Treasurer visiting Tritium, a global leader in developing charging stations for electric vehicles and the first company to receive a grant from the Advance Queensland Business Development Fund to help them to commercialise. That same afternoon the Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy was out in my electorate visiting Euclidean, a global leader in hologram technology, with their CEO, Bruce Dell, a key player in the innovation summit we held last year. These are only two of the many amazing businesses in our area.


What is also absolutely exciting for me is the Advancing Education agenda. The Palaszczuk government knows that STEM skills are critical in preparing students for the jobs of the future. More than 90 per cent of Australia's current workforce will need digital skills to perform their roles in the next two to five years, and 60 per cent of Australian students are studying or training for jobs that will be largely automated in the near future. That is why our government is investing so much in the digital agenda, with a digital technologies curriculum, STEM teaching scholarships, the Queensland Coding Academy and the Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow program to support innovative programs in STEM teaching. I congratulate Balmoral State High School and Norman Park and Bulimba state schools for winning those grants. I know that they are developing programs which will break new ground.

Our local schools are embracing this agenda in droves. I think the visit of the Premier and the Minister for Education to Bulimba State School last year to launch the digital technologies curriculum reflected this. However, it is not just the classroom learning of coding that is so impressive locally. Our school communities know that the thirst among our students for digital technologies is huge, which is why they have established Micromakers, an after-hours program which allowed interested students to reach into areas of technology they had never known existed. The contribution of Balmoral State High School, in particular Sally Kennedy, the head of science and e-learning, and parents such as Lee Brentzell and Christian Bretmaisser and our local principals towards achieving this for our community cannot be underestimated.

Alongside this program has also been the incredible interest of our local business community and the community in general such that it led me to establish a working group comprising Lee Brentzell; Bill Owens, the CEO of Veracity Business Solutions; Michael Zeuschner, the principal of Bulimba State School; and Dianne Wilson, the teacher librarian at St Oliver Plunkett primary school to help harness the interest in the most constructive way. It is a privilege to be part of this group. Our first cab off the rank was a coding workshop for parents and teachers, held in June, aimed at those who do not feel confident that they are supporting our kids in the best way they can around technology or that we even fully understand what it is our kids are learning in school. I am sure there are parents in this chamber who recognise that feeling. The workshop was fantastic and we were delighted to receive feedback that indicated we had achieved our objective. However, there is still much more to be done.

I could go on and on about what is happening in my local area and across Queensland in this space—about the opportunities for growth and innovation, about how important it is to make sure we are planning for the jobs of the future. However, what is indisputable is that none of this would be happening in my local area or anywhere in Queensland if the Palaszczuk government had not made advancing Queensland such a huge priority, if we were not deeply committed to preparing for Queensland's future. In the last 18 months we have put the full force of our resources behind it. Queensland is being sorted for our future, and we are determined that our state will be the lighthouse for other jurisdictions to follow.

Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (12.06 pm): The transport minister is fast becoming the Palaszczuk Labor government's grim reaper. When Queenslanders see Minister Hinchliffe on TV—

Mr Hinchliffe: He is not tall and thin.

Mr POWELL: The comparisons continue!—not only do they let out a collective groan; they know that bad news is coming. This rang true last Wednesday. With tens of thousands of people at the Ekka, the minister saw his chance to announce that a major stretch of the Sunshine Coast and Caboolture rail line will be closed for six days. For six days commuters will have to catch rail buses and transfer services—

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I just want to ensure that the member for Glass House is not misleading the House. There is no stretch of the Sunshine Coast line; it is the Caboolture line that has been closed.

Mr POWELL: I am sorry, Madam Deputy Speaker, but to get to the Sunshine Coast you have to go on the Caboolture line.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): I ask the member to proceed.

Mr POWELL: For six days commuters will have to catch rail buses and transfer services. It is simply going to be a nightmare. With his track record, commuters are right to be sceptical about whether the minister will be able to make this work. If the minister needs proof, I refer him to a meeting that was held late last week between TransLink and the member for Aspley. It was the member for Aspley who had to explain to TransLink that the Bald Hills and Carseldine railway stations are significant commuter park-and-ride stops for anyone further north and that those commuters will not be stopping at Bald Hills and Carseldine but will be driving on to Zillmere, creating parking chaos, a nightmare for residents of Zillmere and a commuter nightmare for anyone heading into town.

We have also seen today the magnitude of the transport minister's blunders when it comes to the Moreton Bay Rail Link. RTI-ed documents from the minister have shown that the signalling testing and precommissioning works on the Moreton Bay Rail Link have been delayed three different times— from Christmas 2015 to February 2016, then to March and again to April. All the while, as late as March, the minister was putting out media statements telling Queenslanders that all was well. Four months of delay is what this minister considers 'on track'.

After the first delay, do you think the minister thought to request a briefing? No. How about the second? No. The third? Well, it was not until May that this Palaszczuk Labor transport minister thought, 'Something's not right here. I had better get a brief.' You can forgive the minister for being a little confused when the brief finally came. The member for Sandgate suddenly found himself in the middle of a turf war between Queensland Rail and his own department—nine pages of conflicting advice. Queensland Rail said the system was risky. TMR said, 'No, it's not.' Queensland Rail said the system was not up to the job. TMR said, 'There's no such evidence.'

TMR, the project team in charge, said that the system was safe but, in a snub to his department and to his director-general, the minister sided with Queensland Rail. What a show of confidence! The transport minister must now come clean with Queenslanders about what his incompetence has cost taxpayers. We now know that the new system may not be compatible with the ETCS program the government is spending some \$600 million on. Does that mean that in a couple of years we will be back here spending money on a new system for the MBRL because this minister could not enforce a contract? What additional costs have built up on the MBRL project because of this minister's delay? We on this side, the opposition, are always wanting to be helpful in situations like this, so I do have some advice for the transport minister. The transport minister might like to pick up the phone and call Sir Topham Hatt. He might be able to call in Thomas the Tank Engine because, let us face it, not only is Thomas a really useful engine, not only does Thomas come with guards who can actually—


Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! I do not think we need the use of props thank you, member.

Mr POWELL:—jump out of the engine and change the signals—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think we have seen that, thank you.

Mr POWELL:—themselves, manually overriding the automatic system, but Thomas is also a steam engine and for those six days that the Caboolture line will be closed perhaps Thomas could be assisting commuters get to and from Caboolture and all stations north into the city. As I said, the transport minister must now come clean with Queenslanders about what his incompetence has cost them, because surely all of these extra costs to commuters and these bungles should cost this minister his job.

Back to Work Program

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (12.11 pm): The Palaszczuk government is committed to growing jobs now and jobs for the future and our \$100 million Back to Work regional jobs package aims to do just that by providing support for jobseekers to build confidence and retrain for jobs in a more diversified economy. Back to Work provides incentives for regional businesses to employ new staff which we expect should get around 8,000 regional Queenslanders back to work. Back to Work provides employers with payments of \$10,000 for hiring an unemployed person, rising to \$15,000 for the long-term unemployed. Employers can access payments within four weeks of hiring under this initiative, which commenced on 1 July. The program is only available to employers outside South-East Queensland because that is where the area of greatest need exists. Back to Work also includes \$10 million for the Certificate 3 Guarantee Boost program that will see more Queenslanders able to access subsidised courses to obtain jobs. This is a package which aims to support up to 8,000 jobs in regional Queensland, and it has already received a very positive reception from regional business owners and the peak industry body the CCIQ. Minister Grace and I recently met with Rockhampton business owner and Marketing Mafia's Tracey Siddins, who will take advantage of the Back to Work program by hiring new staff. If you are a regional Queensland employer like Tracey who is thinking of hiring, I encourage you to take advantage of our Back to Work program.


Queensland is forecast to have nation-leading economic growth over the next two years, so now is the time to invest in more staff. The unemployment rate in Central Queensland is still too high, particularly youth unemployment, but we now have a positive program to get people back to work. I welcome this new Back to Work initiative and its focus on supporting more local jobs in Central Queensland. I am getting very positive feedback from local employers about this program and I know it has also excited a lot of local jobseekers.

Regional Queensland is crying out for more jobs, and employers who are looking to hire say they need more help to link with support and assistance to find jobseekers. While the Palaszczuk government has brought the trend unemployment rate in Keppel down by 0.7 per cent in the quarter to March 2016 and down one per cent in Rockhampton, unemployment in Central Queensland is still too high. That is why this package is specifically targeted at the regions. Our regional jobs package has been designed with input from business, employer and industry groups along with local government representatives. The Back to Work program is also better funded and better targeted than the LNP's alternative. The LNP's jobs plan is little more than a cruel hoax in that 20,000 vouchers is not 20,000 jobs.

Unlike the LNP's jobs plan, our program is open to all regional employers and businesses willing to take on a jobseeker and not just to businesses with a turnover of less than \$2 million. Employers can access payments four weeks after hiring a worker under our program as opposed to four years under the LNP's. Our scheme also has a dedicated regional focus whereas the LNP has thrown its scheme open to businesses in Brisbane and the south-east. The Newman-Nicholls LNP government put regional unemployment in the too-hard basket, but we have a plan to bring jobs to the regions. Our Back to Work officers will create links between employers, business and jobseekers that are needed to kick-start jobs in regional Queensland. Our Back to Work officers will connect real employers with real jobseekers, and I congratulate Mr John Fitzgerald on his appointment as the Central Queensland Back to Work officer. I met with Mr Fitzgerald last week to discuss the Back to Work program and I offered my full support to Mr Fitzgerald in his new role to grow jobs in Central Queensland. Specialist workers like Mr Fitzgerald will provide on-the-ground support throughout regional Queensland and are being rolled out across regional Queensland, including in Wide Bay-Burnett, North Queensland, Far North Queensland, Mackay-Whitsunday, Central Queensland, the north-west and south-west of the state.

So good is this Back to Work package that it received a glowing thumbs up from local builder and former LNP candidate Scott Kilpatrick. Mr Kilpatrick said that he believes that any incentive to get people into the workforce is a winner. That is why the local owner of Affordable Quality Homes is backing the state government's Back to Work regional employment package which was announced in the state budget in June. Mr Kilpatrick said that anything the government can do to create incentives to employ people was a benefit to the regions. Mr Kilpatrick said that when it comes to the local economy confidence is key, and that is what this Palaszczuk government is doing for regions like Keppel—delivering this \$100 million Back to Work program to continue to build confidence and grow regional jobs now and regional jobs for the future.

Australian Space Design Competition; Hear and Say Centre; Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (12.16 pm): In National Science Week for 2016 I wanted to talk about the importance of supporting our own home-grown ideas in science, innovation and entrepreneurship and the need to do what we can to help turn those ideas into reality. Yesterday I had the pleasure of welcoming students to Parliament House who had recently returned from NASA as part of the Australian Space Design Competition, with the member for Mansfield and the Leader of the Opposition joining me. Twelve students from four schools across Queensland, including students from Corinda State High in my electorate of Mount Ommaney, recently travelled to the Kennedy Space Center in Florida to compete in the International Space Settlement Design Competition. What an absolute fantastic opportunity for these students, some as young as years 9 and 10. This 30-year-old global event has 200 student competitors from every continent on the earth and sees the students form fictional engineering companies and design futuristic space stations. They were finalists at the Australian Space Design Competition, which for 11 years has been encouraging STEM development and business skills in Australian students.

I also recently had the pleasure of visiting the Hear and Say centre at Ashgrove, one of the leading paediatric auditory, verbal and cochlear implant centres in the world that has specialised in teaching our children who are deaf to hear, listen and speak using a world-leading end-to-end service delivery model. Hear and Say is a not-for-profit organisation that was established here in Queensland in 1992 by Dr Dimity Dornan AO and provides services and programs to over 2,000 children, young adults and families across six centres including audiology, verbal therapy, occupational therapy and school hearing screening. Queensland is leading the world in this field and being born deaf no longer means it is a disability with the technology that is being implemented here in Queensland. In government the LNP recognised this vital work that is being done at the Hear and Say centre and contributed \$2 million to the new premises in Nathan Avenue. We also committed at the election to support Hear and Say by providing an additional \$2 million—\$500,000 per annum over four years—from 1 July 2015 for additional services and extending the Hear and Say service agreement with Queensland Health for an additional three years, giving it funding certainty until 2019.


The LNP supports innovation and advancing Queensland through investment in home-grown ideas and entrepreneurship, not handing out taxpayer funded subsidies to multinational conglomerates that are not based here, do not pay tax here and are likely to support jobs in their own home countries or somewhere else offshore. In estimates, it was revealed that, to date, the government's Advance Queensland program, the centrepiece to the government's whole focus on the budget this year, which originally had a price tag of over \$180 million over three years, has created only 121 direct jobs. That is a cost of over \$500,000 a job. Is that value for money? Is that value for Queensland taxpayer dollars? I think not.

The government and, in particular, the minister continues to say that this is about creating jobs now and jobs in the future. It is not even about creating jobs now, as we have found out. How can Queenslanders have faith that it will create jobs in the future? I can tell members that the people in my electorate and many other parts of the state to whom I have spoken do not care about start-ups from Silicon Valley or innovation being the new buzzword from the government; they care about the local plumber or the mechanic who wants to know about how the so-called innovation agenda will benefit them.

Despite the fact that there were significant underspends in the 2015-16 budget of some \$35 million, as part of this year's budget the government saw fit to expand the Advance Queensland program, known as Accelerating Advance Queensland, to be the centrepiece of its 2016 state budget. Only 121 jobs have been created.

(Time expired)

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Achievements

 **Mr WHITING** (Murrumba—ALP) (12.21 pm): I rise to talk about the strengthening of business and consumer confidence in the Palaszczuk Labor government and to contrast that record with that of the LNP. We can see that rise in confidence from the National Australia Bank monthly business survey for July 2016, which shows that Queensland business confidence remains the equal highest in the nation.

In July, the trend business confidence rose to be equal highest in the nation—alongside New South Wales. Queensland businesses have had the highest, or equal highest, business confidence of any mainland state for 12 months out of the last 13 months. In trend terms, the NAB survey reveals

Queensland business confidence rose to be plus six in July 2016 compared to the national average of plus four. Queensland's trend business conditions index also rose plus seven points, recording the strongest improvement of the mainland states.

Whichever way we look at it, those surveys illustrate how Queensland businesses have greater confidence in the Queensland economy under Labor. The NAB survey was taken in the weeks after the state budget. It is clear that the budget has helped build this confidence. The CCIQ Director of Advocacy, Nick Behrens, acknowledged what he said are many positive aspects in the 2016-17 state budget. He said—

It balances the books, has a good degree of expenditure restraint across forward estimates, while at the same time invests in infrastructure and innovation.

Confidence in Queensland is clear in the building statistics that we have also seen over the last 18 months. Housing finance commitments for owner occupied dwellings rose again in June 2016 to be 5.8 per cent higher over the year. Finance for the construction of new dwellings rose two per cent over the last three months, spurred on by our \$20,000 First Home Owners' Grant. Last year, Queensland housing investor finance commitments hit a near eight-year high. Most recently, investor housing finance for the purchase of existing dwellings reached \$4.1 billion in the July 2016 quarter.

I see this increase in confidence in construction and housing in my area. Local real estate agents I talk to say that houses are selling as fast as they are listed or constructed. The only problem is that they do not have enough housing stock to sell. It is clear that confidence levels in Queensland continue to recover after the turmoil of the Campbell Newman LNP government. It is very apparent that the Palaszczuk government is turning around business and consumer confidence in Queensland.

That growing confidence is partially based on our record of debt reduction. Our debt reduction measures mean that general government debt for the next financial year is now forecast to be down \$10.4 billion on what the Leader of the Opposition said that it would be by now. We told Queenslanders at the state election that we would reduce general government debt by over \$12 billion over 10 years. We have taken \$10 billion off in less than two years. We are paying down debt through our debt action plan without having to resort to asset sales, as favoured by the front bench opposite. Our debt action measures mean a saving in interest of more than \$800 million in 2016-17. This achievement I am talking of is something that the LNP cannot match.

Opposition members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order!

Mr WHITING: I would say to the members opposite that they have not offered any alternative plan. In opposing Labor's budget initiatives, they have exposed themselves to an \$80 billion black hole. I ask members to compare our achievement to the LNP's record on debt.

An opposition member interjected.


Mr WHITING: Listen to this. Under the stewardship of the current opposition leader, the total general government debt rose from \$32.2 billion to \$45.8 billion. That is an increase of \$13.6 billion. Let me repeat that: an increase of \$13.6 billion in three years.

Increasing government debt is in the DNA of the LNP. It is very clear. You see it everywhere in the nation where the LNP has control of the treasury benches. In Canberra, under the Abbott-Turnbull government, government debt is fast increasing. The net government debt equivalent has gone from 10 per cent of GDP when the coalition first came into government to now 18.25 per cent in 2017-18. Only in wartime has government debt been higher.

As I said, it is in the DNA of the Liberals and the Nationals to increase debt. Every time one of them accuses Labor of dealing with public finance by simply putting everything on the credit card, we can remind them that they are the party of debt increasers.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Before I call the member for Gregory, I would like to acknowledge in the gallery students from Salisbury State School, in the electorate of Yeerongpilly. Welcome.

Rural Queensland, Health Services

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (12.26 pm): I wish to draw the attention of the House to the importance of Dr Rolf Gomes' Heart of Australia mobile cardiology clinic to my constituents and to plead with the health minister to join the dedicated private sponsors in becoming a funding partner of this important initiative for Western Queensland.

Australia's health system is one of the most admired in the world. Part of its success rests with the fact that it is a public-private partnership model. We direct our public money to addressing the needs of those who cannot participate in the private system. Many rural and regional Queenslanders carry the highest level of private cover in case of a medical calamity. However, their ability to participate in the private system is nonexistent because, until now, the private system is not physically present for them the way that it is for our coastal cousins. The Heart of Australia model changes all of that.

Historically, the only way to provide health care across an area as vast as Queensland has been as a centralised model of service delivery. That means that we travel—the many, the patients—rather than the few, the specialists. Year after year, this model has delivered a shameful gap in the health outcomes for rural patients. We continue to die younger because we are diagnosed later, receive less treatment and receive less education and support than do our city cousins. That gap in health outcomes is true across gender, all age groups, occupation and income levels. We cannot continue the same model and expect different results. We have a moral responsibility to explore ways of achieving better health outcomes for rural Queenslanders.

It is easy for those in the city to gloss over the true expenses for rural patients. Every time rural patients travel, they must leave their businesses and lose earnings. They must make arrangements for the care of their dependants. They must pay expensive travel and accommodation charges and face more transport expenses when they get to the city to receive treatment. They travel to unfamiliar cities, far from family and friends who could offer comfort and support.


If we are to achieve a more equitable health outcome, we must find a model that confronts these issues. Other members representing regional areas know this. That is why Lawrence Springborg was happy to support the establishment of the Heart of Australia when he was health minister. This centralised model was dictated not just by the tyranny of distances but because Queensland lacked modern infrastructure in the form of sealed roads and serviceable airports. It took someone looking at this with fresh eyes to see how successfully Queensland has addressed many of those obstacles in the 21st century—it took Dr Rolf Gomes. When the big Kenworth pulls into town, hydraulics unfold at the push of a button to reveal a modern clinic on wheels where rural patients can consult some of Queensland's top heart specialists without leaving their home town.

When I went looking for statistics for cardiovascular disease and outcomes for my constituents I came across the National Heart Foundation map for CVD in Queensland for 2014. Virtually all but a thin coastal strip was marked grey and labelled 'statistics unknown'. Heart of Australia has been driving into that big grey unknown area for years now. It has travelled more than 72,000 kilometres. It not only provides investigation and diagnosis but also the important follow-up checks and treatments that ensure quality outcomes. In the last year at least nine patients have required open-heart surgery. This is literally a matter of life and death.

The presence of the clinic in our towns has been welcomed by rural GPs. Dr Ewen McPhee will tell you that one of the issues facing rural GPs is professional isolation and the frustration when they try to help their patients have some control over the treatment pathways. Having top specialists visiting fortnightly changes this and makes our rural GP workforce more sustainable.

Minister Dick has said that Queensland Health already offers cardiology services in rural Queensland. This is not the lived experience of my constituents. CVD for them means long waits, often ending in emergency evacuations when they are already in cardiac arrest and when they return home there is limited or nil follow-up. The minister has also said that it is not a public hospital issue. I urge him to rethink this. By allowing private rural patients to access private health services he will free public health services to better serve public patients. I call on the minister to fund this important piece of infrastructure that is working in rural and regional Queensland. We should continue it because it saves lives and has direct benefits in regional Queensland.

Central Queensland University

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (12.31 pm): On 9 August, just seven days ago, an important event occurred in an area off Flinders Street in Townsville where representatives of the traditional owners, the Wulgurukaba and Bindal peoples, joined fellow passionate and dedicated community members at a special Indigenous ceremony where elders of these groups told stories of their youth and their families working on the railway where the site of the Central Queensland University is being expanded. They performed a special smoking ceremony on that same site where this important development of the CQU university campus is now being built. Collaboratively, all involved on that day are in some way responsible in the taking forward of the priority development area, or PDA, for the people of Townsville.

Representatives from both traditional owner groups, including well respected Aunty Gracelyn Smallwood, joined the Central Queensland University vice-chancellor Kari Arbouin and staff, along with city representatives, the member for Townsville, local government representatives and members of Honeycombes Property Group who are now building the CQU campus on the site. This is important because this multimillion dollar CQU investment in the building of the city campus means that we now have a major anchor tenant as part of the Palaszczuk government's investment of \$140 million into the Townsville stadium area. The campus is alongside the PDA area.

CQU forms part of our city story. In the future perhaps emerging city elders and representatives will stand on the same site and tell stories of this period of time where the collaboration of government, business and community was pivotal in the overall urban redevelopment of our fine city of Townsville for the people of North Queensland. This news provides encouragement and much needed positivity for the business, private and construction sector. We are restoring business confidence. This job alone provides up to 200 local jobs. It is a \$30 million investment and it is a sure sign that our election commitment of delivering the \$250 million Townsville stadium is indeed a real catalyst for infrastructure investment to deliver more jobs in Townsville for Townsville families.

Many constituents who have contacted me in Thuringowa are excited by this proposition. CQU is providing a range of courses for locals, including something close to my heart which is the paramedical science degree. I have a good working relationship with the vice-chancellor. Many former peers from my previous vocation as a paramedic are now teaching the paramedical science degree at the CQU Townsville campus. They bring real important life experience to the classroom for future paramedics who will also hopefully gain employment locally.

Mr Peter Honeycombe has a vision for investment in this space and should be commended for his belief in Townsville and that our city is big enough for two universities. I am not taking anything away from James Cook University, which also contributes so much into our local economy. They provide great and commendable work in the areas of medicine, nursing, research, science, agriculture and the environment. They are just some of the impressive areas that I have seen firsthand when visiting JCU.


Recently I had the opportunity to tour the Brisbane CQU city campus in Ann Street. It too is impressive and provides some real insight into the Townsville redevelopment of CQU. CQU hopes to reach 3,000 students over the coming years and is seeing good growth in numbers since their arrival in our city in 2010. As reported in the *Townsville Bulletin* yesterday—Monday, 15 August—by the vice-chancellor—

'There is no doubt CQU's investment in infrastructure, support services and new courses in Townsville have shown that local students are reacting positively to additional support and course options,' she said. 'We are constantly fielding queries and interest and expect many more at our CQUni Townsville Open Day next month.'

This campus is being fast-tracked and we expect to see it finished in the first few months of 2017. I commend CQU's investment in Townsville and welcome the real jobs it will bring into our local economy.

GRAMMAR SCHOOLS BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (12.36 pm): I present a bill for an act to regulate the governance and administration of grammar schools, and to amend this act, the Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2001, the Fair Work (Commonwealth Powers) and Other Provisions Act 2009, the Information Privacy Act 2009 and the Right to Information Act 2009 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes and I nominate the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Grammar Schools Bill 2016 [[1243](#)].

Tabled paper: Grammar Schools Bill 2016, explanatory notes [[1244](#)].

I rise today to introduce the Grammar Schools Bill 2016. Queensland has eight grammar schools which were established between 1863 and 1892, each run by a board of trustees. These schools hold an important role in the history of education in Queensland. Historically, the Queensland government established grammar schools as a form of community-government partnership. It was a cost-effective way for the state government to support secondary school education without assuming the full cost of establishing a state high school.

Queensland grammar schools provide a non-discriminatory secular education and a great example of the benefits of community-government cooperation. The establishment, governance and regulation of grammar schools is currently provided for by the Grammar Schools Act 1975 and the Grammar Schools Regulation 1975. The Grammar Schools Bill 2016 will replace the existing Grammar Schools Act with modern legislation that meets the contemporary needs of our grammar schools. In general, the bill maintains the current regulatory regime for grammar schools with some important reforms which removes the power to establish future grammar schools, provides flexibility for board appointments to facilitate board transition and rejuvenation, reduces red tape while maintaining financial accountability and enhances board autonomy for the conduct of board business.

I will now outline these reforms in more detail. As I have already said, grammar schools have played an important role in the education system of our state. However, no new grammar schools have been established since 1892. The contemporary approach is for the state to provide secondary education through state schools and to regulate and fund the provision of education by non-government schools. It is no longer considered necessary for the state to retain the power to establish grammar schools into the future and the bill therefore removes the ability to establish future grammar schools. However, in recognition of the unique status of Queensland grammar schools as statutory bodies, the bill retains the current offences prohibiting the use of the term 'grammar' by non-grammar schools.

Currently, Queensland grammar schools are governed by a seven-member board of trustees appointed by the Governor in Council. Four members are nominated for appointment by the minister and three members are appointed following an election process conducted by the board. During consultation, some grammar schools raised concerns that the fixed number of members and the inability to stagger appointments to the board created difficulties for succession planning and board renewal. The bill addresses these concerns in two ways. Firstly, the bill modifies the membership of the board to provide that the board consist of four members nominated for appointment by the minister, three members appointed following an election process and up to two additional members appointed at the request of a board. The additional two members may be chosen by a grammar school board to be nominated for appointment and the minister must nominate the additional members if the minister is satisfied that the person meets the suitability criteria for appointment. Secondly, while the bill provides that the term of appointment for a member of a board is four years, it also allows the board to request a shorter term of appointment for a person nominated for appointment by the minister. This will allow grammar school boards to choose to stagger board appointments and move towards a model in which the term of appointment for all members does not end at the same time.

In addition, these two amendments will provide boards with a greater ability for succession planning and board rejuvenation. These amendments will also provide boards with the capacity to respond to emergent issues for which the board needs a specific skill set. The bill ensures that people nominated by the minister for appointment to a board are appropriate by providing that the minister must be satisfied that the person has a sufficient understanding or the ability to rapidly acquire a sufficient understanding of the legislation applying to grammar schools and the skills, experience or expertise in commerce, corporate governance, economics, finance, law, management or education, or another area the minister considers relevant or necessary, to support the board in performing its functions.

At the request of grammar schools, the bill also strengthens the requirements for the minister to consult with boards prior to making a nomination, and I strongly support this amendment. It provides that the minister must consult with the board prior to making the nomination and take into account the board's submissions about the proposed nomination, including the effect of the appointment on the board's composition.

The current grammar schools legislation requires boards to comply with prescriptive requirements relating to financial management. For example, the act mandates the types of accounts the board must maintain and includes prescriptive procedures that must be undertaken before borrowing state funds. The bill does not replicate these prescriptive requirements. This bill reduces red tape on grammar school boards, without reducing the oversight of grammar school viability. The board of trustees for each grammar school is a statutory body and is subject to state legislation that regulates and provides for the oversight of statutory bodies. This includes the Financial Accountability Act 2009 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982. Grammar school boards are audited by the Queensland Auditor-General. The bill retains the capacity for the minister to appoint an administrator if the minister has concerns about a school's financial viability. The state borrowing regime is also strictly controlled through administrative practices.

Finally, a number of provisions in the current act prescribe operational details relating to how a grammar school board shall conduct business and proceedings at meetings. The bill modernises these provisions and allows boards a greater ability to determine their own business practices, while still ensuring appropriate procedures around decision-making. As I have outlined, the bill contains modest but important reforms that will ensure that grammar schools continue to play a role in Queensland's education system into the future. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. KJ JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (12.42 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.


Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE PROTECTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (12.43 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 and the Weapons Act 1990, and to amend the acts mentioned in schedule 1, for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 [[1245](#)].

Tabled paper: Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016, explanatory notes [[1246](#)].

Family violence is an entrenched epidemic that we've lived with since time began, so we've got a long way to go.

Those are the words of Rosie Batty, a woman struck by the unimaginable tragedy of losing her son to family violence. As the 2015 Australian of the Year, Rosie turned her words into actions and continues campaigning for cultural and policy changes to end domestic and family violence in this country.

So far this year, another nine coronial investigations have commenced into deaths that have occurred in domestic or family relationships in Queensland. The Palaszczuk government is committed to changing this. In partnership with all parts of the Queensland community, we are taking long-term action to end violence. Victims must be better protected and supported. Perpetrators of domestic violence must be held more accountable, and police and courts must be given improved tools to help them save lives and provide support to victims.

With bipartisan support, this House has passed four priority bills to improve how the legal and justice system deals with domestic and family violence. We are bringing together government agencies and community service providers to develop and implement a fully integrated response to domestic violence. We have committed funding to trial integrated responses in three different locations—Logan/Beenleigh, Mount Isa and Cherbourg—and to roll out high-risk teams in those and five other locations across the state. We have opened two new shelters in Brisbane and Townsville to support women and children in crisis. Two further crisis shelters will be established in Charters Towers and Roma.

The Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 builds on the priority legislative reforms that have already been progressed by the Palaszczuk government. It includes further changes to better protect victims and their families, hold perpetrators to account for their actions and support integrated responses. It amends the Domestic and Family Violence Protection

Act 2012 to implement the outcomes of the review recommended by the special task force and to enable Queensland to participate in the National Domestic Violence Order Scheme, which has been agreed by COAG.

The bill introduces a new framework to facilitate the sharing of domestic and family violence information between key government and non-government entities. The nature and dynamics of domestic violence are often complex and information sharing is critical to assessing and managing potentially fatal risks. As the task force said in its *Not now, not ever* report—

... fatalities are rarely without warning and are generally preceded by violent or abusive incidents indicating a heightened risk of future harm. It is because of these indicators that these types of deaths are considered some of the most preventable.

The need for more information sharing and collaboration across the system was highlighted during the coronial inquest into Luke Batty's death. Rosie Batty had been in contact with the Victorian police, courts, a government department, counsellors and medical practitioners. The Victorian Coroner found—

... no one agency had looked at all the information when they were considering the risk posed ... towards Luke.

Often victims expect agencies to be able to share information. Similar issues were raised in Queensland as part of the coronial inquest into the horrific 2011 murder of Noelene Beutel. In the six months prior to her death, Ms Beutel had been in contact with her doctor, a hospital, police and domestic violence support services. They were all holding different pieces of the puzzle and providing a response based solely on what they knew.

This bill enables government and non-government organisations, in defined circumstances, to share information about victims and perpetrators to assess and manage serious domestic violence threats. In this way, it removes barriers to saving lives. Information can only be shared to the extent necessary to assess the threat or take action to lessen or prevent the threat. While obtaining consent before sharing information will remain the preferred approach, the bill prioritises the safety of victims and their families by enabling information sharing to occur without consent. The bill includes a range of safeguards to prevent the inappropriate sharing of information and protect people's privacy. Penalties of up to two years imprisonment or 100 penalty units will also apply for the inappropriate use or disclosure of information.

The bill includes reforms to provide victims with access to earlier and more tailored protection. These include expanding the operation of police protection notices and requiring police to consider how to provide victims with effective protection prior to a court determining the application for a protection order.

Police notices were introduced in 2012 and currently offer limited protection. They can only protect the victim, not their children or other people, and can only include two conditions—the standard condition that the respondent not commit domestic violence and a 24-hour cool-down condition that keeps the respondent away from the victim. The bill streamlines the administrative processes for issuing a police protection notice to allow police to provide victims with protection immediately and without delays. The bill also gives police more flexibility to issue protection notices. It removes the requirement that an officer must be in the same location as the respondent to issue a notice. This means that notice can be issued where the respondent has fled the scene before police arrive.

It also expands the protection that can be provided by a police protection notice by enabling police to name a victim's children or a child who usually lives with the victim as well as their relatives and associates in the notice. Police will also be allowed to include additional conditions to remove perpetrators from the family home until a court hearing and non-contact conditions that prevent respondents contacting the victim or their children.

Police protection notices will now be enforceable in the same way as domestic violence orders. Police will always have to personally serve notices on respondents, as notices will continue to be court applications for DVOs. However, to ensure that this requirement does not delay victims being protected, respondents will commit an offence if they breach a condition that a police officer has told them about, even if personal service has not yet occurred. This is consistent with the approach currently adopted for DVOs and will assist with holding perpetrators to account where they actively evade service.

The bill increases the maximum penalty for breaching a police protection notice or release condition to a maximum three years imprisonment or 120 penalty units. This ensures the penalty for breaching a notice is consistent with the penalty for breaching court issued DVOs—penalties that the Palaszczuk increased last year. The bill preserves the current safeguards and court oversight that apply to police protection notices.

The bill includes a range of reforms to strengthen the justice response to domestic and family violence. These changes include enabling courts to make protection orders that last longer and requiring courts to consider including conditions to tailor a DVO to better meet a victim's protection needs. Currently, protection orders can only last for up to two years, unless there are special reasons for courts making a longer order. Stakeholders have told us that two years does not provide victims with adequate protection.

The bill expands court powers so orders can be made that last for as long as necessary to protect victims. At the same time, the amendments set an expectation that orders will last for a minimum of five years unless there are reasons for making a shorter order. Courts will also always have to consider whether more specific conditions should be included in DVOs, in addition to the standard condition that the respondent does not commit violence.

The bill also helps to address the issue of DVOs and family law orders containing inconsistent terms about respondents' contact with their children. While family law orders made in the Commonwealth jurisdiction will continue to prevail, the bill strengthens the current obligations of Queensland domestic violence courts. As recommended by the task force, state courts will be required in each case to consider any family law order that they are aware of and whether to use their powers to vary or suspend the order if it conflicts with the proposed DVO.

Finally, the bill clarifies the weight that should be given to respondents' compliance with voluntary intervention orders. The current provisions enable courts to consider a respondent's compliance with the program in deciding whether to make a protection order and its duration. Consequently, a victim's protection can be diminished if the respondent has complied with the program, even if there is no evidence of a change in their behaviour.

Under the bill, courts will still be able to consider a respondent's compliance with an intervention order in making or varying a DVO, but the court must not refuse to make or vary a protection order merely because the respondent has complied with the intervention order. Further, courts will be specifically required to consider a respondent's noncompliance. This will ensure that a victim's access to protection focuses on what is needed to keep them safe and does not depend on whether or not a respondent complies with a voluntary intervention order and ensures that the voluntary intervention orders are not considered a viable alternative to a longer term protection order.

Another important component of the bill is the implementation of national model laws that will support Queensland's participation in the National Domestic Violence Order Scheme. The scheme provides for the automatic, mutual recognition of DVOs made across Australia. Currently, victims must manually apply to courts to register in Queensland an order made in another state or territory. If a victim does not register their order, they are left without protection in their new jurisdiction.

The bill will streamline processes so victims who relocate to Queensland do not need to register their interstate DVO. Other jurisdictions are in the process of implementing the same laws so that Queenslanders who move interstate have the same protection. The nationally consistent laws will be supported by a national information sharing system.

This government is continuing to do all it can to support victims and their families, demand further accountability for perpetrators and strengthen the police and justice response to domestic and family violence. As we implement other task force recommendations and the changes in this bill, we will continue to consider whether further amendments are required to ensure that the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act remains a contemporary legislative framework to support the reform of the domestic and family violence system in Queensland. The bill is another important step towards ending the harm caused by domestic and family violence. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. SM FENTIMAN (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (12.55 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.


Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee.

GENE TECHNOLOGY (QUEENSLAND) BILL

Message from Governor

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Alger—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (12.55 pm): I present a message from His Excellency the Governor.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): The message from His Excellency recommends the Gene Technology (Queensland) Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

MESSAGE

GENE TECHNOLOGY (QUEENSLAND) BILL 2016

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

I, PAUL de JERSEY AC, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intituled—


A Bill for an Act to apply the Gene Technology Act 2000 (Cwlth) and Gene Technology (Licence Charges) Act 2000 (Cwlth) as laws of Queensland, to repeal the Gene Technology Act 2001, and to amend this Act and the legislation mentioned in schedule I for particular purposes

GOVERNOR

Date: 16 August 2016

Tabled paper: Message, dated 16 August 2016, from His Excellency the Governor, recommending the Gene Technology (Queensland) Bill 2016 [\[1247\]](#).

Introduction

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Alger—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (12.56 pm): I present a bill for an act to apply the Gene Technology Act 2000 (Cwlth) and Gene Technology (Licence Charges) Act 2000 (Cwlth) as laws of Queensland, to repeal the Gene Technology Act 2001, and to amend this act and the legislation mentioned in schedule 1 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Gene Technology (Queensland) Bill 2016 [\[1248\]](#).

Tabled paper: Gene Technology (Queensland) Bill 2016, explanatory notes [\[1249\]](#).

I am pleased to introduce the Gene Technology (Queensland) Bill 2016. The Palaszczuk government is committed to providing certainty and consistency for Queensland state government agencies, higher education institutions and sole traders in relation to the regulation of gene technology activities.

Queensland's Gene Technology Act 2001 and Gene Technology Regulation 2002 are part of an integrated national legislative scheme. By regulating and managing risks associated with gene technology and genetically modified organisms, GMOs, the scheme focuses on protecting the environment and the health and safety of people while still enabling the development, testing and commercial release of highly productive new crops and life-saving vaccines.

State legislation is necessary to ensure regulatory coverage of state government agencies, higher education institutions and sole traders. Under the intergovernmental Gene Technology Agreement 2001, Queensland has committed to keeping our legislation consistent with the Commonwealth legislation which covers the majority of organisations conducting dealings with GMOs.

Presently, Queensland's legislation operates as mirror legislation which means that whenever the Commonwealth gene technology legislation is amended Queensland's legislation must also be amended to ensure that all gene technology activities in Queensland are regulated consistently. This manual amendment process takes time and effort, and results in a period of misalignment which creates uncertainty and potential disadvantages for Queensland entities covered by state legislation.

When GMO risk assessments are updated and tightened to require more stringent safety procedures, Queensland researchers who continue operating under earlier, unamended legislation may be put at unnecessary risk. Conversely, when regulatory requirements are reduced in response to knowledge and experience gained over long periods of safe use of a GMO, Queensland research programs and organisations that continue operating under unamended, more stringent legislation may be disadvantaged and viewed as a less appealing investment.

Queensland's legislation has been amended four times since 2007 to mirror the Commonwealth legislation. A further set of minor and technical amendments to the Commonwealth Gene Technology Act 2000 commenced on 11 March 2016 and, as such, the Queensland and Commonwealth legislation are out of alignment once more.

The Gene Technology (Queensland) Bill 2016 will effectively introduce these latest Commonwealth amendments. This bill will establish a lock-step opt-out approach so that consistency with the Commonwealth legislation is automatically maintained, while the Queensland parliament's ability to block any Commonwealth amendments that are not in Queensland's interests is still preserved. I am very pleased to be introducing this bill for parliament's consideration today. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. LM ENOCH (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (12.59 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)


Appropriation (Parliament) Bill

Finance and Administration Committee

Report

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): Order! The House will consider the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill first. The question is—

That the report of the Finance and Administration Committee be adopted.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (2.30 pm): I rise as chair of the Finance and Administration Committee to speak to the examination of the budget estimates and to present report No. 26 on the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2016. I pass on the recommendation of the committee that all proposed expenditure as detailed in the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment. On behalf of the committee, I thank the Speaker, the Clerk of the Parliament and their staff for attending our committee hearing on 19 July. The detailed information provided to the committee, the relevant experience and rationale for the changes were very helpful to the committee in our consideration of the proposed expenditure.


We were informed that this year's expenditure is required to keep pace with the rapidly developing structure of our parliament. It was noted that as our parliament grows and develops so, too, must our Parliamentary Service. As was pointed out in the presentation to the committee by the Speaker, the Parliamentary Service's current organisational structure was designed some 15 years ago. In this time, significant procedural changes have occurred in response to developments in technology, including the broadcasting of parliament, the *Record of Proceedings* and the introduction of e-petitions.

In addition to this, we were informed that the number of electorate office staff has doubled from 89 to 180 full-time-equivalent positions and the members' remuneration system has been completely remodelled during this time. The Parliamentary Service's current structure was not designed to cope with these significant developments and a new strategic plan and organisational structure has been developed to ensure that the Parliamentary Service remains efficient into the future. We were informed that these proposed structural changes will be undertaken within the current resources available to the Parliamentary Service.

We were also informed that the most significant strain on our parliamentary services stems from our increased reliance on our hardworking committee staff. As was pointed out by the Speaker, although parliament sits approximately 16 to 18 weeks of the year, the committees are constantly working. It was pointed out that, if the amendments proposed by the Constitution of Queensland and Other Legislation Bill 2016 currently before the House are to come into effect, committees would be allowed to self-initiate inquiries on matters within their portfolio. As was noted, this increased committee activity would be likely to place a strain on the already large workload of the committee staff. It is for this reason that a proposal was put before the committee that three additional full-time positions be provided for in the committee office. Our committee accepted that this additional resourcing would be necessary to support the projected increased use of the parliamentary committees.

The committee also noted the current progress of capital works overseen by the parliament. The Speaker reported to the committee on the restoration effort that is taking place on old Parliament House. We note that after almost 25 years the restoration of the external stonework will be completed shortly and that the remainder of the interior is soon to be repainted.

On behalf of the committee, I thank the Speaker for his informative address to the budget estimates hearing, as well as for his skilful stewardship of our parliament. I also thank the Clerk and the officers from the Parliamentary Service for their expert advice in relation to the proposed appropriation measures and for answering questions put to them by the committee. Finally, I thank my fellow committee members and our wonderful committee staff for the tireless support they provide.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (2.35 pm): I rise to speak on the budget estimates for the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill. From the outset I would like to congratulate Mr Speaker on his judicious running of the Parliamentary Service. I also congratulate the Clerk of the Parliament for providing great service and for keeping up with the needs of parliamentarians and the changing environment in which we exist today.


I would also like to thank the chair of the committee, the member for Sunnybank, on his equitable and fair conduct of the estimates process for this particular bill and as we move on to successfully implement many new issues such as the extra staff for the management of parliamentary committees which is an absolutely important part of this whole parliamentary process. The level 7 extensions are going ahead and have run into some problems that were unforeseen in terms of the wet weather and the asbestos that added to the problems. All in all, the Parliamentary Service is acting appropriately. I would also like to thank the staff who assisted the FAC as part of overseeing that part of the Parliamentary Service—in particular, one Amanda Honeyman, who has been very successful in keeping a lot of members in a straight line.

There were a couple of issues that were raised at the estimates hearing that I do have concerns with and have concerns with the answers that were given. The opposition leader raised matters in relation to the member for Cook. It was suggested by the Clerk that the Leader of the House had approached the Clerk of the Parliament for changes to the office accommodation. The reason given at estimates was that the member for Cook was too close to members and that he would be unduly hassled, if you like, by members in the Parliamentary Annexe. I cannot think of any worse place to be than in the parliamentary offices in the old building where you get hassled by ministers, assistant ministers and where the whips hang out—oh, all on the government side. Isn't that amazing! That was a lame duck excuse that was brought to estimates, and it is very, very disappointing. It is like they want to keep the member for Cook well and truly in the fold even though he is actually the de facto member for Cook these days and not a member of the ALP anymore.

One other issue that was raised at estimates in response to the member for Bundamba was that the Clerk of the Parliament was looking at conditions of electorate office staff. I note that the Clerk of the Parliament was very much engaging with the Together union as he looked at the conditions and working futures of EOs and AEOs. I can assure the House that the staff in my office are not in the Together union. It is not their interest. There may be 42 members out there who have staff members in the Together union, but I sincerely urge the Clerk of the Parliament to take any matters in relation to work conditions and directions into his own hands, independent of the Together union.

I would hope that there has been no government interference in terms of suggesting that the Together union be part of the Clerk's review of the working conditions of electorate office staff and assistant electorate office staff. They are totally independent. They are very much the working wheels behind parliamentary members, and they should have unfettered opportunity to work with the Clerk of the Parliament to come up with appropriate conditions.

I will get in one quick plug for a matter that is close to my heart—it is a matter that should be close to the hearts of all members of this House—and that is the infamous family friendly hours of parliament, as they refer to them in other parliaments. In other parliaments all around Australia they have worked to put in hours that are appropriate in the 21st century, particularly for staff members. I would really like the CLA, under Mr Speaker's jurisdiction, to revisit the operation of the hours of this parliament.

 **Mr PEGG** (Stretton—ALP) (2.40 pm): I rise to speak to the examination of the budget estimates and report No. 26 of the Finance and Administration Committee. On 19 July 2016 the Finance and Administration Committee conducted a public hearing and took evidence about the proposed expenditure from Mr Speaker and officers of the Parliamentary Service. I join with the chair and deputy chair in thanking the other members of the Finance and Administration Committee. I understand that our committee sat for the longest period during the estimates hearings. I thank the chair, the member for Sunnybank; the deputy chair, the member for Mermaid Beach; the member for Bundamba, the member for Condamine and the member for Gregory for all of their efforts. I also recognise the committee secretariat for their ongoing hard work.

As stated by the member for Sunnybank, the committee recommended that the proposed expenditure as detailed in the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2016 be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment. The purpose of the bill is to provide the requisite funds to ensure the ongoing operations of the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service. This includes attendant and security services, the Parliamentary Reporting Service, the committee office, services provided by the Parliamentary Library, information and advisory services to assist the parliament, and chamber and procedural services.


This government is upholding the convention that the appropriation for the Legislative Assembly be contained in a bill that is separate from the Appropriation Bill for the government's other activities. As the Treasurer said in his introduction of the bill, this government remains committed to the independence of the Legislative Assembly and, by extension, to the means by which public monies are appropriated to enable its continued functioning. The budget estimates hearings are vitally important. They enable the examination in public of the responsible minister and chief executive officers of agencies that are within the portfolio area of the committee. In this regard, as I mentioned earlier, the committee undertook a public hearing and heard evidence about the proposed expenditure from Mr Speaker and officers from the Public Service. I want to congratulate Mr Speaker and his staff on their efforts. I also want to recognise the efforts of the Clerk and all parliamentary staff. I am sure everyone here today will be thanking the secretariat staff as well. I take this opportunity to thank them and the committee members again for all their hard work.

There were a number of issues raised at the public hearing. Time is against me in terms of mentioning them all, but I did want to highlight some in particular. These included the Queensland parliamentary portfolio committee system, the new strategic plan and organisation structure for the Parliamentary Service, restoration of the external stonework of Parliament House, maintenance work undertaken on level 7 of the Parliamentary Annexe, the parliamentary friendship initiative regarding the placement of native bees within the parliamentary precinct, any budgetary consideration for a possible introduction of family friendly sitting hours of the Queensland parliament, the outcomes and associated actions from a review of electorate office security undertaken in 2015-16 and security incidents during 2015-16.

In the time remaining I want to highlight a couple of key issues that came up during the public hearings, in particular the initiative regarding the placement of native bees within the parliamentary precinct. As we heard from Mr Speaker, this is a partnership that our parliament has with our universities

and tertiary education facilities. We heard from the Speaker that immediately after the hearing he was going to be signing a memorandum of understanding between the Queensland parliament, the Queensland University of Technology, which is the immediate neighbour to the parliament, and Dr Tim Heard of Sugarbag Bees to further the research work that QUT is undertaking in relation to native stingless bees in Queensland.

We heard from Mr Speaker that through this partnership our parliament will become the custodians of two native beehives. QUT staff and PhD students will be able to have access to these hives which will be placed on the parliamentary grounds. We heard during the hearing that the intention of the beehives is that it will serve two main purposes. The first is to assist with current research into bees and the second is to be a constant reminder for us to consider what impacts our decisions will have on the environment. I think it is particularly important in this place that we continue to understand and fully support environmental initiatives and consider the environment and heritage protection in everything we do.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (2.46 pm): I would also like to pay tribute to the Finance and Administration Committee. As a relatively new member of the committee, I have been welcomed with open arms. I am absolutely in awe of the staff, led by our research director, and their ability to put issues together for us in a timely manner. They work so hard and they work so diligently. I would like to thank the chair, the member for Sunnybank, and the deputy chair, the member for Mermaid Beach. I also thank the member for Bundamba, the member for Condamine and the member for Stretton. I have been welcomed on the committee. We are dealing with a lot of issues. I certainly appreciate the opportunity to be on the Finance and Administration Committee. Coming from the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee and going to the Finance and Administration Committee, we are dealing with completely different issues and it is a good learning curve for me as a new member of parliament.

In the cut and thrust of politics, our estimates process reminds us how important this parliament is for our state. This parliament is the people's parliament. We, the elected representatives, have a very important role to play and this parliament has shaped our great state for a very long time. Once you become a member of parliament you really do appreciate the significance of this great House and the people who are honoured and lucky enough to have the opportunity to represent whatever part of the state they belong to.

The Appropriation Bill that is put before parliament is the genesis of the infrastructure spending right around the state for a very long time. I am glad that this parliament provides us with an opportunity to scrutinise the Appropriation Bill. I think that is very important. Every member has an opportunity, no matter what side of politics they are on, to scrutinise the Appropriation Bill, which plays a significant role in growing our state and provides an opportunity to move forward in the 21st century.

This parliament provides us with an opportunity that we should never, ever take for granted. We live in a democracy which is fair and just, and we have an opportunity as citizens of this great state to participate in this parliament. If you are a citizen, you have the opportunity to meet with your local parliamentarian. What the estimates process was able to show is that through the committee process we can scrutinise the budget. We were able to see what the budget was there for.

Through the estimates process and through the Finance and Administration Committee of this parliament we were able to scrutinise the ministers of the day right across all portfolios to see what is actually in it for them, what is actually in it for Queensland when it comes to this budget. Certainly it was an opportunity to be able to put fine detail on what is actually being spent here in Queensland.


Through that committee process we were able to see that the Labor government is racking up the credit card bill again. Through the estimates committee process we were able to find out that the State Actuary only recommended that \$2 billion be drawn down on Public Service superannuation but the Treasurer was happy—very happy—to make that \$4 billion. We discovered that through the estimates process and through the Finance and Administration Committee, and this parliament provides that opportunity to be able to see the budget in fine detail.

Finally, I would again like to thank the staff. I would also like to pay tribute to the parliamentary staff from security, to the caterers, to the people who do the laundry. As a Western Queensland member, as a member from regional Queensland—and I am sure the member for Callide would agree with this as well being here for such a long time—sometimes you get a bit homesick when you are here.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr MILLAR: No, of course not.

(Time expired)

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (2.51 pm): I would like to join with my colleagues in thanking the chair, the member for Sunnybank; the member for Bundamba; our deputy chair, the member for Mermaid Beach; as well as the member for Gregory. As my colleague from Gregory just mentioned, the committee process, which includes the estimates process, does provide an opportunity for proper scrutiny of the bills that come before the House during the year. Earlier in the year the Finance and Administration Committee conducted an investigation into four-year terms. The member for Stretton and I are the only original members of the committee. We went through that process. One thing that was highlighted during that whole process was that Queensland does not have an upper house; the only level of scrutiny of legislation is in the estimates process and in the committee process. That was on display again during this year's estimates committee hearings. I thoroughly enjoyed that.

I would also like to thank Amanda Honeyman, the research director with our team, who puts in enormously long hours. She and her team do a fantastic job.

There were several issues brought up, which have already been mentioned. The works on level 7 took up a fair bit of time. It has obviously run a little bit over schedule. They ran into some serious setbacks there with wet weather and asbestos. Apparently an enormous amount of asbestos was uncovered during those works. Of course, the restoration of the stonework is an ongoing process and we all look forward to that being completed.


The member for Mermaid Beach also commented on the moving of the member for Cook into his new digs. He apparently was not happy with the ease of access to his office. I would have thought that would be something you would really favour as a member of parliament. Apparently we do not all think the same.

The Speaker also talked about some new software for recording and storing emails, a new system that has been put in place to help replace the paper system. Some new staff have also come on board to assist in the committee process. Committees will be able to self-initiate inquiries, and the addition of new staff will help to cover that workload. I think that will be a great thing for the committees.

The member for Stretton mentioned the native bees. The Speaker went into quite some detail about his partnership with the University of Technology regarding native bees. We will be interested to see how that goes. Somehow I think it will be a long time before we will be having honey on toast for breakfast. I say good luck to him on that.

I would also like to thank the Speaker for helping me with the relocation of my office in Dalby. The office I had in Dalby previously was extremely substandard. I did not like my staff working in it. It was an embarrassment. The Speaker passed that, along with the CLA. I would like to thank the Speaker for that and all those who assisted with that transition. While I have the opportunity I would also like to thank my staff in the Dalby office. They are the front line for every member of parliament. They are the ones who take the angry phone calls. They are the ones who deal with the walk-ins. They do a fantastic job and I thank them very much for everything that they do.

I would also like to join with the member for Gregory in thanking everybody else in the Parliamentary Service whether it be in catering or security. We really are made to feel welcome. It is a home away from home for us during these sittings, and they are long hours. We get tired and drawn out at the end of these long sittings, but they are still working over in the cafeteria looking after us. I say thank you very much to all of them. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time on the Finance and Administration Committee and I look forward to the coming year.

 **Mrs JR MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (2.55 pm): I speak today as the only member of the Queensland parliament who has ever attended all of the estimates committee hearings apart from police on the advice of the Clerk of the Parliament. He said to me that it would be prudent not to attend that particular committee because I was the police minister for six months of the financial year. Can I just say that I believe it is very important that MPs follow in my footsteps from now on in relation to attending all of those particular estimates committees that they are interested in and ask questions of the ministers. They should be representing the members of their community and also the issues in relation to their community very strongly by attending these estimates committees. It is my belief that this is what Fitzgerald wanted when he brought down his landmark report in 1989 and it was subsequently taken up by the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission a couple of years after that.


Many people in this chamber would not be aware, but I was a public servant back in 1989 when the Fitzgerald report was brought down. One of my duties was, in fact, implementing the Fitzgerald reforms. I have always been devoted to open and accountable government and been devoted to having

integrity within government. In fact, over the years it has saddened me somewhat that the estimates committees of the Queensland parliament have come to be seen as a joke not only within this parliament but also within the Public Service.

Can I say that as a public servant who was very much involved with getting the briefs ready for ministers and very much involved with getting budgets ready as well, every person in this parliament should very much have in mind the work—the incredible work—of public servants that goes in to informing ministers of what is actually happening within their departments and getting them prepared. Having said that, I think again what we have in Queensland is a situation where we have almost a dance. The government side is so organised that it is almost like a parliamentary waltz where you can see ministers almost relax when the government members ask questions and you can see them sigh a bit of a relief and then when the opposition gets up to ask questions they tend to move forward and take a bit more notice. Of course, it is up to the opposition to raise these questions and get to their political points that they want to score. However, I would like to implore members of this parliament to actually follow in my footsteps no matter what threats are made to the individual members of parliament or whatever the consequences of those actions may be.

I thought it was very interesting that it took myself, a member of the CFMEU mining division, to bring up the issue of cleaners. Of course the mining division has been a leader in relation to workplace health and safety and wages issues right across Australia for many decades. I would also like to comment about what the member for Mermaid Beach said in relation to electorate officers not being part of unions: that is not really something that you should brag about. In fact, my electorate officers are proud members of the CFMEU.

In relation to backfilling for electorate officers and assistant electorate officers, for eight weeks of the year I only have one staff person in my office. As I said, during that time my office is like Grand Central Station. We do not deal with people who are rich and wealthy; we deal with people who are poor, people who are on the bones of their backsides, people who do not know where their next meal is coming from. That is why I need these positions backfilled. It is not good enough for this parliament to say it is okay that for eight weeks of the year we do not have people in their places.


 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (3.00 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the consideration of report No. 26 of the Finance and Administration Committee in regard to the budget estimates that were part of the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2016. Each year this particular part of the budget estimates is something of a challenge for members of the parliament. It is something that my old mate—and I use the term loosely—Robbie Swarten and I discussed a week or so ago when we met up in Rockhampton and he was particularly vocal about in the consideration of this report every year, so I thought I would stand today and continue the tradition on his behalf if nothing else.

There has been a longstanding problem in this parliament of allocating money to maintain the parliament, and it is not the fault of either side of politics: it is the fault of the adversarial system here. Whoever is in government has to allocate money for the maintenance of the parliament, and whoever is in opposition fails to resist the temptation to criticise the allocation of that money. The people who lose are the people of Queensland, whose House this is. This precinct, as Robbie Swarten used to say, belongs to the people of Queensland and it should be the No. 1 public precinct in the state. It needs to be maintained in a condition that is fitting for that role, otherwise it reflects on all of us who are custodians of this place on behalf of the people of Queensland.

One of the things that we did to try and address this was to set up the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, the CLA, which was supposed to move beyond this partisan approach to allocate money each year in the budget for the parliament to make sure that these buildings and this precinct were maintained in a proper format and to ensure that the people who were elected to come and be part of this parliament were given resources and working conditions commensurate with their position in the community and commensurate with the role that they were expected to undertake so there was no longer any political pointscore about the amount of money that was allocated each year in the budget for the maintenance of the parliament or for MPs to do their jobs. In listening to the estimates hearing this year I was somewhat gratified that there was none of that.

It was also gratifying to see bipartisan support for the renovation of level 7 of the Parliamentary Annexe, because that was a disgrace to all of us who invited the people of Queensland into their own precinct. It was a good example of something that needed to be done and it was long overdue. I have no doubt that the current Treasurer was as reluctant to allocate money as treasurers that I was familiar with were reluctant to allocate money, but the point that Rob Swarten and I discussed a week or so ago was that it is one of the first responsibilities of us as a parliament to maintain the house that we occupy on behalf of the people who send us here.

There has similarly been bipartisan support for the increase in committee staff, and so there should be. There is a responsibility to ensure that the money that is allocated is spent properly, and that does not always happen. I am a bit concerned about the way that the level 7 project is blowing out, for example, but I am sure we will pursue that in the CLA. I am a bit concerned about the wi-fi system that was put into this place. I use 4G because the wi-fi is so darn slow. When we allocate money we have to make sure that we get the result that is expected from the allocation of that public money, and we do not always get that in this sort of a situation. That is why I think we were moving towards independent maintenance of this precinct and an independent body to ensure that the precinct is maintained independent of the politics that are a natural part of this place.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (3.05 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution concerning report No. 26, Budget Estimates—Appropriation (Parliament) Bill. I echo the words of the member for Callide in relation to this fine institution, which incorporates both the buildings and obviously all of the records. We know that when guests come to this place and we show them around they all love to look at the reading room and they love to look at the history. There was a time in this building's history when, if money had not been allocated, this whole building may have been condemned. It would be a real shame and a loss of part of Queensland's history if we did not have this fine building. Making sure that the stonework, the building and all of these things are maintained on a regular basis is critically important so that the people of Queensland can be proud of the institution that exists here.

The history and the institution itself needs to be maintained, and I am pleased with the bipartisan approach that has been taken. Level 7 is another good example of something that needed upgrading, because when we brought people here for barbecues it was like we were stuck in the 1970s. We bring overseas guests and visitors here to show them how important Queensland is on a national level, and I think that maintenance and bringing it up to scratch is a very good thing and I am pleased that it has happened.

Mr Speaker has run a good administration when it comes to the parliament itself. I certainly find that all of the members have been well accommodated and looked after, and I would like to thank his staff, the Clerk and all of the Clerk's staff. As we know, when we have technical issues that need discussion or when we are trying to find out different things when we are under time pressure here, there are people running around to make sure that we have the ability to do our jobs well. Further to that, I would like to talk a little bit about the library and the services there. I find it immensely helpful to be able to access a group of people who have professional research skills, who can look into hard topics and spend the time to give you a concise report, and I certainly thank them for that. When you are looking into different bills and different things that are going on in the parliament or things that you are interested in investigating on behalf of your constituents, I find the resources that they have invaluable.

There are, unfortunately, a couple of things that I would like to raise and one relates to our office staff. As was mentioned before, for eight weeks of the year we are down to one office staff. If only that were true. If you have staff who have been in the parliamentary system for 10 years, they are entitled to long service leave; people are entitled to sick leave; and people are obviously entitled to their annual leave and to carers leave. This means that quite often you can find yourself in an office that is undermanned—

A government member: Understaffed.

Mr WATTS: Understaffed. The difficulty with that—


Mr McArdle: 'Underpersoned'.

Mr WATTS: 'Underpersoned', if you please! I am sure that Donna and Wendy will be very happy to know that I am talking about making sure we have enough people and resources to deal with constituents, who are not only emailing but also coming in through our door. I think that is something that needs to be looked at by the CLA over a period of time—to make sure we can backfill to ensure we are not overly stressing the staff in our electorate offices so we can service the increasing needs that are coming forward from the community.

I mention IT. I was one of the very fortunate people who got a Mac laptop. It would be really good if I could actually print from it. It would be really good if, when it updated, it did not shut down my phones and my computer system. I think it is something that we need to look at. At home I pay \$89 a month for 100 gigabytes, yet in the office I have four dedicated to trying to run three staff and all of our computer systems. It causes us a great deal of difficulty when we upload a photograph and everything then goes

slow for a period of time. I really hope we can look at those things going forward, as IT is something we all depend on. It needs to be as efficient and effective as possible so that we can do our jobs to the best of our ability.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (3.11 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate of the report on the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2016. I acknowledge the range of input from members of the estimates committee, members who attended part of the estimates committee hearing and other members interested in ensuring we continue to appropriately fund and support not only a great parliamentary precinct but also a great Parliamentary Service and the work that service needs to do to support all of our tasks and this institution. Mr Deputy Speaker Elmes, I ask that you pass on to the Speaker my congratulations on the work he has been doing in managing and delivering those services, with the support of the whole of the Parliamentary Service under the leadership of the Clerk.

One of the things dealt with in this report and at the estimates hearing for the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill relates to the extra resources being put into the committee process. I think it is important, in the face of growing demands—growing community expectation and capacity to engage in the committee process—that we resource committees properly to support additional opportunities for committees to engage in policy development and address community issues.

I also note that, as part of a broader look at how we manage these things, the Parliamentary Service has developed a new strategic plan and created an organisational structure for the Parliamentary Service that is more responsive to modern demands and expectations of our parliament, the members of this chamber and indeed the broader community that we serve.

I particularly note that in this financial year we will see the completion of the stonework restoration program—a project in the early days of which I was involved when I played another role in this place, working for a former Speaker. It reminds me how old I am that things have moved on so far that we will see the completion of that very long, extensive, quite difficult and tricky process of stonework restoration in a way which had not occurred, as alluded to by the members for Callide and Toowoomba North, for many decades. It will be great to see that work completed and know that the outcome will be enjoyed by the people of Queensland. This building is a great asset and great part of our heritage and will remain so for many decades to come.

In addition to the improvements and dealing with the issues of the old house, some of the challenges of 1970s building that is annexed to this building are being dealt with. The works underway on level 7 will result in a great improvement. I again concur with the member for Callide and Leader of Opposition Business that this was overdue. It is important that we do continue to have bipartisan support for getting that project done appropriately, to make sure it becomes a great asset to this precinct and allows the community to have access to this precinct in an appropriate way.

I conclude by thanking, on behalf of all of the members of the parliament, all of those parliamentary staff—not only our electorate officers and electorate staff across the state but also all of the staff across the different elements of the Parliamentary Service here within the precinct—for their dedication and their service to us, not only around this time of year but also throughout the year. I know that all members here value that very greatly. Mr Deputy Speaker Elmes, I again ask you to thank Mr Speaker for appearing before the estimates committee.

Report adopted.

Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.


Appropriation Bill

Finance and Administration Committee

Report

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): The question is—

That the report of the Finance and Administration Committee be adopted.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (3.17 pm): I rise as chair of the Finance and Administration Committee to speak on the 2016-17 appropriation for the portfolio areas of the Premier and Cabinet; Treasury; Employment and Industrial Relations; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships;

Arts; Sport; Racing; and Multicultural Affairs. The committee's recommendation is that the proposed expenditure for the committee's areas of responsibility, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2016, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment. On behalf of the committee I thank the Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for Employment, as well as their staff, for their attendance and for providing details and answering questions of the committee during the estimates hearing.


The budget is a responsible move by the government to boost Queensland's employment figures and to support economic growth in our regions. The committee identified three central themes: job creation, infrastructure investment and the restoration of front-line services. As the Minister for Employment noted in her statement to the committee, the 2016-17 budget strives to build on the 36,000 new jobs that have already been created since the 2015 state election. The budget commits \$100 million to create 8,000 jobs across regional Queensland as part of the Back to Work initiative. At the time of the hearing the Back to Work initiative had already proven popular among employers in Queensland's regions, with high rates of engagement being recorded through the website.

The committee also noted the proposed doubling of the payroll tax rebate for apprentices and trainees from 25 per cent to 50 per cent. This rebate will act as a further incentive for business to take on new employees who are just starting out in their chosen field.

The committee heard that support for the regions was a key priority for this budget in response to the suffering caused by slumping commodity prices and a crippling drought in our regions. To this end the Premier pointed to a number of initiatives targeted to improve the lives of those doing it tough in regional Queensland. As explained by the Premier in her statement to the committee, this year's budget begins to reverse the long decline of state investment in infrastructure. It provides \$40 billion for capital works across the state which are projected to create around 31,000 new jobs. The infrastructure plan includes \$2 billion in state infrastructure to fund priority jobs that are urgent or overdue. Queensland is rapidly growing in population and this government is showing its commitment to ensuring we have the resources and the infrastructure to cope and move into the future.

The third theme of this budget is the restoration of front-line services. I thank the Premier for drawing the attention of the committee to the report from the Public Service Commission for the March quarter. This report shows an additional 4,058 full-time-equivalent positions created over this quarter of which 90 per cent were front-line staff for Health, Education and TAFE. Queensland is still playing catch-up with regard to our front-line staff from the cuts of the previous government, but this report demonstrates real action in increasing employment in the fields of teaching, health, law enforcement and emergency services. In his report to the hearing, the Treasurer emphasised the government's commitment to fiscal responsibility. The committee notes that there is a projected surplus of \$867 million which is the largest in a decade. This surplus is forecast to grow to \$1.2 billion by the 2017-18 budget. This has been achieved through the government delivering on election commitments and without the need to sell off public assets. I offer my—

(Time expired)

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (3.22 pm): In rising to speak to the 27th report to the parliament relating to the budget estimates and Appropriation Bill, I highlight the fact that the committee unanimously supported the passing of the Appropriation Bill. We understand that the estimates process is a very important process in answering questions for the year ahead and what has gone on in the past for the budget. I thank the secretariat in particular for arranging a very good estimates hearing. I thank the chairman again and fellow committee members for their involvement in the estimates process because it is a very important part of the questioning of the government. That is exactly what the estimates process and this bill are all about.


With regard to supporting the passing of the Appropriation Bill, the non-government members are obviously doing that because this Palaszczuk Labor government needs all the help it can get to bumble its way through its fiscal ineptitude led by example from the front by the mathematically challenged Treasurer and member for Mulgrave, Mr Curtis Pitt. In a sporting analogy, Rugby has its Honey Badger but the Queensland Treasurer is the Money Badger as he chases up any spare dollars he can find in any government's hollow log, regardless of the risk involved, for the purposes of grabbing savings from allocated purpose funds and dedicated Public Service retirement funds.

As a result of his callous risk taking, the non-government members have tabled a statement of reservation highlighting shortcomings in government ministers' answers at estimates and providing genuine concern at the capacity of this Premier and her ministers to guide Queensland through the turbulent financial years ahead. Running out and hiring nearly 5,000 new public servants may well bolster its union backers' membership and may well hide rising unemployment figures, but it also puts

a \$500 million per annum extra burden on the taxpayers of Queensland. Was it necessary in terms of service delivery for Queenslanders? The answer is definitely no under any proven key performance indicators. It is a political answer to the Labor government's union masters and will further put pressure on a Queensland budget that this government cannot control. It does not care about debt and concentrates on short-term political expediency.

Matters that were raised with the Premier at the estimates—and these are alluded to in our statement of reservation, particularly on matters for the budget year ahead and some actions that have been taken by this government—were dodged by the Premier in particular referring to past years of past governments. That is not the way the estimates process works. There should be genuine answers to the questions put forward rather than a political answer. I remind the member for Stretton in particular given his inexperience and youthfulness at his second go at estimates that he did make a mistake, but for the Premier to sit there and argue—she is a 10-year veteran—that you had to quote the SDS page number before she could answer the question was another obfuscation and another showing that she clearly does not understand the estimates process. It is not necessary. I suggest that she should ask the Clerk for some advice and then she should come in and apologise to me after arguing with me and wasting good estimates question time.

The Treasurer did a great job in highlighting that the \$4 billion raid on the defined benefit scheme for public servants was absolutely a political move. The recommendation was \$2 billion but unfortunately that was ignored, so again the public servants of Queensland should be very worried about their future defined benefits if the markets go bad. It is not all cash in the bank that they have. There are a lot of assets out there that may get revalued et cetera and then it will be up to the Queensland taxpayers to make up the shortage in the defined benefit scheme. This is bad operation by a government and we stand by our statement of reservation on the Treasurer's activities.

 **Mr PEGG** (Stretton—ALP) (3.27 pm): I rise to speak to the Finance and Administration Committee's report No. 27, *2016-17 budget estimates Appropriation Bill 2016*. I start by thanking the other members of the committee and also the secretariat. I want to join with other committee members in thanking the Premier and Minister for the Arts; the Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport; the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs and departmental and statutory officers for their cooperation. The estimates process in my view is vitally important.

After careful consideration and deliberation, the Finance and Administration Committee has made the recommendation that the proposed expenditure be agreed to without amendment. On 23 June this year the Appropriation Bill 2016 and the estimates were referred to the committee for investigation and report. We conducted public hearings on 19 July 2016 and listened to evidence about the proposed expenditure. The committee considered the proposed expenditures for portfolio responsibilities of the Premier and Minister for the Arts; the Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport; and the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs. We also received evidence from other witnesses.

As I cannot mention every aspect of the Appropriation Bill, I will proceed to mention a few key highlights. The Department of the Premier and Cabinet expenditure we reviewed included a 2016-17 capital expenditure program of \$20.5 million in capital purchases and \$6.8 million in capital grants. There are various highlights of this program including \$11.1 million to renew and replace large critical infrastructure items at the South Bank cultural precinct, \$7.5 million for the creation of a new permanent Anzac Legacy Gallery at the Queensland Museum and \$1.5 million towards the upgrade and renewal of permanent galleries at the Queensland Museum.

There is \$1.3 million for the restoration of the state's war memorial in Anzac Square, \$1.2 million towards critical asset replacement at the Queensland Art Gallery and \$1.1 million towards the Turrell lights project at the Queensland Gallery of Modern Art. This expenditure program provides positive steps to enhance and improve infrastructure in this state and prosperity for the future.


The member for Mermaid Beach made some negative comments about the Treasurer. He also made some negatives references to the Honey Badger. I really did not follow the reasoning of the member for Mermaid Beach. The Honey Badger, Mr Nick Cummins, is a much loved Australian Rugby Union player. We saw in the Olympics a fantastic gold medal-winning performance by our women's Sevens Rugby team. Unfortunately, although our Rugby Sevens men's team tried very hard, it did not get beyond the quarter finals. The Honey Badger, Mr Nick Cummins, could not play owing to an injury. I am sure the Australian Sevens team performance in the Olympics would have been much improved

if the Honey Badger was in the team. When it comes to the analogy that the member for Mermaid Beach drew between the Treasurer and Nick Cummins, I would certainly say that the Treasurer's approach to the budget was a gold medal winning performance. This budget is on target and focused on growth, innovation and jobs. At the same time, it is fiscally prudent and responsible. The Treasurer has calibrated this budget to focus on growth, innovation and jobs while also ensuring that it is responsible and affordable now and into the future.

In addition to his role as Treasurer, the member for Mulgrave is also the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. This budget has seen an increase of \$24.9 billion on the 2015-16 budget for this area. That allocation is to support the continuation of the Remote Indigenous Land and Infrastructure Program Office and the Cape York Peninsula Tenure Resolution Program. It also allows funding for new initiatives, such as the From Jails to Jobs program pilot, economic participation partnership projects and support for an integrated response to domestic and family violence.

Unfortunately, we have to suffer the predictable and rather hopeless attacks by the member for Mermaid Beach and those other members opposite to what is a gem of a budget. Rather than just thoughtlessly criticising the government or obsessing about the office accommodation of other members, I encourage the member for Mermaid Beach to admit how hopeless previous LNP budgets were and to publicly congratulate the Treasurer.

(Time expired)

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (3.32 pm): It is yet again a pleasure to follow the member for Stretton, who stakes his claim for the Treasurer's position with undoubted calm and dispassion and a complete absence of relevance and regard to the facts of the matter. The member for Stretton takes the gold medal for saying 'I object' or calling for a point of order the most in the estimates committee hearing. The member for Stretton continually sought to reference pages in the SDS—a practice that is not only unnecessary but also garnered to waste the time of the committee that is charged with dealing with the estimates. Notwithstanding the herculean efforts of the member for Sunnybank in terms of trying to restrain the member for Stretton, he still managed to find out if there were points of order or references to the SDS during the entire process.

The Palaszczuk government's second budget is again a budget of raids, rip-offs and writedowns. It is a budget that is based on short-sighted hollow-log raids instead of outlining a clear economic vision for Queensland and a plan to strengthen the state's financial position. Indeed, the shadow Treasurer will no doubt refer to the questions and the responses that he received in respect to the consideration of the appropriation by the Treasurer.

The budget continues to see unemployment remaining above six per cent. It continues to see declining business investment. It continues Labor's long record of fiscal deficits, with debt continuing to increase towards \$80 billion and government expenses growing at almost four times the rate of inflation. Those are statistics and figures that, under this Labor government, should have Queenslanders shaking in their boots—under the self-styled Captain Risky of the Queensland budget and of treasurers Australia wide.

The Premier's lacklustre performance at the estimates hearing also instilled no confidence that she was aware of what was going on in the budget handed down by the Treasurer. It was clear that the Premier had no idea what is happening with her individual ministers and with individual departments. We saw that again this morning.


In terms of workforce statistics, following a media article and following consistent questioning by the opposition, the Premier was shamed into releasing long overdue quarterly workforce statistics. We were going to ask the Premier a number of questions about the delivery of those workforce statistics, which miraculously appeared on the morning of estimates. They were published the night before the committee hearings, but the figures were not available online until four o'clock that afternoon. The March quarter figures were delivered only at some stage in July—months after they were due to be provided to enable people to make a proper assessment of what this government is doing.

The statistics show that more than 4,000 full-time-equivalent positions were created in the Public Service in just one quarter—in just one quarter. As highlighted in the budget pages for 2015-16, the Public Service grew by 4,000 FTEs more than originally budgeted. There are 8,000 more public servants on the payroll. In those circumstances it was reasonable to ask: what is the benefit to Queenslanders? What is the improvement in delivery of services? I asked the Premier a number of questions in relation to Health and in relation to Education and not once was the Premier able to point to any improvement in the delivery of the services. Although Queensland has lost more than 20,000

full-time jobs over the last 12 months, those jobs that have been created are in the Public Service. The Premier still struggles to understand the necessity to control expenses and to have a Public Service that is the right size to deliver the services that Queenslanders need and can afford.

There are further questions about the merit based selection process—the Premier's much vaunted principle—and the appointment of Rachel Hunter, who did not go through that merit based selection process. We find that, 18 months into the job, the Public Service Commissioner has himself not been through a merit based selection process. This commitment has not been completed and rings hollow, as do many other of Labor's promises.

There were concerning statistics about child safety and, despite obvious failings, the failure of the commissioner to undertake a review of the child safety department. This budget continues the Palaszczuk government's record of not delivering for Queenslanders. Only the LNP can get Queensland moving again.

 **Mr EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (3.37 pm): From some of the contributions that we have heard already from the government's side, we see an attempt to ignore the realities of what this budget is. The member for Stretton finally said something correct when he said that this budget was on target but, of course, the ones being targeted are Queenslanders. This was a budget of broken promises. We heard the Captain Risky of Queensland politics—an embarrassing performance at the estimates hearing—confirm that this was, as the opposition indicated, a Labor budget of raids, rip-offs and writedowns. It is an infrastructure budget that sees infrastructure spending decline to record levels over the next five years. It is a jobs budget that forecasts an increase in unemployment—an increase in number that is already out of date.


Since that budget was delivered we have seen two more labour force figures released and each time the number is going up. For the fifth month in a row, unemployment is rising. The budget forecast is already out of date. The unemployment rate is 6.5 per cent on a trend basis. In terms of a comparison with New South Wales, while we may be smashing them on the playing field, we are losing the economic State of Origin to New South Wales. Since the election Queensland's unemployment rate has increased to 6.5 per cent. It is a budget that promises less debt but delivers more debt with debt forecast to go up to just under \$80 billion. It is a budget that sees public sector expenses increase at more than four times the inflation rate and almost six times the population rate over the last 12 months.

Labor broke its key election promise not to introduce new taxes. Taxes and charges will also go up at double the inflation rate. The bad old days of Labor are back with expenses and taxes going through the roof. The centrepiece of this second failed Palaszczuk-Pitt budget was the \$4 billion raid on the Public Service super fund to prop up the budget black hole. During the estimates hearing there was damning testimony by the State Actuary Wayne Cannon in relation to Labor's deceitful raid of the fund. The Premier and the Treasurer repeatedly claimed in this House the rate was based on the State Actuary's advice. The Queensland State Actuary revealed at the hearings that he never recommended that the government raid \$4 billion from Public Service superannuation. He was asked repeatedly did he recommend a \$4 billion raid and he said no, he never did, he never recommended that. What Mr Cannon made clear was that his sole recommendation was for the government to take a maximum of \$2 billion from Public Service superannuation.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr EMERSON: I hear the Treasurer interject, saying, 'No, no, no. That was his only recommendation.' It is up to the Treasurer when he gets a chance to speak to correct the record and say yes, he did recommend \$4 billion. That is the challenge now to the Treasurer who is keen to interject. Will he get up in this House and say the State Actuary recommended \$4 billion? Let us see when he gets a chance shortly. Mr Cannon made it very clear he never recommended \$4 billion; he only ever recommended \$2 billion. It was also revealed that the Under Treasurer held behind-closed-door discussions with the State Actuary regarding his advice.

This is more evidence of the fact that this is the Captain Risky of Queensland politics, the most reckless Treasurer this state has ever seen, who is willing to say he acts on the advice of the State Actuary, and the State Actuary gets up in estimates hearings and makes it very clear he never made a recommendation of \$4 billion; he only made one recommendation of \$2 billion. This state is getting hurt badly by incompetent Labor government policies.

 **Mrs JR MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (3.42 pm): Following on from the member for Indooroopilly's contribution, there is one thing that our Labor government will not do and that is outsource our Treasury and a budget to Santo Santoro which is what those opposite would do if they ever came onto the government benches again.

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs MILLER: It is the truth but they do not like it. You can imagine Santo out there salivating at trying to have a look at the books. In fact, he would be out the back saying, 'Show us what's in the books. Show us what's happening.' He would be there scribbling out little notes to be brought in here to tell whoever is going to be Treasurer what they had to do. The LNP owe Santo Santoro everything and he will get his money's worth out of it if, heaven forbid, the LNP ever take over government in Queensland again.

At the outset I would like to personally wish the Auditor-General well in his new position in Victoria. He and his staff have done a fantastic job for the people of Queensland. He has served our community well. I know him quite well. He has done a fantastic job not only looking into Queensland government audits but also local government audits, and I wish him well in his future career and hope that one day he may, in fact, come back to Queensland.

I would like to comment briefly about the royal commission into black lung which members would remember that I asked the Premier about during the estimates hearings. I still want a royal commission into black lung. Over the last few years we have seen royal commissions into things like the Health payroll, which was aimed at having a go at us in the Labor Party. We have also seen other royal commissions, but here we have a situation where people are being diagnosed with a disease that we all thought was eradicated. I note today that there has been a media release put out that can be attributed to a Department of Natural Resources and Mines spokesperson that says—

The Department of Natural Resources and Mines, the Office of Industrial Relations—which regulates Queensland's workers' compensation scheme—and Queensland Health are already working to ensure information is appropriately shared and monitored to identify any possible unreported cases of coal workers' pneumoconiosis, past or present.


Then it goes on to say—

The confidentiality around medical records and privacy requirements limit the capacity of Queensland Health, WorkCover and self-insurers to share and compare data, and these organisations do not record information to the level of detail required to specify that a person diagnosed with pneumoconiosis is necessarily a coal mine worker with coal workers' pneumoconiosis.

That is exactly why we need a royal commission. They have just argued for a royal commission. We have a situation whereby departments are not actually talking to each other. Departments are being restricted, apparently, by privacy considerations. They are being constricted by confidentiality restrictions. They are in silos. They are not talking to each other. That is the perfect argument, that they have said today in their release, for a royal commission. I will not rest until a royal commission on black lung is instituted here in Queensland.

I would briefly like to talk about the Public Service Commission. I have been advised that as more people are employed in front-line services less people are employed in corporate services so corporate services are about to be restricted even further. I would like to say to the people of Queensland that I am still going to be working on TAFE and the unemployed who cannot access TAFE if they happen to be on the dole because they cannot afford the TAFE fees; also on tolls and SPER.

In relation to infrastructure spending can I say that money needs to get out the door. There is no use having infrastructure money there if you cannot get it out the door and then suddenly you say there is a magic surplus. It is not good enough.


 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (3.47 pm): Breaking the cycle of intergenerational disadvantage is difficult and complex. This has to be the focus of the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships with its leading role of coordinating service delivery across government. I just heard the word 'silos' mentioned by the previous speaker. There is a criticism of government service delivery that in these very complex areas with multiple agencies delivering services the failure can be not only at the local leadership level but also right through those silos right to the top where there is a lack of coordination. That was certainly, in my view, evident in respect to the lack of key indicators where this government is able to measure what they are doing and what the outcomes of those measurements are. These are complex issues and no-one is naive enough to say there are simple solutions because there are not. We must always strive for better solutions. Look at what does not work, fix it, strengthen what does and work alongside people at the local level.

I want to briefly reflect on a recent visit to Aurukun with my colleagues the shadow education minister Tracy Davis and Broadwater MP Verity Barton before I go on and talk about issues in relation to estimates. I wish to thank the Treasurer and minister for his assistance and his director-general Clare O'Connor in regard to that visit, as well as the Family Responsibilities Commissioner David Glasgow and Senior Sergeant Brendon McMahan, the senior government coordinator.

I also wish to acknowledge the women of the Aurukun community, Mayor Dereck Walpo and councillors. The school, police, health workers and those from many other agencies are seeking to do their best and certainly the community is seeking to do its best. I would feed back to the Treasurer and minister for DATSIP that, by all observations and reports, putting the senior government coordinator, Senior Sergeant Brendon McMahon, into the community was a very smart move. We know that there was a crisis with issues happening around violence and that there was a local meltdown. That has been a very positive example of what can happen when there is a need for local coordination and when somebody with the leadership ability to read and work with the local community, and who has the respect of that community, is doing an excellent job. I also acknowledge some of the educational officers who are providing mentoring in the community. We acknowledge that this is a complex issue.

I come back to the issue of coordination, because it is a fact that, with many services—not just in this community but also in other communities—there is a need to be pretty robust and rigorous in how we look at what we are doing and what government is doing, to say what works and then measure that. There should be some key indicators that more clearly give leads on what is happening and ensure that breaking the cycle of disadvantage is more effectively achieved. There are some very good people working in this area. There are some people with great intent and great passion; however, in having transparency of information, we need to have discussions about how we can do it better. Certainly what we see across the three tiers of government—federal, state and local—is that often agencies do not know what other agencies are doing. Sometimes it is not until you are in a community that you will see that, while there is evidence that people are delivering services on the ground, they are not always talking to each other. That has to stop. There has to be better coordination, not only at the top but also flowing through to the local level.

I wish to talk about the issue of multicultural affairs. Once again, while there are some nice programs, if we are talking about social cohesion and giving money to groups to deliver that then it is about time that we get some meaningful indicators in regard to what those programs are delivering. I raised an issue about some of the Community Action for a Multicultural Society or CAMS programs being run throughout Queensland and the training that is provided so that people are effectively referred, for example, into domestic violence services or other mainstream services where, through their connections, it can be identified that there are issues. We need to make sure that people are effectively serviced and that those things are measured.

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (3.52 pm): On 19 July, the Finance and Administration Committee held a detailed hearing across all of my portfolio areas of Treasury, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Sport. The second budget of the Palaszczuk government was well scrutinised by the committee. They heard a detailed explanation of a clear economic plan that is focused on job-creating innovation, investment and infrastructure. Those priorities all aim to create jobs and are a part of our economic plan that addresses the challenges we face as we transition to a post-mining boom economy. Global growth is forecast to be lower for longer and this is reflected in lower than expected royalties and state taxation revenue over the four years to 2018-19.

The committee heard me advise that, despite the writedowns, we can still deliver a forecast surplus of \$867 million in 2016-17, which will now be the largest surplus in a decade, moving to a forecast surplus of \$1.2 billion in 2017-18. Our whole-of-balance-sheet approach means that we are able to improve services, generate jobs, build infrastructure, support home ownership, encourage employers to hire and help businesses to grow and create jobs. We have done all that without the need for asset sales, without the need for mass sackings and without the need for cuts to services, which is something that the former government said could not be done. The budget continues our debt action plan, again, without asset sales. I make no apologies for using part of the surplus from the defined benefit scheme according to actuarial advice as part of our whole-of-balance-sheet approach to deliver jobs through infrastructure and pay down debt. Debt will be \$10.4 billion lower this year than it was forecast to be by now under the former government's 2014-15 budget.

The shadow Treasurer has tried desperately to make out that the State Actuary made statements during estimates that differed from his written advice to government. That simply is not the case. I will go through this for the benefit of the member for Indooroopilly. Our fiscal principle is to—

Target full funding of long-term liabilities such as superannuation and WorkCover in accordance with actuarial advice.

The State Actuary's letter of 20 May, tabled in this House, clearly outlines the connection between the original report and subsequent guidance from the Under Treasurer about the application of the fiscal principle, that is, the main game here is minimising overfunding of the scheme and managing it in

accordance with the spirit of APRA funding and solvency standards. In his letter, the State Actuary explains that the report and the subsequent advice should be 'read in conjunction' and advises that a maximum repatriation of \$5 billion will result in the expected progress of the active member Vested Benefits Index being at 110 per cent. Mr Cannon and the Under Treasurer both reaffirmed this advice during the estimates hearing.

During this hearing, the only badger we saw was the member for Indooroopilly, who continued to badger the State Actuary. Despite all of that, Mr Cannon was able to put additional guidance on the APRA standards, stating—

You could argue that it is a slightly more conservative approach.


The key part was the minimisation of overfunding.

He was quite clear in both of his letters and in his estimates statements that he was providing advice connected to the probabilities of maintaining more than 100 per cent fully funded status, which of course a \$4 billion repatriation achieves. Mr Cannon advised this was not a recommendation. I will say that again for the benefit of the member for Indooroopilly, and it should be very concerning to Queenslanders if he were the Treasurer of the state but cannot make this distinction: there was no recommendation because, under the relevant professional standards, only triennial reviews require such a recommendation. The key point is that, despite the opposition's persistence in opposing our debt action plan, they have refused to outline any alternative, of course resulting in an \$8 billion black hole.

I think it is important to note, particularly for the knowledge of the member for Clayfield, that under Labor debt is lower than was forecast in the LNP's budget, that is, general government sector and non-financial public sector or gross debt, which is the LNP's preferred measure. Growth is higher and unemployment is lower. It is concerning that the member for Indooroopilly and the member for Clayfield seem to have tried to erase the last three years of their government.

Moving to my other portfolio areas, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships plays a very important part in working with councils, elders and communities to ensure we deliver the best outcomes. I am pleased to say that a total of 1,021 jobs placements were delivered for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the state, far exceeding our target of 400. We have been listening very carefully. We have introduced our ministerial champions initiative and I thank my cabinet colleagues for their work there.

In terms of Sport, the government recognises we need to be promoting a healthy and active lifestyle across the state, including a particular focus on grassroots sport, women and girls through our Start Playing Stay Playing initiative and our Join the Movement campaign. I thank the secretariat and the committee for all their work.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (3.57 pm): Who is the government trying to kid? This was the second Palaszczuk government budget, delivered by this Treasurer, that is full of raids, rip-offs and writedowns. Business confidence is at an all-time low. Unemployment is up above six per cent. Youth unemployment is over 13 per cent. Who is the Treasurer trying to kid? Queensland is not a happy place at the moment. Businesses are fleeing Queensland and, for goodness sake, they are fleeing to Victoria and New South Wales. We used to be the envy of every other state and territory in Australia. People came to Queensland to get a decent job. They came to Queensland to raise their families. Many people in this place are probably from the southern borders, as I was. My parents came to Queensland because they saw opportunities. Now we have people fleeing Queensland because of this government.

You might think that this has happened because of a long-term Labor government, but we have all of these issues in Queensland and they have managed to do all of it in 18 months. In 18 months, people are fleeing the state to go to Victoria of all places. I say to the Treasurer that that is no record to be proud of. More people are moving to Victoria than are coming to Queensland. The reason they are not coming to Queensland is because we have an employment minister who has taken her eye off the ball. Unemployment is up. She said nothing can be done about youth unemployment. 'It's just in the system', she said. 'Nothing can be done about it'. No policies or procedures—

Ms GRACE: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. The member is misleading the House. I have explained this on numerous occasions. I take offence at what he is saying. He is quoting out of context. I ask that he withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): There is no point of order.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw. Anticipating that point of order, I have a copy of the document where the minister is quoted. I again table for the benefit of the House where the minister is quoted as saying that nothing can be done about youth unemployment.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Courier-Mail* online, dated 15 January 2016, titled 'Employment Minister says youth employment "not new" and "not much you can change"' [1250].

Ms GRACE: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I was asked this question in estimates. The member is misleading the House. I was quoted out of context, and he knows that. I take offence and I ask that he withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask you to withdraw, member for Kawana.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw. While we are talking about the Minister for Employment or, as I dubbed her in estimates, the 'Minister for Unemployment'—because all she has managed to achieve is an increase in unemployment under her short reign—let us look at the Back to Work policy.

The Back to Work policy is unravelling before their very eyes. It is a regional employment package that actually does not apply to Toowoomba. I note for the new member for Toowoomba South that their Back to Work package does not include Toowoomba. Apparently Toowoomba is not a region in Queensland. Apparently Ipswich is not a region in Queensland. Ipswich has nothing to do with the regions. In terms of jobs and opportunities, do not worry about Ipswich. The Sunshine Coast is part of greater Brisbane. It is not a region either that needs a jobs package. The package is falling apart before their eyes.

I note that the Premier is in the chamber. The Premier gets up in here and talks about accountability, transparency, openness and so on. Her Minister for Employment refused to tell estimates and members of parliament why she met with Michael Ravbar. It is not disclosed in her diary why she met with Michael Ravbar—a man under police investigation. She refuses to say.


She had the opportunity in this estimates committee to take the question on notice and explain why she met with Michael Ravbar. What did they discuss? She refused to do it. She is hiding behind the fact that she does not want people to know what she met with Michael Ravbar about. The department said in answer to an estimates question that they have had no industrial meetings with Michael Ravbar with respect to industrial relations. Yet in the estimates hearing they said that they have had a couple of meetings with Michael Ravbar about other matters.

If the department of industrial relations is not meeting the CFMEU president about industrial relations matters, what on earth is it meeting Michael Ravbar about? What other commitments has he given the government that would have the industrial relations department of Queensland not meeting Michael Ravbar about industrial relations matters? Maybe they were catching up for coffee. Maybe it was about the big do they had the other day where a few Labor members had a good picture with Michael Ravbar. They quickly tweeted it and then untweeted it because they did not want that photograph with the Deputy Premier out there.

The Minister for Employment has a big jobs package which she calls Back to Work. She confirmed to the estimates committee that she never discussed it with the CCIQ. The peak business body in Queensland was not even consulted about the government's key election commitment or policy for Back to Work. The CCIQ had nothing to do with it.

The minister is happy to hand out \$10,000 cheques to Coles and Woolies—multinationals—for their employment package. Coles and Woolies are about to get \$10,000 cheques. In a month if Coles and Woolies dropped five staff through natural attrition and employed another five staff they would get \$50,000 from the Queensland taxpayer. I am pretty sure Coles and Woolies can afford to take on staff without the taxpayer putting their hand in their pocket and handing money out to Coles and Woolies.

Where should the money go? It should go to small business. That is where it should go. It is not. The Minister for Employment or unemployment did not disclose why that was the case. I suspect they just did not know. They rushed the policy too much and they announced it without consultation. Coles and Woolies benefit with \$10,000 cheques.

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (4.03 pm): I rise to speak on the Finance and Administration Committee's estimates report. The estimates process is an important accountability mechanism. Anyone who seeks to diminish estimates is simply trying to avoid scrutiny. Queenslanders know it when they see it. This year provided a great opportunity for me to speak as Premier on a range of issues but also particularly on the responsibilities of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and Arts Queensland.

It also gave me an opportunity to speak about my government's second budget. It was a budget framed in difficult times but with an eye on the future. Slumping commodity prices and a crippling drought mean economic conditions in regional Queensland are vastly different to those in the south-east. That is why my government has been steadfastly focused on jobs.

Our jobs programs have offered opportunity and confidence in the face of really tough economic conditions. A key budget policy is our \$100 million Back to Work program, which will create 8,000 jobs in the regions. I have already travelled to Townsville, Bundaberg and Cairns to urge employers to make the most of this support and the response has been overwhelming. I am advised that in Townsville 20 people have been placed this week as part of the Back to Work program. Congratulations, Minister; a job well done. There is already significant interest in the program and I expect that to grow.

I also took the opportunity to announce changes to our payroll tax system to encourage employers to hire more young people. We have now doubled the payroll tax rebate for apprentices and trainees from 25 per cent to 50 per cent. This means that a business will receive \$500 to \$1,000 a year for each apprentice and trainee hired, up from \$250 to \$500 under the 25 per cent rebate.

I also took the opportunity to announce that my government would be delivering on our commitment to implement the real-time disclosure of political donations. An implementation plan is currently being considered. It will mean that, instead of waiting months to see who is donating to a political party, people will be able to see who is donating and how much they are donating before an election takes place. This is an important next step in my government's push for greater openness and accountability following our legislative change that saw the political donation threshold dropped from \$12,800 to \$1,000. That was an election commitment which I am proud my government has actually endorsed.


We are determined to ensure the government plays its part in stimulating regional economies through our \$40 billion Capital Works Program which will create 31,000 jobs. It includes our \$2 billion State Infrastructure Fund for urgent priority projects across Queensland and a \$175 million boost to our Building our Regions program. The first State Infrastructure Plan in more than three years has been delivered and now in this budget we are starting to reverse the decline in infrastructure investment.

I discussed my government's commitment to restore confidence in our front-line services which were savagely cut by the LNP under the Newman-Nicholls government. The reality is that over 90 per cent of full-time-equivalent Queensland government workers are employed in front-line or front-line support positions. As I said on the day, if anyone wants to pretend that more front-line service personnel are a waste of money they should say which teachers, which health workers, which doctors, which police officers they would sack and from which regions. In contrast, I will stand up for and my government will fight for front-line workers every single day of the week.

Finally, I would like to thank the committee for their focus on the government's initiative in the arts sector. Queensland has a thriving arts community which we should all be proud of. We are attracting more and more blockbuster movie productions to our shores, GoMA goes from strength to strength and such is the demand for major art exhibitions that my government is investing in a major new Cairns Performing Arts Centre with the council, which will be one of the foremost arts precincts in regional Australia.

I also place on record my sincere thanks to all of the public servants who have worked night and day to ensure the estimates process ran smoothly. I think on both sides of the House people would appreciate that when you are the Premier or a minister of the Crown we have hardworking public servants who work really hard on the briefs and preparation. They work night and day and over weekends because they want to deliver the best they possibly can to ensure that the estimates process works well and they are contributing to that process.

Once again, I pay tribute to all of our hardworking public servants. I thank each and every one of them for their hard work. I thank my director-general, Dave Stewart, all of the directors-general and all of the staff under him for their commitment, their dedication and their sheer determination to make sure that they provide the best possible advice to their ministers. I again thank the committee, the secretariat, my department and my personal staff for all of their hard work in preparing for the estimates committee hearings. I commend the report to the House.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (4.08 pm): As I rise to speak to the estimates report for the Finance and Administration Committee for the 2016-17 budget I would acknowledge in the gallery one of my constituents, Mr Wagner. He is here to view this week's debate and in particular the debate on the vegetation management laws that will be coming on Wednesday night. I know he is a fierce advocate for that matter. We welcome him to the parliament.

I examined in the Finance and Administration Committee the budget estimates for the areas of racing and sport. I will start with racing. This year's budget, carrying on from last year's budget in relation to the racing industry, really sets out a budget which has decimated confidence in the Queensland racing industry over the last 18 months through the actions of this government and the former minister and the new minister, Minister Grace, following in the former minister's footsteps. We have only to look back a little in time to see the actions that have decimated the confidence in Queensland Racing, and that is the sacking of all of the boards of racing here in Queensland by those members opposite because of the outcome of an inquiry into a misguided and very bad element in the greyhound industry.

To sack the entire boards across three codes because of the bad behaviour of some greyhound owners, trainers and breeders has decimated confidence. It is only through the hard work and the dedication of those in the racing industry who have been determined, despite the actions of those opposite, to carry on with what they do in promoting racing in Queensland and in making a go of it in their industry that they have managed to keep going. They took more than 12 months to appoint a permanent board of Racing Queensland. Only recently in the last couple of months—in fact, a few days before estimates—there was an announcement that we would have a permanent CEO of Racing Queensland again after the former one was sacked some 12 months ago. How you can leave an industry that contributes so much without a permanent CEO for months and months and months is beyond me. It shows the disdain that the Labor government has for the racing industry.


When we looked at the budget estimates we saw that the new integrity body set up for this government, an integrity body which is focusing on animal welfare and integrity in racing, is becoming a ballooning bureaucracy. We saw from the answers to questions on notice that were given that employment expenses are almost more than doubling from \$5.7 million to \$10.8 million over the forward estimates. This is a huge increase in employee expenses—a huge increase. Although the minister tries to explain it away by saying this is just because they are putting more people on to ensure the integrity of the sport and animal welfare, a doubling of employee expenses simply does not add up when put together with what they are actually doing, because the animal welfare and integrity line in their budget is not increasing that much at all. The industry needs to know, and the industry is worried that this is going to become another cost that will be a burden on the industry after 2019-20 when the government's commitment to fund these costs expires.

We have also seen administration expenses go from \$500,000 to over \$5 million. What is all the administration for? That is a tenfold increase compared to the previous set-up for animal welfare and integrity in Racing Queensland. It is a cost that will be passed on to the industry. It is lead in the saddle bags for racing that does not need any more lead in their saddle bags going into the future.

They have cut prize money for racing in country areas. They have cut prize money for racing across-the-board. Those cuts to country racing are going ahead. The minister says there is \$2 million a year over the next four years to support country racing clubs to become more sustainable. We have no idea where that money is going, whether it is going to make it to country racing clubs or whether it is going to be spent on bureaucrats and consultant reports produced in Brisbane to tell country racing clubs what to do. The industry has no confidence in this government to support country racing in particular over the next few years. We on this side of the House have very significant concerns about the costs that have been loaded into the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission across the forward estimates.

In the brief time remaining, I would like to touch briefly on the Sport portfolio in which we examined the Treasurer and the fact that in a number of regional areas around Queensland the ability of children to be able to access the Get Started vouchers of \$150 has nosedived under this government which is very bad for participation in grassroots sports in Queensland.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (4.13 pm): I rise to address the tabled report of the parliamentary Finance and Administration Committee. I want to acknowledge the work of all members on the committee, particularly the chair, the member for Sunnybank. I thank them all for their contribution. This was my first estimates hearing and, since, the government's employment initiative—our \$100 million Back to Work regional jobs package—has been officially rolled out and support payments to regional businesses are already being made. There is a strong industry interest in regional Queensland in our Back to Work program. I look forward to updating the House later this week on the benefits it is bringing to local communities, including the doubling of the payroll tax rebate for taking on an apprentice or trainee.

Back to Work aims to give the unemployed in the regions a greater opportunity at getting a new job. That is a great thing. That is why it is regionally targeted and far superior to any alternative plans of those opposite. In fact, when I was being questioned at the estimates hearing about why the program is targeting the regions, it was interesting to watch the two regional opposition members on the committee. Their body language was very loud because like this government they knew that regional Queensland is where the greatest need and challenges are and that this program is rightly focused. It was interesting that their body language said a lot when we were being questioned in regard to that issue.

The opposition's ill-conceived and poorly thought out jobs plan on the run lacks adequate financial incentives and would be hampered by a lack of on-the-ground delivery and coordination. To make matters worse, it targets incentives at the wrong end of the employment and training cycle. It is no use promising apprentices \$500 vouchers at the end of an apprenticeship; they need it at the beginning of an apprenticeship when they are actually on the job. Can I remind those opposite of something they are having difficulty understanding? A voucher to buy tools is not a job. I just remind them of that.

Over the last 18 months the Palaszczuk government has worked hard to restore fairness to Queensland workplaces. When in office, those opposite ran roughshod over Queensland workers, sacking thousands of public sector employees and stripping them of hard fought entitlements. They refused to negotiate in good faith with Queensland public sector workers and it was left up to us to conclude fair and reasonable enterprise agreements with the majority of the state's public sector workers, in line with the government's wages policy.

Those opposite also continued to demonise unions and the workers they represent. Of course I meet regularly with unions who are representing their workers, just as I also meet with business and industry groups. That is what any reasonable industrial relations minister would do, and I will continue to meet with all relevant stakeholders. If they wish for those meetings be kept in private, I will respect their wishes.

The CFMEU are obviously part of the union movement. The problem of deadly asbestos imports has been brought to the national attention by them. I applaud them for carrying out testing which detected asbestos-containing materials on major building sites, including 1 William Street in Brisbane. The Palaszczuk government has a zero-tolerance approach to asbestos. We target the immediate removal of this material when detected and pursue prosecutions where possible. This problem needs to be tackled at its source. We simply should not be seeing items such as children's crayons, car spare parts and building materials containing asbestos entering the country in the first place. The federal government needs to address this issue as a priority.

We conducted the first major review of Queensland's industrial laws in nearly 20 years through an extensive consultation process with all stakeholders. I look forward to introducing new laws into the House in coming weeks in line with the recommendations of the review. We have a strong workers compensation system. We have made excellent changes which see firefighters now receiving benefits that otherwise they may not have been entitled to. We see workers who were denied their benefits and common law under the previous government now being paid.

There is no greater supporter of the Queensland racing industry than the Palaszczuk government. I was at Eagle Farm on Saturday. Let me tell the House that the feedback on what we have been doing with racing is the complete opposite to what the member for Beaudesert mentioned here today. They are more than happy with the board. They are more than happy with QRIC. More importantly, they are more than happy with the way this government is handling racing.

(Time expired)


Report adopted.

Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee

Report

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Millar): The question is—

That the report of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee be adopted.


 **Mr PEARCE** (Mirani—ALP) (4.19 pm): In rising to speak to the Appropriation Bill, I wish to thank all members of the committee for enduring such a long day facing off to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment, followed by the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines and then by the Minister for Housing and Public Works, who joined us late in the day.

As chair of the committee, I thank all members for the good work that they did on that day and that they have been doing as a committee. I also acknowledge the professional support of the secretariat. The way that they work and the professionalism that they show always overwhelms me. I would also like to acknowledge the ongoing work that Hansard does for all the committees as well as the House. I felt that our committee worked well, even though there will always be a level of conflict when opposing sides of parliament sit at the same table and challenge a state government minister and senior departmental officers on their performance over the past 12 months.

I want to raise a couple of process issues which give more meaning to the purpose of budget estimates hearings. I acknowledge that shadow ministers have the task of keeping government ministers focused and accountable. Budget estimates hearings are a good time and place to achieve that, but all year I work with and watch the efforts of opposition and crossbench members turning up for committee meetings, travelling and giving their time to make our committee work well. Then at estimates hearings they are left sitting at the table and they never really get into the game. I personally believe that to be unfair and unreasonable. There should be a way to make it fairer for those members. I appreciate the work that they do for the committee, and they should not be left there sitting like a shag on a rock at estimates committee hearings. Shadow ministers do have the right to maximise their time to ask questions if they wish to pursue an issue.

The second issue is the time wasted pursuing issues that are not in the context of estimates hearings or in the interests of the public. Some of the issues that I have seen pursued at estimates hearings are really meaningless. From my experience here, there are real matters of public interest questions that can be put to the responsible minister—things like expenditure; underspends and overspends. What gain has there been for the people of Queensland as a result of budget expenditure? How does the minister propose to correct any of the problems? Is one program in particular going to deliver better outcomes than another? Can the minister justify that expenditure? What is in it for Queenslanders? At the end of the day, that is what it is about: what is in it for Queensland? These are the things that voters want to hear about. They do not want to see a shadow minister relentlessly following an issue which is very obviously not going to go anywhere.

I will now speak about the government's efforts under the Deputy Premier to push forward investments and get projects off the ground. I see the development of Queen's Wharf casino as being the most exciting development Brisbane has been a part of since South Bank. With the construction of this massive precinct due to commence in 2017, there will be an estimated 3,000 to 8,000 jobs created from the start-up to completion, when it is completed and up and running. We will have five new hotels with three- to six-star ratings, three new residential towers, 50 restaurants and bars which will be fully accessible to the public, and new green spaces as large as six football fields for 26,000 people. There is so much to go through and it will mean great things for Queensland. I am looking forward to the completion of the project and will be there as proud as a peacock, even though I will take that stance for only a small number of hours. People who know me know that I am not a vain, self-centred person, but I can assure all members that Jimmy Pearce will strut on that day.

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (4.24 pm): I rise to speak to the estimates report of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee with respect to the Appropriation Bill. The Palaszczuk Labor government's second budget is best characterised as a budget of raids, writedowns and rip-offs with no long-term cohesive economic plan to create jobs and grow the Queensland economy.

With respect to infrastructure, in yet another display of a lack of transparency the true costs of the Cross River Rail project—the government's No. 1 infrastructure priority—have been hidden and Queenslanders are still in the dark about who will fill the financial hole for a tunnel without trains. The opposition tabled a document during the proceedings that showed many billions of dollars have been excluded from Building Queensland's financial and affordability assessment of the Cross River Rail project. This funding shortfall relates to the trains required to provide the additional services. Unfortunately, the Deputy Premier was more concerned about where the document came from than explaining how she would fund the black hole for the project. It is indicative of this government's failure that its No. 1 infrastructure priority remains unfunded with no funds for trains nor operating the stations and maintenance of the trains.

Labor wants to have a conversation with Queenslanders about the funding but will not release details of the secret business case containing six new taxes to fund the \$4.6 billion black hole. The CEO of Building Queensland would not say whether the \$1 billion benefited area levy or the \$2 billion public transport levy modelled in the Cross River Rail business case were new taxes. He also refused to say how many households would be slugged with the public transport levy, expected to raise

\$2.6 billion. Although the 2016-17 budget has been billed as an infrastructure budget, it fails to deliver any major new infrastructure projects. This is most apparent in Cleveland and Redland city, where Labor's infrastructure freeze on major projects continues now for two budgets.


In terms of trade, on the issue of establishing a third trade office in China, the acting CEO of Trade & Investment Queensland admitted that no analysis had been done. Taxpayer funds are being directed into a new trade office in Chengdu over other markets without analysis by Trade & Investment Queensland, a body which employs 128 full-time staff and which will receive over \$35 million in 2016-17. How can that be?

In terms of local government, the director-general advised that the standard process for investigating complaints about a local government office bearer regarding misconduct is for the complaint first to be investigated by the council CEO and then referred to the director-general to determine whether further investigation is required under the Crime and Corruption Act. The director-general confirmed that this standard process was not followed during the 2016 local government election campaign when Brisbane City Council Lord Mayor Graham Quirk was referred to the Crime and Corruption Commission. In this instance, the director-general referred Councillor Quirk without a completed investigation from the CEO. Labor's practice is clearly unacceptable, and we await the outcome of the government's review into the councillor complaint process and expect the findings of the review to be released to the Queensland public.

In terms of state development, the LNP remains concerned about the \$248 million underspend on capital works for the Commonwealth Games venues. Many economic benefits will be lost if the venues are not ready in accordance with the original schedule so that trial events and training camps can be held. This massive underspend, which is 75 per cent of the budget, will impact on business development, economic growth and job creation.

In terms of natural resources and mines, the LNP opposition is concerned about the return of cases of coalminers pneumoconiosis in Queensland. The director-general confirmed that concerns about potential coal dust exposure had not been raised by industry safety and health representatives nor by the CFMEU with the department or the Mines Inspectorate in the lead-up to the very concerning diagnosis of recent incidents.

In terms of housing and public works, the rollout of QBCC's service delivery transformation has been at a slow pace, meaning only 39 per cent of insurance claims for defective work were assessed and responded to within 35 days. There are many other aspects of the estimates process that I could comment on, but I thank the secretariat and the members for their hard work.

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (4.29 pm): I rise this afternoon to speak with respect to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee's inquiry into the Appropriation Bill during the estimates process. It was a wonderful opportunity to hear from the Deputy Premier, from Minister de Brenni and also from Minister Lynham about their respective portfolios—portfolios that I have a key interest in.

I start by thanking the committee. The committee chair, the member for Mirani, is a great mentor to me. I thoroughly enjoy being a member of a committee of which he is the chair. I think he does a great job. I would also like to thank the other members of the committee for their support, their work and their interest in these portfolios.

The estimates hearing was a long day. We did have three ministers whom we were scrutinising. It was a long day. It went until about nine o'clock that night, so it was about 12 hours of estimates hearing that day. We started with the Deputy Premier. The Deputy Premier has a number of different portfolios as the Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment. A number of these portfolios are very important to my electorate.

The Deputy Premier outlined the Palaszczuk government's infrastructure plan and how it is guiding the rollout of Queensland's \$10.7 billion Capital Works Program which will, in turn, support more than 31,000 jobs throughout Queensland with around 46 per cent of this being invested in our regional areas, which is of great importance to me as a regional member.

The significant regional infrastructure fund is a fund that I am keenly interested in. I am very pleased that the 2016 Palaszczuk government budget includes an allocation of \$1.25 million from the significant regional infrastructure fund for Frenchville State School's new school administration building. The school community has welcomed that announcement. There is also \$200,000 for the Farnborough State School undercover play area which is coming directly from that significant regional infrastructure fund.


I also raise the issue of the infrastructure funding. We are seeing a \$2 billion State Infrastructure Fund which will deliver the next phase of priority infrastructure needs. The Deputy Premier talked about how the State Infrastructure Fund will be informed by the independent advice of Building Queensland and how, through this fund, the government is already fast-tracking \$300 million of transport projects to unlock economic activity across the state. There is \$180 million in economic and social projects for regional and rural Queensland and \$20 million to progress business cases for other infrastructure priorities.

Also funded from the significant regional infrastructure fund is about \$2.3 million of moorings and reef protection buoys which will go out in Keppel Bay. It is something that a lot of people in my community are very excited about. Being able to moor their boat using these public moorings will save them needing to use an anchor and, in turn, save a lot of precious reef around the very popular Keppel Bay.

The Deputy Premier also talked about the NDRRA funding and the over \$1 billion shortfall that the federal government is still yet to pay. This is a very sensitive issue for people in my community given that we were victims to Cyclone Marcia last year. In this budget there is an allocation of about \$20 million for natural disaster recovery payments, which is of great need to people in my community.

We also heard from Minister Lynham about the Building Our Regions program. I know that people in my community are very excited about the next stage of the Building Our Regions program. I understand that more than \$70 million is being invested in 42 projects around the state. People in Keppel are very excited about the next stage of that program. We have about three projects which have been invited to progress to the next stage.

I would like to thank all the members of the committee and also the committee secretariat. I commend the report to the House.

 **Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (4.34 pm): I am pleased to be able to contribute to the comments on the report from the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee. I do thank the chair and the members of the committee for allowing me to take part in the committee hearings. I note the admonition of the chair when he spoke about how members can transgress what estimates committee hearings should be about. I know that I speak for all on my side to reassure him that we certainly did not do that. We used the estimates committee process for exactly what it was meant to be used and that is to look carefully at what the government is doing, how it is spending taxpayers' money and where it intends to go as a result of that.

The committee's deliberations were largely overshadowed, I suppose, by the concentration on the Deputy Premier's business case for the Cross River Rail, the six new taxes which were very carefully looked at and the preparation of a business case which had a tunnel with no trains. That obviously took significant public interest for the day.

My main concern as shadow minister for planning was to question the deputy minister in her role as Minister for Planning. Planning is an exceptionally important part of the legislative role of this chamber in setting the framework for business within Queensland. If we do not get the planning system right, all the Premier's talk about a government committed to jobs will come to nothing because the planning system has to be right for both the community and business to be satisfied with the way in which our state expands and, in turn, for business to create jobs. What was clear from the Deputy Premier's performance before the committee was that she and this government are continually caught up in a process of review and delay. They are totally unconscious of the certainty and the practicality that business and its consequential job-creating prospects demand. That was clear in respect of two particular matters on which I questioned the Deputy Premier. The first was about the delay in the processes of reviewing the South East Queensland Regional Plan.


The South East Queensland Regional Plan sets out the ultimate framework for development in this most important corner of our state where so much of the economic basis, particularly of the construction industry, is housed. I was able to produce to the committee a letter that the Deputy Premier had written to me as the member for Mansfield some time ago promising on behalf of an inquiry I had made for a constituent that the review of the plan would occur and the new plan would be available one year ago. That has not happened. We are still in the process. The plan is still not here. Despite promises that that draft would be released in 2015 to public consultation, we are now halfway through 2016 and there is no sign of that review being finalised. It is an important one. It is important again for certainty and practicality for business. That is what business is calling out for from this government and what it continually fails to get.

We suggest that the Deputy Premier make better use of her time fulfilling her statutory obligations in this regard as a minister rather than injecting herself into backyard development applications in her electorate. Apart from obvious conflicts of interest, it is misplacing her efforts which should be primarily put into these broad planning roles that the state government has a proper place to play in and in particular the South East Queensland Regional Plan.

We also raised concerns about the new planning act which we support to a large degree and the transition provisions that allow local governments and the business community to deal with the new planning scheme. It is a fact of life that with the continual change within the planning legislation many local governments have not even caught up with the last two changes of acts. We still have town plans that were drafted two acts ago. Local governments have not had the resources and the ability to bring their town plans up to speed.

I questioned the Deputy Premier about the budget allocation in relation to this transition for the new planning scheme. I was concerned and remain concerned that the vast majority of the approximately \$55 million that is going to go to this work will go to consultants within the Deputy Premier's department, to extra resources within that department, rather than to the front line, to local governments who actually need money to upgrade their schemes, to upgrade their IT processes and to properly serve the community and business in ensuring that new planning schemes hit the road running. I was concerned and remain concerned about that important issue.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment) (4.39 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee estimates committee report. In doing so I really do want to address some of the mistruths that have been peddled by those opposite in their statement of reservation and in the chamber here today.

Firstly, let me say that there will be trains for Cross River Rail; in fact, 75 new six-carriage trains have already been delivered. The business case for Cross River Rail was developed independently by Building Queensland and takes into account the additional trains that will be required for this project. In line with standard industry practice, the capital cost for Cross River Rail does not include the cost of new trains. This is consistent with other similar projects like Melbourne Metro and Inland Rail. I also understand that the former LNP's failed BaTT project did not include trains in its capital cost. It is telling that the opposition deputy leader has yet, some seven weeks later, to produce that business case after she said she would.

Secondly, the opposition was critical of the business case for Cross River Rail for including consideration of value capture opportunities. As I have said many times, it is a Commonwealth government requirement that all major projects assess the full range of value capture options as a condition for any federal government funding. Consistent with this requirement, value capture options were explored as part of Building Queensland's independent, rigorous and robust assessment of the business case for Cross River Rail. By trashing value capture options, the LNP is trashing a major policy plank of the federal LNP government. No wonder Malcolm Turnbull would not have the opposition leader standing anywhere near him during the election campaign in Queensland.


The opposition has also incorrectly accused the director-general of my agency of not following process by referring the Brisbane Lord Mayor to the CCC without a completed investigation from the CEO during the 2016 local government election campaign. The director-general has a statutory obligation to refer a matter to the Crime and Corruption Commission when correspondence or other material being dealt with by the department gives rise to a reasonable suspicion of corrupt conduct. This is the circumstance under which the Brisbane City Council matter came to the attention of the government; not as a councillor complaint, but rather as an assessment exemption request made by the Brisbane City Council CEO. To suggest that proper process was not followed is wrong, and those opposite should know better.

Regarding the opening of the new trade office in China, I can assure the House that Chengdu is a very good choice for Queensland. Both Austrade and the Victorian government agree: they have also selected Chengdu to develop new opportunities in the growing western China region. Our trade commissioner to China, Zhang Zijian, also supported the choice of the Sichuan province.

In regard to the merit selection process for the position of chair of Trade & Investment Queensland, the position was advertised in the *Australian*, print and digital, the *Financial Review* newspaper, the CareerOne website and TIQ's website.

I wish to take this opportunity to make a number of minor clarifications and corrections. On page 28 of the transcript I stated that \$49 million was left unexpended from the budget for planning reform. I am advised that it is \$47 million that has not been expended. On page 40 I referred to the Brisbane Metro project rather than the Melbourne Metro project. I also wish to correct the record from question time this morning where I referred to international student numbers when of course I meant Queensland's share of international students, which went backwards every year under the Newman-Nicholls government.

I again wish to thank members of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee, particularly the chair, parliamentary staff and officers from my agency and ministerial office for their hard work during estimates this year.

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (4.43 pm): The estimates committee hearings for the Natural Resources and Mines portfolio was another unfortunate affair similar to last year's dispiriting experience. It is sad to see that this previously proud and energetic department—which was focused on delivering economic development opportunities—has been reduced to such an unproductive, backward-looking agenda. The Minister for Natural Resources and Mines has failed to defend his department from a hostile takeover by the Deputy Premier and the environment minister. The estimates hearings made it quite clear that the minister is a disinterested passenger in this portfolio, and Queensland industries and the economy are suffering as a result.

Despite massive increases in the Public Service under the Palaszczuk government, the number of full-time-equivalent employees within the Department of Natural Resources and Mines has not increased at all despite the member for Inala stating in 2012 that at current staffing levels the department's ability to protect the environment would be compromised. The minister confirmed that the department was able to perform its role at current staffing levels, contradicting the member for Inala's 2012 statement to the contrary. In fact, the minister stated that the Department of Natural Resources and Mines was performing wonderfully, which was a ringing and welcome endorsement of the LNP's 2012 restructure of the department.


The opposition is concerned about the re-emergence of coalminers pneumoconiosis in Queensland. The director-general confirmed that no concerns about coal dust exposure had been raised by industry safety and health representatives or by the CFMEU with the department or the Mines Inspectorate prior to the latest incidents of coalminers black lung. I note that the minister disagreed with the member for Bundamba about the need for a royal commission concerning these cases of black lung and that the department had failed to administer Queensland's mine safety legislation. The minister and the Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health expressed confidence in the department and in the Mines Inspectorate.

The minister confirmed that Labor's decision to grant the mineral and coal exploration sectors a 50 per cent exploration expenditure concession over two years had resulted in Queensland missing out on about \$274 million in exploration investment. This is despite financial and technical capability assessments being undertaken prior to the grant of exploration permits to applicants. Labor's failure to provide any new funding for a precompetitive resource exploration initiative is a serious concern. This decision abandons a decade of bipartisan support to provide incentives for precompetitive resource exploration activities and projects. Since 2006 funding to encourage the discovery of new mineral and energy resources has been forthcoming until now.

The minister admitted that commitments he gave about the consultation process on Labor's proposed changes to Queensland's vegetation management framework have not been fulfilled, including an undertaking that the consultation process would involve a report and recommendations from a stakeholder round table. The minister confirmed that no such report exists. The minister could not confirm the MOU between the Palaszczuk government and IFED for the Etheridge Integrated Agriculture Project proposes to allocate water on the basis of an annual average diversion, nor could the minister confirm this condition was not equivalent to other water entitlements that carry volumetric limits and stream flow conditions. The publicly available memorandum of understanding clearly spells out that this is in fact the case. These facts clearly demonstrate that the Palaszczuk government is unnecessarily delaying the release of existing volumes of unallocated water in the Gilbert catchment of the Gulf Water Resource Plan which is denying local landholders the opportunity to pursue new irrigated agriculture projects.

The minister has repeatedly and publicly stated that he intends to pursue reform of the Land Court to try and increase its capacity to deal with complex matters relating to resource projects. However, the minister confirmed that he is not responsible for the budget allocation relating to this reform, which will compete with other workforce management priorities within the Queensland judicial

system. There has not been a single new idea, innovation or genuine reform come out of the Department of Natural Resources and Mines under the stewardship of the current minister. The Queensland economy, particularly in our regions, cannot afford this important job-creating department to continue to remain idle because its minister is incapable of providing it with any direction.

 **Mr CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (4.48 pm): The Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee welcomed me to their committee earlier this year after I transferred from the Finance and Administration Committee, and I want to take this opportunity to thank the chair, members and secretariat for welcoming me to their fold.

The estimates hearing of our committee, held on 20 July, considered the portfolio areas of the Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment; the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines; and the Minister for Housing and Public Works. As the member for Keppel said, it was quite a long day. The committee sat until nine o'clock at night. The committee did recommend that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2016 for the areas of the committee's responsibility, be agreed to by the House without amendment.


In relation to the areas of responsibility of the Deputy Premier, issues that were discussed related to Cross River Rail, the State Infrastructure Fund, the Capital Works Program, TIQ assistance to the dairy industry, the State Infrastructure Plan, Economic Development Queensland, Building Queensland, Queensland as a study destination, and planning within Queensland. I will focus on two matters that affect my patch in Far North Queensland. The first is the TIQ offices in Singapore and Chengdu in China. The markets of China and all of Asia are massive for Cairns and Tropical North Queensland, not only in tourism but also in export opportunities across-the-board. I certainly welcome anything we can do in that space to connect Tropical North Queensland with Asia. I welcome that new office.

The second matter is the Significant Regional Infrastructure Projects Program and the \$180 million for regional Queensland. This is a significant boost for regional Queensland. I am very proud to have some of that money coming into my electorate of Barron River, to the tune of around \$39 million. Having \$39 million spent on a couple of projects in your patch goes a long way towards generating confidence, jobs and growth and resolves some issues. The projects in my patch are the Bill Fulton Bridge, which has a total construction cost of \$34 million, to address a blockage on the western arterial at Cairns; and a \$5 million fire station to be constructed at Smithfield. I thank the Deputy Premier and her departments for that. From conversations I have had with local departmental officers I can say that these projects are ready to go. Tender documents are being drawn up at the moment. I would love to see some boots on the ground and some high-vis vests in both of those spots if not before Christmas then certainly shortly after.

Some of the things discussed with the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources were the Townsville stadium, the North Stradbroke Island transition strategy—I was a member of the Finance and Administration Committee when it visited North Stradbroke Island, so I am well aware of that issue—the Carmichael rail and coal project, biofuels, renewable energy projects—and the list goes on. I was quite satisfied with the minister and with his departmental officers.

Finally, very late at night we heard from the Minister for Housing and Public Works, who I think conducted himself quite well, especially as it was his first hit-out. I said to him later that night that I gave him 'best on ground' for that day. He earned a gold star. The big project he rolled out that day was the Logan Renewal Initiative. I am sure he wants to talk about that himself.

In closing, I thank the committee, the staff and the ministers. I did read the statement of reservation from the opposition. I do not agree with it.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (4.53 pm): First I thank our deputy chairman of this committee, Dr Mark Robinson, for the excellent work he did—I also acknowledge the other committee members from our side of this House—in relation to the estimates committee. In the short amount of time allocated to me I will refer to my conversations at the estimates hearing with the Deputy Premier and her officers and the Minister for State Development, Minister Lynham.

This is said to be an infrastructure budget; however, as we have seen and as has been reported on numerous occasions, the infrastructure spend is the lowest for many years. It is some \$2 billion less than in the LNP's last budget. We also saw a lack of transparency from this Palaszczuk government on the only infrastructure project it has: the so-called Cross River Rail that the Deputy Premier has been talking about. Queenslanders have no further idea—unfortunately, the Deputy Premier was not forthcoming at the estimates hearing—about this project.

The Deputy Premier has now been caught out. Through the estimates process, the six new secret taxes that went through cabinet were revealed. All of these taxes were mooted to go onto all motorists and property owners throughout Queensland. Interestingly, the chair of the committee would not allow LNP members to call these levies and taxes 'taxes'. I am not quite sure what it is when a Queensland taxpayer is expending something. It was very difficult to understand what we are meant to call them if the Deputy Premier will not allow us to call them taxes. They are taxes, but the words 'taxes' and 'levies' were ruled out. Obviously the committee chair was trying to protect the Deputy Premier, who was struggling on that issue.

The Cross River Rail document that went to cabinet was clear. Cabinet ministers all agreed on the body of it. It contained new taxes. Government members said that there would be no new taxes, levies or charges, but we see in this budget that that promise has already been broken. To see that we only need to look at the changes applying to foreign investors.

How is the Deputy Premier planning to pay for the No. 1 infrastructure project? Certainly the money is not there in the budget. There is some \$50 million just to create another bureaucracy. Queenslanders would like to know how Cross River Rail is going to be funded. Unfortunately, the Deputy Premier was not able to answer those questions.

The Deputy Premier put this No. 1 infrastructure project on the table, but we now learn it is only a tunnel. There are no trains allocated. It was a great part of the day when we discovered there were no trains. This project is for a tunnel without trains. There was no clarity provided in terms of how the Deputy Premier plans to fill the black hole. The question remains: who will pay for this \$16 billion project?

In relation to state development and Minister Lynham, concerns were raised about the substantial underspend on capital works for Commonwealth Games venues. It clearly ignores the loss of economic benefit if they were delivered within the original schedule. Also, the minister was unable to explain why the Building our Regions program has cost Queenslanders jobs and why less than one per cent—only \$406,000 out of the \$7 million budget—actually went out the door. He was also unable to explain why no jobs were created, because less than one per cent of his budget got out the door. It was very disappointing to see the lack of projects in rural and regional Queensland.

In relation to trade, we saw policy on the run, with the Deputy Premier forced to open a trade office on the whim of the Premier when there was no advice taken or analysis made by Trade & Investment Queensland. That was clearly set out in that estimates process.

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (4.58 pm): I thank the committee for its report and its recommendation that the proposed expenditure as detailed by the Appropriation Bill 2016 for the committee's areas of responsibility be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.


I turn to the issue of capital works for Commonwealth Games venues. With less than two years to go, the delivery of the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games venue construction is on time and on budget. Those opposite seem to be almost willing the Commonwealth Games to fail. All venues are on track to be delivered 12 months ahead of the games. The total value of the capital works budget for the venues has not exceeded the original bid budget. My department is working to ensure the best possible infrastructure outcomes within the approved budget. Time taken throughout the early planning process for the venues has helped identify better outcomes for the community such as temporary venues being upgraded to permanent. The \$320 million investment in sport and community infrastructure in the lead-up to the Commonwealth Games is generating more than 1,000 jobs during the design and construction stages.

I turn to our signature \$375 million Building our Regions. A low spend in the first year of a grants program is not uncommon. The LNP spent not a single dollar from its Royalties for the Regions budget of \$60 million in 2012-13. The spend in its second year was only \$2.4 million.

In January I put in place a five-point action plan to tackle the insidious disease of coal workers' pneumoconiosis. This included an independent review by Monash University, which has made 18 recommendations. My Department of Natural Resources and Mines is working with industry, unions and the medical profession to implement all 18 recommendations as well as the five-point action plan. Our three-pronged strategy to take us forward is to prevent new cases of coal workers' pneumoconiosis, to identify existing cases early and to provide a safety net for workers with the disease. Action is underway. It is proposed that coal companies be required by regulation to notify my department of confirmed cases of coal workers' pneumoconiosis. It is further proposed that companies will be required by regulation for the first time to report all dust monitoring results quarterly to my department for publication. Under a new dual checking procedure, our underground coalminers can have confidence

in knowing that their X-rays are read by an Australian radiologist to ILO standard and then by a US based accredited reader until full Australian transition occurs. My department is currently partnering with WorkCover to ensure workers diagnosed with CWP are able to access information on their entitlements. I have also placed this important issue on the agenda of the COAG Energy Council meeting in Canberra this Friday.

I am proud of the fact that in the face of declining commodity prices, increased difficulty assessing finance and the current uncertain global environment the Palaszczuk government acted to throw a lifeline to explorers in Queensland. Earlier this year I announced concessions for mineral and coal explorers to deliver a possible 50 per cent reduction in the expenditure they are required to commit for mineral exploration over the next two years. The Queensland Exploration Council, the Queensland Resources Council and the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies supported and welcomed this initiative. This is in contrast to those opposite, who watched exploration expenditure decline by 70 per cent. What did those opposite do? Absolutely nothing! He was prepared to let Rome burn. I reaffirm this government's commitment to investing in driving innovation and the development of industries of the future to create jobs of the future. I thank the committee and the staff of my departments for the work involved in the budget and estimates process. I commend the Appropriation Bill 2016 to the House.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (5.03 pm): With the 2016-17 Queensland budget we have again seen comments that are vague and mostly seem contradictory. The smoke and mirrors plan seems to have a couple of main elements or thought bubbles—inject funds from Queensland public servants' defined benefit fund into government owned corporations to seek project finance from the private sector and to continue to spend like only Labor can with no plan for the future. There are many speaking out about the raid on superannuation funds, and the Future Fund just posted its first negative quarter of performance in almost four years. With the discussions around poor investment outlook, especially here in Queensland, one would wonder with all these challenges facing the superannuation sector why this government would raid the capital of the state's defined benefit fund to plug an ever-increasing black hole in its budget.

The reality is that this budget delivers very little for the Bundaberg region and next to nothing for those hardworking men and women of the Burnett. Employment growth is down, jobs are drying up in the region through significant lack of confidence and unemployment is up and continues to rise after we stopped the upward pressure, so I will be sad to expose this deteriorating state to my local community after the budget. Labor promised to create jobs for young Queenslanders, but after 18 months of government we have seen youth unemployment rise and fewer Queenslanders starting or completing apprenticeships and traineeships in my region. Labor is good at spending taxpayers' money but terrible when it comes to delivering real outcomes and jobs for Queenslanders. It talks about training for training's sake and we talk about skills and training that lead to real jobs. Labor's flagship bureaucracy, Jobs Queensland, had not even started despite the relevant legislation being passed by this parliament some eight months ago.


The Service Delivery Statements for the Department of Housing and Public Works has shown an increase in costs but a reduction in assistance for housing services. It also shows the new government's fairness review has shown an increase in underoccupancy in government owned and managed social rental housing. We also see a reduction forecast of departmental owned social rental dwellings in acceptable condition. In general, the majority of measures flag a reduction in target expectations with one notable exception—a forecast increase in the average wait times in allocation for assistance with government managed social rental housing for clients in very high or high need. It is concerning that new measures introduced only predict a 54 per cent new service standard, demonstrating effective facility utilisation by aligning and providing housing stock that matches the greatest demand of people requiring social rental housing. We are only getting half the people where they need to be. We also saw the percentage of insurance claims for defective work assessed and responded to within time frames as low as 39 per cent.

The budget papers reveal some disturbing trends in the minister's portfolio, and it is forecast to get worse. Procurement services operating costs continue to rise with no efficiency gains and promised trials of regional procurement plans have not materialised. The budget reveals QFleet vehicles diminished in numbers even after the ballooning of the Public Service, with another 8,000 full-time equivalents. We see the sale of assets such as government employee housing. Some \$32 million has been sold to fund backlog maintenance. We see ever-increasing operating deficits across the department—\$50 million in this budget to \$120 million in the projected forward estimates—in nearly every department and agency, all forecast to perform badly. We can only guess when the minister proposes to deliver just one balanced budget.

We had confirmation during estimates that the department met with the Deputy Premier's office in relation to the negative impacts of the proposed vegetation management, including the increased costs and charges that involve the department. We also had confirmation of the significant increase in employee expenses.

I must raise the issue of the hypocrisy and the dangerous policy platform of the current minister. After nearly two years of dithering and ducking and weaving on any policy development, what we have seen is a devastating announcement regarding the people of Logan. It is inappropriate to describe the Cornerstone Living project as a public-private partnership and the Logan Renewal Initiative as privatisation. It is clearly misleading. The government was never relinquishing ownership of social housing under Logan Renewal. That was never the intention. We could wait another six years before anything happens in Logan in terms of the Cornerstone project that was mooted this week. The tenants of Logan are rightly tired of the broken promises. The local contracting community is on its knees. Many important stakeholders, including the council and tenants, were not consulted prior to the minister's decision, and it goes on.

There is consensus among housing and homelessness professionals that this government-centric approach to the provision of social housing is unsustainable and we need community housing providers to address the current crisis. With 15,500 Queensland households currently on the social housing waiting list, we wonder why there was a \$30 million underspend in the capital budget. More importantly and devastating was another broken election promise that was contrary to the 2014-15 annual report that said final transition of the tenancy and property management of approximately 4,900 social housing dwellings in Logan had been cancelled. We really need these answers for the community of Logan.

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (5.08 pm): Let me first thank the committee, its staff and secretariat for all of its work in examining this appropriation. It is important to address a few of the matters pertaining to the statement of reservations and some comments in the debate today. Let me take the opportunity to address matters regarding the points made regarding the investigation of invoices referred to in the statement of reservation. I can confirm one case which is related to an electrical contractor undertaking work in public housing that has been identified where that conduct led to action being taken by the department. I can inform the House that the amount involved was \$1,370.66, which is related to service costs. The departmental investigation was substantiated. The matter is being referred to the Queensland Police Service and the Queensland Audit Office in accordance with the relevant legislation. The contractor involved has been removed from the department's standing offer agreement panel.


When dealing with a significant number of construction invoices, there is a risk of incorrect invoices being issued. I can assure the House that a number of measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of fraud. These measures include how we manage the payment of contractors so that there is a clearer oversight of payment arrangements. Examples include introducing a new statewide monthly review of certain invoices, monitoring trends in regard to payments, identifying any overuse of the same contractor as well as the use of data analytics by the department's internal audit unit. Where issues are identified the department takes appropriate action, including referral to the Queensland Police Service and the Queensland Audit Office.

I turn to the issue of government employee housing. The disposing of surplus or underperforming government employee housing properties is not only a business-as-usual activity but also a usual part of managing a large property portfolio. It is good economic management. The decision to dispose of these properties is not made in isolation; it is driven by agency demand and the viability of local rental markets. The properties that my department has sold, or are on the market, or are short-listed, are all properties that are either surplus to demand or are older, requiring higher levels of expenditure, or where there is a viable rental market. The department uses these funds to either invest in new housing in areas of high need, particularly in regional and remote areas of Queensland, or to maintain and upgrade existing stock. Those opposite ought to remember that these properties are underperforming and surplus to demand. They are not income-generating assets. Government employee housing is not being sold off or privatised. A property that was once used to house a government employee that is no longer required is disposed of and new ones are built that will house a government employee in remote and regional Queensland.

I will now address the comments that were made in relation to the performance targets of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring that the Queensland Building and Construction Commission delivers Queensland a regulator that is fair and inspires confidence and trust. I have made my expectations very clear to the new

commissioner of the QBCC, who was appointed in May this year. I expect the QBCC to be a proactive regulator that will make decisions that are fair and will build confidence and trust across the industry. As part of that role, I have asked the commission to conduct a review of all operational policies to ensure that they align with the intent of the legislation. I am confident that the commissioner will work hard to meet these expectations and I look forward to continuing to work with him and his team.

I will reflect on the comments made by the member for Burnett. He wants to make a point about hypocrisy. I can assure the House that, in terms of hypocrisy, there is nothing more consistent than the LNP members coming in here and claiming that they act for Queenslanders who live in and rely on public housing when their government's only plan was to privatise the lot—give it away and throw away the keys forever. That is hypocrisy. Once again, I thank all the committee members, the parliamentary staff and the departmental staff for their work during the estimates process.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (5.13 pm): I rise to speak to the estimates committee report of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee. I would like to thank the ministers, the chair, Mr Jim Pearce, the committee members and the staff for all of their hard work. I would also like to thank the departmental officers and the officers of statutory bodies who attended.

I would like to talk about Springvale Station. I asked the Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment the following—

With the recent acquisition of the Springvale Station, can the Deputy Premier confirm that the state government will continue to pay the local council rates in order to have the local council continue vital pest management and the upkeep of roads?

The Deputy Premier's response was that the state government does not pay rates but, instead, responsibly manages access routes and pests at a cost to the state and also gives grants and financial management guidance and funds some service levies. However, the Deputy Premier did not mention that, although the government purchased the property to protect the Great Barrier Reef, the government plans to mine the waterways for gold, tin and ore which, according to the environment minister, will not hurt the reef. However, the Australian Conservation Foundation has said—

The rivers of the Normanby Basin flood every wet season and all the disturbed material is washed downstream and into the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, smothering sea grass meadows and nearby coral.

I question why the government spent \$6 million when it is allowing mining in the same river. I really believe that, during the federal election campaign, the federal opposition could have received green votes in the city area by creating the perception that Labor is doing wonderful things for the Great Barrier Reef, but, after the election is over, all of a sudden we have tin mining in that same river. It does not stack up. I really believe that in some sense it is very hypocritical.

With regard to the Big Rocks and Hell's Gate dam projects, I would also like to acknowledge the need for the minister and the department to work with the federal government to get these projects up and running. Yes, I appreciate the fact that the Minister for Natural Resources came to Charters Towers and had a look at the Big Rocks site. Not many ministers have been out there. It is very important that the state government works with the federal government on this project. I ask members to cast their minds back to the October 1987 stock market crash. At that time, Australia was doing it tough but North Queensland was prospering because we had completed the Burdekin Dam. The Big Rocks and Hell's Gate projects are great opportunities to provide water security for Townsville and the Burdekin. They will provide opportunities for development, particularly the Pentland biofuel project south of Pentland. They will also save money by resolving the issue of water restrictions for Townsville. I ask the government to build the Hell's Gate dam with the support of the federal government. That will resolve the issue of water security for Townsville.

I would also like to acknowledge the Minister for Environment for providing \$1.5 million in regard to moving the bats with a bat-tracking device. I know that \$500,000 has been given to the Charters Towers Regional Council. I really believe that that funding will be helpful, but the council needs to have a criteria of what it is supposed to do to move the bats. I ask the Minister for Environment to come to Charters Towers to speak to the council, because it wants to ensure that this will be good dollars well spent.

During the estimates committee hearing the minister announced that there were exemption fees for smaller timber millers who treated under 1,500 cubic metres of timber and used less harmful chemicals. This is good news for timber millers across the state, especially the small ones, who were paying \$10,000 in fees—the same amount that the big companies were paying. That was very discriminatory against these small timber operators. This exemption is going to help the Tablelands and help these timber millers in these regions.


Report adopted.

Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

Report

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Millar): The question is—

That the report of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee be adopted.


 **Mr FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (5.18 pm): I rise to commend to the House the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee's report on the budget estimates for the 2016-17 financial year covering the portfolios of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills and the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services. I also commend the ministers' departmental officers for their contribution and the hard work that they did in respect of the preparation of the budget estimates. I also commend the deputy chair of the committee and the other members of the committee for their hard work and their contributions. Finally, I also thank the committee secretariat, other officers of the Parliamentary Service and Hansard for their assistance.

One particular area I want to focus on is the continual process of methodical implementation of the justice system for initiatives in relation to the domestic and family violence task force *Not now, not ever* report. I do that on the basis of being a white ribbon ambassador. I am very happy with the contribution this Palaszczuk Labor government is committing to this area: funding of \$54.6 million over the next four years, including \$5.6 million across the department to support domestic and family violence initiatives. This forms part of the government's overall package of \$198.2 million over five years. It is a significant amount of funding for a particular area of concern in our communities. It will support the delivery of specialist domestic and family violence courts which we already see in operation on the Gold Coast. It will also support the Women's Legal Service helpline for victims of domestic violence, establish a Queensland sexual assault counselling privilege legal assistance service and ensure that Queensland magistrates receive ongoing contemporary professional development on domestic and family violence issues, including the impacts of domestic and family violence.

To slightly digress, recently I was privileged to have the Attorney-General in the electorate of Ferry Grove at a community forum on domestic violence. It was very well attended by stakeholders. The feedback was overwhelming of the benefit of having had the opportunity for people to come forward to hear what this government is doing in relation to domestic violence and the continual rollout of legislation dealing with the *Not now, not ever* report.

I now turn to the other portfolio areas for our committee, that is, Police, Fire and Emergency Services. It is great to see a government that is committed to restoring front-line services by putting 300 extra police on the front line. This government is concerned about tackling organised crime, ensuring that we put enough people on the ground to make sure we address this issue. It adds to the 1,100 police over the next four years, in addition to all those other front-line services such as 1,940 nurses and 940 teachers. It is a demonstration of our commitment to make sure that our front-line services are adequate in terms of addressing the result from the previous government of the dismissal of over 14,000 workers. It certainly demonstrates our commitment in respect to policing.

We heard from the minister of the additional 2,200 body worn cameras. I had the privilege last week to represent the minister at an awards ceremony and heard very concerning stories that people were awarded bravery awards on the basis of the crime that they had prevented as a result of dealing with serious criminals in circumstances where they put themselves selflessly beyond the call of duty in terms of addressing and capturing those particular criminals. No doubt the addition of body worn cameras will assist greatly in capturing the evidence and also what is occurring in our community to make sure that our community is safe and secure in their homes and on the streets in their area.

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (5.23 pm): I rise to make my contribution to the 2016-17 budget estimates report No. 34 of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. The committee recommends the proposed expenditure be agreed to by the Assembly without amendment, but with a statement of reservation by opposition members of the committee. My particular interest and contribution today will be around youth justice, programs to reduce recidivism and the corrections area. I note in the statement of reservation by the opposition under Corrective Services we talk about the correctional centres increasing occupancy by eight per cent overall and nine per cent in high-security facilities. There has been a 265 per cent increase in prisoner on officer assaults, a 78 per cent increase in serious prisoner on prisoner assaults—a 51 per cent increase in prisoner on prisoner assaults in the past 12 months. I will table a separate copy of that statement of reservation for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Extract from Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 34—2016-17 Budget Estimates, pp 29-32 [[1251](#)].


As I said, my focus is on the area of corrections. What we seem to be doing at the moment, and it was something that was alluded to by the Attorney-General in estimates, is focusing on recidivist offenders but at the top end of those recidivists. She talked about 10 per cent of young offenders being responsible for 45 per cent of crime and they are doing some work around that.

In my experience, in the considerable amount of time that I have spent with people in the Corrective Services areas, not just in Queensland but in New Zealand and around Australia as well, across-the-board I get the feedback that we are spending too much money on that top end. We are putting in too much effort in that particular area and it is taking our eyes off the ball, so to speak, in relation to the bottom end and perhaps the low-hanging fruit—that is, recidivists at the bottom end of the spectrum who have committed lesser crimes and have lower terms of imprisonment. If we spend more time with those people before they start to have crime entrenched in their life cycle, before they become career criminals, then we will have a better chance of stopping the rot and stopping them coming through and ending up being in the same position as those particularly severe recidivist offenders at the other end.

Recently I was at a conference and I listened to one of the speakers in the legal fraternity who said words to the effect that she had spent many, many years spending her time fishing people out of the river downstream. She decided that it was time for her to change her trajectory and go upriver to where they were being thrown into the river and see what she could do there. That is where we should be putting our efforts when it comes to recidivism. We should be aiming at those areas of corrections that are the bulk of our corrections services.

Sixty per cent of our prisoners have a prison term of less than 12 months. We should be putting more effort into those people. We should be focusing on what I call the AEIOU when they come out. Earlier this month I visited Lotus Glen. They confirmed to me that one of the issues for them is that prisoners come out of jail late in the afternoon and where do they go from Lotus Glen? They end up in Cairns and guess what? If it was Friday afternoon, come Monday morning they are back in Lotus Glen because they have just done the mill. They have not been able to get back to their communities. There are some issues around that that have to be dealt with.

To clarify the AEIOU, A is for accommodation—appropriate accommodation—E is for education, I is for integration, O is for occupation and U is for understanding. The U for understanding goes both ways. It is about us understanding where these recidivist offenders have come from and what crimes they are committing now. They were not born criminals, they became criminals as a result of what happened to them when they were younger people. We need to focus on that end. We do not need to focus so much on the top end. We need to put more resources into that bottom end and in the end we will have a turnaround in society. Change one life, change many lives and change our community.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (5.28 pm): As I indicated in my contribution to one of the earlier committee reports, this budget was all about raids, rip-offs and writedowns. It was clear from this estimates committee hearing that the Minister for Training and Skills, the Hon. Yvette D'Ath, is out of her depth. She has too much on her plate to worry about skills and training. Just as we saw with the Minister for Employment and unemployment going up, we see that under the Minister for Training and Skills apprenticeships are going down, school based traineeships are going down and traineeships are going down.

In this House and during estimates, they spruik about the great policies that they have with respect to apprenticeships. It is not a very good policy when the statistics show consistently over 18 months apprenticeship completions going down and apprenticeship take-up rates going down. It is all going down.

Mr Krause interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the member for Beaudesert. What about Jobs Queensland? Let me tell the House about Jobs Queensland. What Jobs Queensland? It was the pinnacle of the Palaszczuk government's jobs package. I see the member for Sunnybank smiling because he knows I am right. It was their pinnacle election commitment. The member for Sunnybank and the chairman of the committee, the member for Ferny Grove, whose head is down low now as he sits in his chair, went to the election with Jobs Queensland as the pinnacle jobs package. It was going to create lots of jobs in Queensland. From the estimates hearing it was clearly evident that no jobs have been created because Jobs Queensland itself has not been established. In fact, on the day of the federal election—under the cover of a federal election—they put an ad in the *Courier-Mail* for board positions to serve on Jobs Queensland. What sort of smokescreen was it, on the day of the federal election, to put an ad in the paper advertising for Jobs Queensland board positions? We heard the Minister for Training and Skills advise the committee that they had been inundated with applications. In that case, why did they not do it 18 months ago? Jobs Queensland was their big employment package.

At an estimates hearing the Premier said that she was forced to talk to the Minister for Training and Skills. One would have liked to have been a little fly on the wall when the Premier was having a stern talk to the Minister for Training and Skills. When we look at her charter letter—charter letter? What charter letter—it says get Jobs Queensland up and running. The legislation was passed at the end of last year. The only position appointed was that of chairperson of the board of Jobs Queensland. Was it a merit based selection process? Did they go through a merit based selection process to get the best person? No! Who says so? The deputy director-general of Education and Training. We know that a Labor mate, Rachel Hunter, got the gig and, as the deputy director-general of the department of education said, it was unmeritorious. There was no merit based selection process, despite the promises that that was going to happen.

Then in the witness stand we had the CEO of TAFE Queensland. She tried to tell the estimates committee that TAFE needed rescuing, but then admitted that in the bank account of TAFE Queensland sits \$100 million. It does not seem that an organisation needs rescuing if it has \$100 million sitting in the bank. They do not know what to do with it. That is the problem. They need rescuing? They cannot get the money out of the door and they do not know what to do with it. The reality is that the scaremongering of the Minister for Training and Skills in relation to TAFE was wrong. It never needed rescuing.

TAFE has an 80 per cent occupancy rate. Jodi Schmidt, the CEO of TAFE, has more explaining to do, because she said that they have an occupancy rate, but what she did not say is how much of that was administration and teaching, because I suspect that that 80 per cent means a lot less teaching occupancy rate in TAFE. We have a TAFE campus in Gympie that is sitting dormant and vacant. Universities want to come in, but the government is not letting them in. This morning they talked about the private sector. They said, 'We want the private sector and the not-for-profit sector,' yet we have vacancies.


Mr Walker interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the member for Mansfield. Mount Gravatt is sitting there, wanting deals done—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Millar): Order! Members, interjections will be taken from the correct seat.

Mr BLEIJIE: I love taking interjections on the run from the member for Mansfield, as he runs past. We see that TAFE did not need rescuing. With Fair Trading we see that red tape is up. The minister responsible for Fair Trading is sitting opposite. The property sector already has duplication documents and they are adding more documents. And they buggered up the Keno. They forget to put it into legislation, which they admitted—

(Time expired)


 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (5.33 pm): Firstly, I thank the parliamentary staff involved in the estimates process: Mr Stephen Fimmimore the research director, Kelli Longworth, Lynda Pretty, Greg Thomson and Lorraine Bowden. I also congratulate the chair and deputy chair of the committee for coming up with a reasonable set of hours and a compromise. It was great to see that they could come together in such a way to compromise on the hours. For a moment during a run of the member for Everton, I was a little worried about the questions. He was very enthusiastic during the day, doubling and tripling up on questions. He must be very thankful to the opposition staffer who was pumping out the fillers to fill up the time at the end, but we did get there in the end. I thank my colleagues on the committee, all of the heads of the departments who were present, the Attorney-General and the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services.

The theme of the estimates hearing was restoring front-line services, which came through loud and clear on the day. In regards to restoring front-line services, \$32.4 million over four years has been allocated to boost Legal Aid. Legal Aid is vital in a civilised society. Access to justice is vitally important. A sum of \$54.6 million over four years will support changes stemming from the *Not now, not ever* recommendations in relation to domestic and family violence. We also saw a commitment to restoring specialist and diversionary courts, such as the Drug Court and the Murri Court. Last month I was fortunate to officially open the Murri Court in Cleveland. It was a great day. The Quandamooka elders really appreciate the restoration of such a vital piece of our legal system. It was great to see a commitment to our youth who enter into the youth justice system, with an extra \$5 million for the T2S program. That is an education and vocational training program that allows youth within the youth justice system to not fall behind or miss out, so that they can have a future.

On the Training and Skills front, there are plenty of key initiatives. We heard the member for Kawana talk about TAFE needing rescuing. During the election campaign, the Alexandra Hills TAFE was on the chopping block. It was ready to be sold off. It took a Labor government coming into this place to rescue it. We have implemented initiatives. We have just completed a joint proposal for Queensland's first autistic school, which will be set up on the Alexandra Hills TAFE site. It will be the first of its kind in Queensland. We are looking to enter into partnerships with the TAFE system. I commend the Attorney-General for that initiative, as well.

We are investing \$60 million in Skilling Queenslanders for Work to create up to 8,000 new jobs—32,000 over four years—to get people back to work. It is another great initiative from a Labor government. The allocation of 10 per cent of total labour hours on eligible Labor government infrastructure projects for trainees and apprentices is an important policy platform that will see more apprentices and trainees get a start on government projects. It is a great initiative.

The committee was also responsible for the oversight of the ECQ. At this point I congratulate the member for Toowoomba South on his election to this House. I note that that election was the first opportunity for the compulsory preferential voting system to be used. I understand that the member for Toowoomba South was a big winner from that process coming in. It delivered a low informal vote of only 3.24 per cent. Despite all the scare campaigns that we saw from those opposite, the system worked very well at the first opportunity and, I might add, the LNP benefitted greatly from it. In the short amount of time that I have left, I would just say that estimates highlighted the measures taken by the ministers to restore front-line services and I commend them for doing that.

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (5.38 pm): I rise to add my comments on the 2016-17 budget estimates for the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee and concur with the non-government statement of reservation that this Labor budget is devoid of any sound plan to reduce state debt and does not instil any confidence in the economic future of our great state. I thank the committee secretariat for their assistance through this important process and acknowledge the many hours they contributed. I also acknowledge my fellow committee members.

Consideration of the Appropriation Bill 2016 through the estimates process revealed the ongoing, arrogant attitude this asleep at the wheel Palaszczuk government and its ministers have towards the people of Queensland. Of even greater concern is the lack of direction or actions being taken to sustain and grow our economy to make us competitive and not allow us to fall to the bottom of the fiscal ladder in Australia.

There are many new members in the 55th Parliament who have experienced only their second budget estimates. I wonder if they understand that estimates are meant to be an open and transparent process where non-government and government members and crossbenchers have plenty of opportunity to examine and investigate aspects of each government agency's budget, not a process of Dorothy Dixers, nonanswers and evasion.

Ministers are expected to have a firm grasp of issues pertaining to their portfolio—after all they waxed lyrical when speaking to their 2016-17 budgets. Both the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills and the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services were exposed like rabbits caught in headlights and were not across numerous elements in their portfolios.

The Palaszczuk government has been found wanting once again. It has failed Queenslanders by failing to keep election commitments. They did not make many so what is the problem many would ask? If we take out the revenge legislation to repeal or toss out LNP bills there was not much original there.

How hard is it to implement? Very hard, it seems. Take Jobs Queensland, for example. Here we have a \$40 million taxpayer funded employment initiative and the minister cannot say whether it has created a single full-time job. All that has been set-up is a secretariat. There is no board even though legislation was passed last year and came into effect in January 2016. As we heard from the honourable member for Kawana, the minister did not even advertise for permanent board positions until 2 July 2016, but she did appoint a chairperson by taking a shortcut and not going through the merit based process the Palaszczuk government promised they would employ for all government boards. Over in another department Labor's much touted Advance Queensland, which cost \$60 million, only created 121 jobs. It just goes to show that the only jobs Labor knows how to create are those for their union mates.


Questions to the Electoral Commissioner revealed that he was not consulted about Labor's devious 11th hour alterations to our voting system which smack of political convenience rather than enhancements to the informal voting pattern. How can this government be taken seriously about its intent to tackle alcohol fuelled violence when it is cutting the budget for the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation over the next two financial years. There are genuine concerns over Labor's intention to water down the LNP's tough VLAD laws.

Issues of overcrowding in our prisons grow and fester. Instead of the finger pointing at the former LNP government, the minister for corrections should pull his finger out and address the problem. A 265 per cent increase in prisoner on officer assaults should have shaken him from his slumber. Police resources for cross-border issues, moving our crime-busting RAP to northern Coomera and removing three key, respected officers in the process has undermined public confidence in the Palaszczuk government further.

Fire and Emergency Services continue to do lifesaving work under increasingly difficult circumstances. In Currumbin we are serviced by three rural fire brigades with hundreds of years of experience between them. Given the enormous efforts of our fire and emergency services, many of whom are volunteers, I asked the minister to explain the government's policy for recouping any rescue costs caused by irresponsible or foolish acts.

It seems that more acts of tomfoolery and sheer stupidity are occurring and unnecessarily wasting the time and resources of our skilled emergency workers. The minister did not have a clue what the policy was. I am not for one moment questioning the critical importance of the rapid response of emergency workers to entrapped or injured person, but I am questioning the government's resolve to discourage pranks and dangerous and grossly irresponsible behaviour.

In the moments remaining I place on record my deep gratitude and admiration for all the hardworking police, fire and emergency services workers in Currumbin together with all those who contribute to making it such a safe and happy place to live.

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (5.43 pm): I rise today to speak to report No. 34 of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee on the 2016-17 budget estimates. The committee has recommended that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill, for the portfolios of Justice and Attorney-General, Training and Skills and Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Corrective Services be agreed to without amendment.

Firstly, I enjoyed my experience of working in this portfolio committee environment. I thank the work of the committee—in particular, the chair and my parliamentary colleague, the member for Ferny Grove, Mr Mark Furner; Mr Don Brown, the member for Capalaba; the non-government members of the committee, the deputy chair, Mr Michael Crandon, the member for Coomera; Mr Jon Krause, the member for Beaudesert; and Mrs Jann Stuckey, the member for Currumbin. I also acknowledge that it must have been terribly disappointing for the non-government members of the committee who did not really have an opportunity to participate in the estimates process. I also thank the committee secretariat for their outstanding work and professionalism. It is very much appreciated.

I acknowledge both the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Yvette D'Ath, and the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services, Bill Byrne, who both displayed their outstandingly detailed and in-depth knowledge of all of their portfolio areas. I also thank the chief executives and departmental officials who assisted in the inquiry process, and, like the Premier, I thank them for their professionalism.

The process of estimates is an important one in providing an opportunity for the budget to be discussed in finer detail and the ministers to provide knowledgeable, succinct and detailed responses to all questions posed to them. The allocated funding of \$54.6 million over four years to support domestic and family violence initiatives as well as the reinstatement of specialist courts and court diversion programs including domestic and family violence and Murri courts, the investment of \$60 million or \$240 million over four years to deliver the successful Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative, which will support up to 8,000 Queenslanders, and the implementation of the independent training ombudsman are examples of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to all Queenslanders.


The Palaszczuk government is committed to delivering quality front-line services and to building and supporting public safety services and front-line staff to provide safer communities. The investment across the Queensland Police Service, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management will fund capital works, information technology and other essential equipment.

The combined emergency training centre is an outstanding facility. Coincidentally, it is located in my electorate. This state-of-the-art training facility trains our firefighters and paramedics in a real life built environment, enabling them to provide excellent, world-class, front-line public safety services. Our emergency service workers are some of the best trained in the world, with our firefighter training recognised across the world as best practice.

The member for Capalaba and I were recently given the opportunity to experience a small taste of the training given to all new recruits. We experienced the simulator, a tour of the training centre and then donned the gear that our firefighters don for each and every fire—boots, pants, jackets, ventilator and oxygen bottle, helmet and gloves. Once our gear was checked we were then given a live fire demonstration in the oven and had the opportunity to use the fire hoses to contain and control the fire once the fire reached high temperatures.

Our Queensland fire and emergency services workers and indeed all emergency service workers do an unbelievable job in extreme and difficult circumstances. The member for Capalaba and I had an opportunity to experience in a very small way part of the life-saving and public safety work that they do each and every day. I thank each and every one of our fire and emergency services workers, police and paramedics for putting themselves on the line for Queenslanders. The extra 300 police and the extra 45 firefighters will go a long way to ensuring public safety.

In conclusion, I again thank the Attorney-General and Minister for Training and Skills, Yvette D'Ath, and the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services, Bill Byrne, the chair, my colleagues on the committee and the secretariat. I commend the report to the House.

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (5.48 pm): I stand tonight to speak about the 2016 budget estimates. I will limit my comments to the areas of my shadow portfolio—police, fire and emergency services and corrective services. What have we learnt from the 2016 estimates hearing with regard to police? We did not hear anything new. What we had confirmed was that Labor is soft on crime. This is what the policies that the Labor government have implemented over the last 12 months have led to. In the last 12 months we have had assaults increase by 10 per cent. We have had robbery increase by eight per cent. We have had unlawful entry increase by three per cent. We have had motor vehicle theft increase by six per cent. This is despite the extra resources that we provided when we were in government. Despite those extra resources, we have still had an increase in crime because this government is ineffective in implementing any policy that will seriously combat crime.

What else did we learn? The people of Queensland need to be fearful about what is in store when they look at reversing the tough laws that we brought in to tackle criminal motorcycle gangs. On asking the commissioner about the effectiveness of closing down criminal motorcycle gang clubhouses, the effectiveness of the anti-association laws, the effectiveness of stopping, detaining and searching people, the commissioner said that these laws have been incredibly effective, but this government will do everything in its power to reverse them. Even in this morning's paper I read about an establishment at Nobby Beach that had their business burnt down. It is reported that the Hells Angels are back in town extorting money and threatening. These laws will be reversed because they are soft on crime.

We also heard about this minister who is putting his head in the sand with regard to our primary producers, our honest primary producers who for years, for decades, have responsibly used hand guns to euthanase animals that obviously need to be put out of their misery. This government is turning a blind eye to the fact that Weapons Licensing have changed their policy on this. The minister has the hide to call them 'lone cowboys', to insult responsible primary producers by calling them 'lone cowboys', with the record that he has in the handling of firearms.

Then there are the police vehicles. The police union is saying there are not enough police vehicles. I refer to the member for Beaudesert, who had an example in his electorate just recently where the police said, 'If there is one car out, we cannot go to any other call that we have.' They simply do not have enough vehicles. They are using bicycles and public transport to fight crime which is totally inappropriate.


When it comes to prisons, the record in prisons is even worse. Over the last 12 months overcrowding has increased on average by eight per cent right across the prison network. What has that led to? That has led to an increase in assaults on prison officers. Is that an increase of 10 per cent, 20 per cent or 50 per cent? There has been a 265 per cent increase in assaults on prison officers. This is a minister who claims he sticks up for prison officers but he lets the overcrowding continue with no plan to address it. Riots were happening in Cleveland at the weekend. There are other reports about riots happening. Why? Because of the overcrowding that is taking place.

This is a minister who in 2012 when he was the spokesperson for corrective services said that the corrective services minister needs to take personal responsibility for the consequences of overcrowding. He is now shying away from those comments and showing the hypocrisy of those comments, because this minister is not in control of his portfolio. Crime has gone up. Prisons are still overcrowded. We have an ineffective government trying to deal with—

Mr Krause: Soft on crime.

Mr MANDER: I take the interjection—soft on crime.

(Time expired)

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (5.54 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the budget consideration in the portfolio areas of Justice and Attorney-General; Training and Skills; Police, Fire and Emergency Services; and Corrective Services and to talk to report No. 34 of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. I start by acknowledging the work of those people who served on the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee for this year's estimates and acknowledge the chair, Mr Furner, the member for Ferny Grove, and all of the committee members and the secretariat for their respective contributions. I was on the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee last year and attended budget estimates last year. I acknowledge that it is an important area for the Queensland government and of course an important area for Queensland.

I am very pleased to touch on some of the highlights which have been outlined in the budget estimates report No. 34. The first highlight I would like to touch on is the investment in domestic and family violence which is contained within the portfolio spend of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. I am very pleased to see that there is further contribution to funding for domestic and family violence courts and support at local courts for those people who are involved in domestic violence orders. I acknowledge the great work being done by Legal Aid and the Women's Legal Service at the Caboolture courthouse, providing support to those people who are experiencing domestic and family violence and providing legal advice and support to those people who are involved in the making of those domestic and family violence orders.

I acknowledge that the funding to community legal clinics and Legal Aid has been enhanced through this budget. I note that the Attorney-General has spoken on this matter before, but there is a need for the federal government to step up when it comes to funding community legal clinics. It has long been a practice of both federal governments and state governments to fund community legal clinics because they do provide very good work and very good service for our communities, but they assist some of the most vulnerable people in our community. I think we always have to keep in mind that a person's access to justice is a key sign of how strong the social safety net is in our community. If people cannot access justice and get advice about their legal rights and responsibilities then our community as a result suffers. There are some inefficiencies created by denying people the opportunity to access justice and advice about their legal rights and responsibilities. I am very pleased to see that the Attorney-General has a strong commitment to providing support to Legal Aid and also to community legal clinics.


I note that there are some changes to how that funding will be provided which has been outlined in the portfolio area of Justice and Attorney-General. I note that for many, many years the LPITAF fund has been a key provider of funding for community legal clinics and access to justice programs in Queensland but, because of a number of advances in technology and money remaining in the trust account for shorter periods, the interest earned on the solicitors' trust account fund has actually reduced overall and the cost of providing those services has increased over time. I am very pleased to see that there is a greater contribution to community legal clinics and programs which support access to justice contained in the budget for this financial year.

I also note that in the area of Justice and Attorney-General there is a continuation of the reinstatement and rollout of specialist court and court diversionary programs including the Murri Court and the Drug Court. These are proven programs. These programs ensure that, wherever possible, there are additional supports provided to people to ensure that they do not reoffend. That is a good thing not only for those individuals to ensure that they are not reoffending and they are rehabilitating but also for our community. When we have recidivism and reoffending in our community, there is a social cost associated. One of the key things that I note in the youth justice space is additional support and funding to those diversionary programs and the support program. I am very passionate about youth justice and I am very pleased to acknowledge the great contribution of the Morayfield Youth Justice Service.

Debate, on motion of Mr Ryan, adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Portfolio Committees, Reporting Dates

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (5.59 pm): I advise the House of determinations made by the Committee of the Legislative Assembly at its meeting today. The committee has resolved pursuant to standing order 194B that the Auditor-General's report to parliament No. 20 of 2015-16 titled *Heavy vehicle road access reforms* be referred to the Transportation and Utilities Committee. The committee has resolved pursuant to standing order 136 that the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report on the Limitation of Actions (Institutionalised Child Sexual Abuse) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 by 1 November 2016; the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee report on the Grammar Schools Bill 2016 by 4 October 2016 and Gene Technology (Queensland) Bill 2016 by 4 October 2016; and the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee report on the Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 by 4 October 2016.

MOTION

Deputy Premier, Business Confidence

 **Mr EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (6.00 pm): I move—

That this House:

1. notes the Deputy Premier and Minister for Planning has proposed to call in the West Village project in her electorate under pressure from the Greens councillor Jonathan Sri after the commencement of on-site earthworks, putting at risk an \$800 million development and up to 3,340 jobs;
2. notes that Queensland business confidence has slumped under this government according to the latest ANZ/Property Council industry survey, the CCIQ Pulse Survey of Business Conditions and the Sensis Business Index;
3. condemns the Palaszczuk government for taking unanticipated and politically motivated decisions amounting to sovereign risk; and
4. calls on the Deputy Premier to give certainty to businesses to invest by reassuring them that she will not consider her own political self-interest as a factor in infrastructure, investment and planning decisions.

It has become glaringly obvious that the Treasurer's—Captain Risky—second budget has been given a massive fail, an F for fail, and it is hardly surprising. How can anyone have confidence in a Treasurer who underestimates the impact of his broken tax promise by more than 3,000 per cent? How can anyone have confidence in a Treasurer that raids \$4 billion from the public servants' super, twice the amount actually recommended by the State Actuary? We heard today in the Treasurer's own statement that he admitted finally the State Actuary never recommended \$4 billion, never made that recommendation; he only ever recommended \$2 billion. How can anyone have confidence in a Deputy Premier who panders to the green votes in her South Brisbane electorate above jobs for Queenslanders?

It is clear that the business community does not have confidence in this government. Let's reflect on the numbers. According to the CCIQ Pulse Survey of Business Conditions just prior to the Palaszczuk government's election, confidence in Queensland was in positive territory at 50.2 points. Confidence is now at 42.6 points. That is 7.2 percentage points below the five-year average. Not once since the Palaszczuk government's election has confidence moved into the positive territory. There were declines in general confidence, business conditions, sales and revenue, profitability, employment levels and capital expenditure in that last quarter. What did the CCIQ say shortly before the release of the pulse survey? They stated—

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland ... believes a string of anti-business decisions from the State Government are hurting investment and jobs.

CCIQ Director of Advocacy Nick Behrens said the government could not ignore this mounting concern from the business community.

The government could not ignore the mounting concern. That is the advice of the CCIQ. What is the response of the government? It is to stick their head in the sand deeper and deeper and pretend there is no problem.

Of course, the CCIQ is not alone in its condemnation of the Palaszczuk government's actions. The latest Property Council survey shows there has been a more dramatic decline in confidence amongst property professionals in Queensland than in any other state in the last year. Survey


respondents have directly attributed this freefall to the Treasurer's broken tax promise. What is more, the Palaszczuk government is viewed as the worst performing government in all of Australia. The previous LNP government was viewed as the best performing.

Government members interjected.

Mr EMERSON: That is how they viewed it. What is extraordinary is that members opposite laugh at the fact that the business community is doing it tough. That is the attitude of the Palaszczuk-Pitt Labor government. When business is doing it tough, they think it is a joke. When unemployment is going up, they think it is a joke. When they see jobs being lost, they think it is a joke. When the Deputy Premier puts 3,000 jobs at risk and risks an \$800 million project, she thinks it is a joke. They laugh at the fact that business is doing it tough. That shows their attitude. When Queenslanders see the unemployment rate go up every month for the last five months and now at 6.5 per cent—more than one per cent more than down south and across the New South Wales border—they think it is a joke. They think it is a laugh. They think it is great to see business doing it tough. When the Property Council says confidence is down, they think that is great. What we have seen tonight is that they have been condemned by their own attitude, by their own behaviour. That is why business is doing it so tough in Queensland. We see policy after policy, decision after decision—

Mrs Frecklington: On the run.

Mr EMERSON:—on the run, as the deputy opposition leader just indicated. We see policies that are anti-government, that are anti-jobs and that are anti-growth. Those opposite are only interested in pandering to green votes in the Deputy Premier's electorate. They are only interested in pandering to the unions while we see unemployment going up month after month after month.

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment) (6.05 pm): Can I say that after that performance I think the member for Clayfield is safe.

On 26 July this year I decided to issue a proposed call-in notice for the West Village development at West End. There is no doubt that this is a significant urban renewal site with the developer proposing some 1,350 dwellings and gives rise to a clear state interest. In forming this view, I acted on robust legal and planning advice from my department. These state interests are outlined in the proposed call-in notice and they are very clearly planning grounds, not political grounds. I table a copy of the proposed call-in notice for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Proposed Call In Notice for a Development Application under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009—11 Boundary Street, 26 and 26A Little Jane Street, 19 and 23 Mollison Street, West End and 37 Mollison Street, South Brisbane, Brisbane City Council' [[12521](#)].


I will not be prejudicing my decision-making in tonight's debate. Affected parties including the council, the developer and submitters have until 18 August to have their say on whether I should call in the development application. While the act requires I give people a minimum of five days to have their say, I have chosen to provide 15 days to ensure the community can express their views because this side of the House cares what the community thinks, unlike those opposite. They had a completely different approach. They do not care what the community has to say. They never have and they never will.

Let me be clear that the submitters on this application had their appeal rights curtailed by those opposite because of the laws that they changed when they were in government. They tried to silence the community by changing the rules to allow cost orders against community objectors, a wrong that I am proud this government has righted. We should all be very clear. What we will not hear from those opposite is that this development permit is currently on appeal before the Planning and Environment Court, a process that will take at least six to 12 months to resolve. That is causing real uncertainty for everyone involved. If I decide to proceed with the call-in, the project will have greater certainty much faster, one way or the other. If I decide to call in the development application, I will reassess the development application under the normal assessment and decision provisions of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 including against the LNP's Brisbane City plan. I can assure the House that my reassessment and decision will be based on planning merit alone.

This is in stark contrast to the politically motivated decisions of the Newman-Nicholls government. Who could forget the way they changed the donation disclosure thresholds to protect their secret donor mates? There are still \$100,000 worth of donations unaccounted for, not disclosed. Who could forget the way they rewarded Sibelco for their donations during the 2012 election campaign? To remind those who were not in the House in the last parliament, no-one could ever forget the legislation that the member for Callide rushed into this place in the dead of night to help a major LNP donor from Karreman Quarries escape prosecution for illegal quarrying.

In contrast, my call-in decisions have always been based on planning merit and expert independent advice. I called in and approved the Clare Solar Farm, one of Australia's largest solar farms, to power up 65,000 homes and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about 240,000 tonnes per annum. I called in and approved the Cedar Woods development at Upper Kedron in part—480 lots for new housing—and refused the parts that were completely inconsistent with the provisions of the planning scheme.

There over 20,000 development assessment decisions made within the Queensland planning system each and every year, and this is only the third time I have issued a proposed call-in notice. To suggest that this will somehow destroy business confidence is ridiculous and shows the LNP are only interested in talking down the economy and politicising legitimate decisions of government.

 **Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (6.10 pm): After that performance I can tell you what is not safe: the economy of Queensland and the communities of Queensland. We know that this government is asleep at the wheel, and our economic conditions, including a weakening labour market, low business confidence and the latest CommSec State of the States report, are testament to that. Is it any wonder that we are now ranked last on construction work and second last on unemployment and economic growth when we see the Deputy Premier put political self-interest and fighting off political challenges from the Greens, led by Councillor Jonathan Sri, ahead of her job of creating jobs and promoting better planning and certainty in Brisbane and across the state by proposing to call in the West Village project. It is easy to give the lie to the statements made by the Deputy Premier tonight. The fact is that Councillor Sri has this Deputy Premier where he wants her. I quote from Councillor Sri's Facebook page the day of the call-in. This is before any of us knew; I wonder if it was before the Premier knew. Councillor Sri says, 'Holy' blank. He continues—

I just received a call from Deputy Premier Jackie Trad saying that she's initiating the process to investigate calling in the West Village development. It's not yet 100 per cent certain, but it looks like the plans for the seven 15-story tower mega-project on Boundary Street might be sent back to the drawing board.

I table that Facebook page.

Tabled paper: Extract, dated 27 July, from the Facebook page of Jonathan Sri, Councillor for The Gabba, regarding the West Village development [[1253](#)].

Is it any wonder that the Property Council describes this move as 'yet another blow to the confidence of Queensland's property industry'? They went on to say—

The ANZ/Property Council Confidence Survey released only two weeks ago, shows that confidence amongst the property industry in Queensland has reached a three year low—a drop that is directly attributable to the Government's rushed decision to introduce a foreign investor tax.

The threat of a ministerial call-in not only undermines the existing approval process, but amounts to another example of unwarranted political intervention in one of the few industries that are delivering job-creating projects in Queensland.

Property is Queensland's largest industry, providing new housing, offices, shops and community infrastructure, and generating one ninth of the state's GDP.

The Deputy Premier claims to have in her hand and in what she tabled fantastic planning grounds for calling this matter in. I would be very pleased and interested to see those, because I have in my hand the letter from her department dated 9 July to the Brisbane City Council when the Brisbane City Council asked the Deputy Premier's department what their view of the application was, what they wanted and what their concerns were. 'Dear Danielle,' says the letter. The response to the Concurrence Agency is 'no requirements' from the Deputy Premier's department. When the state was asked what its requirements were, the answer was 'none'. There was a little recommendation that a bus stop be moved. I table that letter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 9 July 2015, from the Manager, SARA Brisbane Region, Mr Shane Spargo, to the Chief Executive Officer, Brisbane City Council, providing a concurrence agency response relating to the West Village development [[1254](#)].

What is really happening here is that certainty is giving way to uncertainty. The state government in its regional plan rightly tries to give certainty to the community and to the construction and development industry and it requires certain residential developments to happen within the Brisbane City Council area. It tells them that they have to create 137,000 new-dwelling apartments. It says they have to do it, and the trouble is that, as soon as they do it in areas where it should be done, areas properly planned and consulted through a proper planning process—as soon as they do it in anyone's electorate—the local state member runs for cover. In this case it happens to be the minister who is going to be deciding the application. She calls in an application in her own back yard for her own political self-interest and now says that she has no conflict of interest in deciding that. That is not a proper way for a government to do things in this state, and it happens all across that side of the House.


In her first speech the member for South Brisbane talked about development in her electorate and said—

The LNP government, together with LNP city council administration, appears addicted to development.

...

I look forward to working with the Deputy Premier to address planning issues in my electorate, with the aim of bringing back a balanced approach, restoring residents' rights and respecting the surrounding buildings and characters of our suburbs.

Out of one side of their mouths they talk about the requirement to create density in the city, but when it is put in exactly the right place we know what happens. We know that this minister wants to work with the Deputy Premier because they are both fighting against a greens resurgence in inner-city Brisbane. What is happening is that certainty is giving way to uncertainty, and that is a poor thing for our economy, our communities and the alleged job-creation proposals that this government claims to maintain.

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (6.16 pm): The member for Mansfield claims there are no planning grounds for the calling in of this development, but I have read the grounds for calling in and I can tell the member for Mansfield that there are very good planning grounds for the calling in of this development, and experienced planners from across the state would agree. I think it is very important to understand the legislative framework we are operating within here. The call-in power is a reserve power that is limited to matters of state interest as defined by the Sustainable Planning Act 2009. The Deputy Premier has only called in two applications to date, with this being her third consideration of a potential application. In contrast, the member for Callide called in eight applications during his time as planning minister and the sky did not fall as a result of these call-ins.


As a planner I am lucky to know the planning system actually works. In this context I want to make it clear that it is by no means unusual for the call-in power to be contemplated in relation to proposals of this nature. In particular, let us not forget that the member for Callide called in the Jewel development on the Gold Coast. If we compare West Village to Jewel we can see many similarities: both are mixed-use developments which have been approved by the council and subject to a submitter appeal in the courts. Jewel was a \$1 billion project with around 3,000 associated jobs which was removed by the courts to undergo the call-in process. It was ultimately approved, resulting in greater certainty for the project. Those opposite also suggest that the call-in consideration is delaying the project. Again this is not true. The project already has full stage 1 development approval for two residential towers unaffected by the proposed call-in notice, and this can be built whenever the developers want to proceed.

It is surprising that the Leader of the Opposition, who has such a keen interest in planning, does not understand the basics of the development approval process. I do not know any developer who would be brave enough to bring all seven towers with 1,350 units to the market at once. If the LNP do not understand the basic economics of a single development project, how can they be trusted to run the state's economy?

There is also a need to correct the Leader of the Opposition's comments earlier today when he said that the Deputy Premier had stated that there was no state interest in the development. For the benefit of those opposite I want to clarify that the Deputy Premier's earlier comments were in relation to the stage 1 application. The Deputy Premier did not call in the stage 1 application, despite being requested to do so. This was because it was a code assessable application that generally complied with the council's planning scheme.

Let us be clear: this is very different from the preliminary approval that is being considered for a potential call-in and which applies to the entire 2.6-hectare site, is of a significant scale and has areas of departure from the planning scheme. As a planner, it is clear to me that the Deputy Premier's decisions relating to call-ins have been based on planning merit and not on political motivations, as those opposite are trying to portray. If you take Cedar Woods as an example, I know that some members of the community in Upper Kedron did not want this development to go ahead at all. The Deputy Premier, in her decision to approve in part that development, ensured that it was based on sound planning grounds and in accordance with the LNP's very own plan.

Finally, I remind those opposite that this government has proven its commitment to an efficient planning system for Queensland. This is evidenced by the Deputy Premier's leadership in the delivery of the new Planning Act, which takes effect mid next year and will streamline approval processes and provide greater certainty for industry. I do not support the motion.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.20 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion moved by the shadow Treasurer. Throughout her contribution the Deputy Premier asked what people in the community were saying. I have here a few quotes that I thought might be relevant. Due to the actions of this Palaszczuk government, the Property Council of Queensland has recently stated—

The Queensland Government's decision to pursue a ministerial call-in for the West Village development at West End is yet another blow to the confidence of Queensland's property industry.

Whether the Deputy Premier proceeds with the call in or not, this announcement will impact on the industry's confidence to invest in Queensland ...

The Housing Industry Association Queensland executive director said that the combination of policy changes from the state government was hurting the industry at a time when the industry was plateauing. He said, 'It has to be putting jobs and investment at risk.'


This new rip-up mentality is risking our jobs, our prosperity and the future of Queensland. This Palaszczuk Labor government has a new weapon of mass economic destruction in its arsenal: giving up on existing deals with the private sector if it suits it politically. No contract is safe anymore under Labor, as we have seen in the reckless acts of ripping up contracts with the private sector. We saw it four weeks ago when the Palaszczuk government terminated an \$800 million social housing initiative and again when the member representing West End threatened to call in the inner-city residential project West Village after it received full council approval and after onsite earthworks had begun. Is it any coincidence that the West End project is in the Deputy Premier's own electorate, where Queensland's first-ever Greens councillor was elected at the recent local government elections and polling is now indicating that the Deputy Premier is under significant threat?

We have seen this Labor style before—this rip-up mentality. We saw it in Victoria when Labor's Daniel Andrews reneged on the \$1.1 billion East West Link contract. Brisbane's failed Labor mayoral candidate Rod Harding also promised to rip up the \$650 million Kingsford Smith Drive upgrade if elected.

Infrastructure projects should not be subject to political debate when billions of dollars of taxpayers' money is at stake. Indeed, as the Palaszczuk government's botched and still secret Cross River Rail business case shows, big infrastructure spends do need proper scrutiny. The debate should be fierce, but once a contractual commitment has been made it certainly should be honoured. Taxpayers rightly have an expectation that their money will not be wasted by paying compensation to terminate contractual rights, like the \$400 million Labor's Daniel Andrews spent cancelling the East West Link project.

Of course, taxpayers are not just paying to terminate contracts. All of these acts turn up the dial on sovereign risk in Australia. Precedents set by the Deputy Premier mean that sovereign risk is alive and well, unfortunately. Labor has increased this risk for Queensland. Any investor, whether in Australia, Hong Kong, Zurich or New York, is rightly adjusting the risk of doing business here in Queensland. That is also the case for investors from New South Wales and Victoria. The investment capital that moves based on their assessments is not faithful or nostalgic; it is looking for the best risk-reward outcome. With higher risk comes either forgone investment or higher returns to compensate for this risk. Unfortunately, what we have seen by this Deputy Premier and the Palaszczuk government is putting everything at risk here in Queensland.

Queensland needs a government that is prepared to make decisions in the best interests of all Queenslanders, not just in the political interests of those making those decisions to save their own seat in West End.

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (6.25 pm): As I said this morning, over the past 18 months the Palaszczuk government has worked hard to deliver on our commitment to advance Queensland's economy through job-creating innovation, investment and infrastructure. The biggest risk to business confidence in this state is the LNP. They are in their fifth year of talking down Queensland's economy. This is a case in point. We know that they had to come out and be political, but I pick up on the comments by the member for Mansfield about the surcharge on foreign investors buying residential property. NAB senior economist David de Garis, at the Master Builders event I attended, said when talking about the Victorian experience that there had been no proven discernible link between the

introduction of the surcharge there and a change in purchasing behaviour. They now have a seven per cent transfer duty surcharge. New South Wales has four per cent. Ours is three per cent. Those opposite really need to take a cold shower and look at this in the context of the national economy.

Today's motion is more evidence of those opposite talking down the economy. The member for Clayfield has confected what he calls a slump in business confidence. In reality, the independent data obtained directly from Queensland businesses shows confidence growing and conditions improving. I would argue that those opposite have gone so far as to mislead the House by suggesting that the Sensis Business Index shows that confidence has slumped. In fact, the Sensis Business Index shows that confidence for small to medium businesses in Queensland reached a five-year high in the June quarter 2016—a plus-36-points result. That is double the plus-18 result recorded a year ago. For context, when the LNP was last in government, the Sensis Business Index of December 2014 was plus 13. We are at plus 36; they were at plus 13. That is the difference. I table a copy of Sensis media release from 28 July.

Tabled paper: Media release, dated 28 July 2016, from Sensis, titled 'Queensland business confidence hits highest level in more than five years' [[1255](#)].

The media release states—

Business confidence rose by six points this quarter, to now sit at its highest level since November 2010 among Queensland's small and medium businesses, according to the latest Sensis Business Index Survey.

Given that the motion moved by the member for Indooroopilly specifically relates to activities in Brisbane, it is worth also quoting what the Sensis Business Index said about the city. It states—

Confidence in Brisbane was up 21 points to +63, making Brisbane the most confident capital city in the nation.

This follows the NAB business confidence index, which has consistently shown Queensland having nation-leading business confidence over the past 12 months. Those opposite do not like facts. The NAB Monthly Business Survey for July again showed that Queensland and New South Wales recorded equal highest position on trend business confidence, rated at plus 6 in July 2016 compared with the national average of plus four points.

It is not just about confidence; business conditions on the ground are also improving. According to NAB, Queensland's trend business conditions index rose plus seven points in July, recording the strongest improvement of the mainland states. Even Malcolm Turnbull recognised that earlier this year, despite the constant negativity of his colleagues in Queensland.

The motion moved by the member for Indooroopilly appears to focus on housing confidence in particular. Queenslanders—both owner-occupiers and investors—are voting with their wallets. ABS housing finance data shows that the trend number of housing finance commitments for owner-occupiers in Queensland rose by 5.8 per cent for the year to June 2016. The number of housing finance commitments in Queensland has risen consistently over the past five years, and the trend value of housing finance commitments in Queensland now totals \$3.46 billion as at June this year. This is confidence in action.

It is not just owner-occupiers who are committing. ABS Lending Finance data shows investor housing finance in Queensland for the purchase of existing dwellings for rent or resale grew over the last three months to total \$4.1 billion in the June quarter. In addition, investor finance commitments for the construction of new dwellings totalled \$514 million in the June quarter 2016—\$4 million higher than the same period last year. These are hardly figures that you would use if we were talking about a slump. The member for Indooroopilly is wrong and the member for Clayfield is wrong. They are continuing their mission—and it has been a five-year mission—talking down the Queensland economy when all of the facts belie their arguments. Even the latest CCIQ Suncorp Pulse Survey, which I am sure the LNP can find plenty of negatives in—I am sure those opposite could find them if they looked hard enough—shows Queenslanders are optimistic about the future, with the report stating—

Queensland businesses believe conditions will strengthen in coming months, with customer spending expected to improve, especially within South-East Queensland.

Queensland consumers and Queensland businesses are right to feel confident about the future given the improvements to the economy over the past 18 months and the nation-leading growth still to come as a result of this government's economic plan. Let me repeat for those opposite who were not listening this morning: debt is lower, growth is higher and unemployment is lower under Labor than it was under the LNP.

Division: Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

AYES, 42:

LNP, 42—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Cripps, Davis, Dickson, Elmes, Emerson, Frecklington, Hart, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Perrett, Powell, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Seeney, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Walker, Watts, Weir.

NOES, 44:

ALP, 42—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Power, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

INDEPENDENT, 2—Gordon, Pyne.

Resolved in the negative.

Sitting suspended from 6.35 pm to 7.35 pm.

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL


Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

Report

Resumed from p. 2799.

 **Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (7.35 pm): I am pleased to contribute to the debate on the report of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. I thank the chair and members of that committee for allowing me to participate in the affairs of that committee during the estimates process. As we said in the statement of reservation to the committee report, the Palaszczuk Labor government's second budget is best characterised as a budget of raids, writedowns and rip-offs with no long-term cohesive economic plan to create jobs and to grow the Queensland economy. The Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee reviewed the budget for the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills, the Hon. Yvette D'Ath, and the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services, the Hon. Bill Byrne, but I will of course confine my comments to the area of consideration that reflects my shadow portfolio responsibilities.

The first significant matter to be raised during my examination of the Attorney-General and her appropriate authorities related to the state's Electoral Commission and the Electoral Commissioner confirmed that the Palaszczuk Labor government's sneaky changes to the voting system in April this year were based on political expediency rather than actually trying to improve the informal voting rate, and that was the justification of the Attorney-General at the time—that this was going to be a reform which would improve the informal voting rate at state elections. The Electoral Commissioner confirmed that the target that he had set that was printed in the estimates documents was an estimate of eight per cent informal vote at the Toowoomba South by-election and was 'reasonably generous' and the 'beginning of the unknown'. Mr van der Merwe also disclosed and confirmed that he was not consulted by the government prior to the decision being made to change the voting system, and members will recall that that was a debate brought on with only 18 minutes notice to this parliament and of course no consultation with Queenslanders. It is extraordinary to me that the chief electoral officer of this state who is informed about voting matters and about informal voting trends was not consulted about that matter.

Mr Hinchliffe: Surely you do remember the circumstances.

Mr WALKER: The circumstances were that he could have been consulted. The matter could have gone through the normal process and been debated with the people of Queensland. There was absolutely no pressure on those opposite to do anything at all other than to do the normal and the right thing, and the government will stand condemned as a result of that action and as a result of the evidence


given by the Electoral Commissioner. The whole thing was explained by the Attorney-General as necessary because of the very short time frames. There were no short time frames needed and this matter could have gone through the normal process of this parliament.

Mr Hinchliffe: You brought it up. Don't remind them that you brought it up.

Mr WALKER: The member opposite had to pass a special motion to add it on to the matters that we brought up, so you could quite easily have taken this through the normal process and consulted with the people of Queensland, but you are obviously embarrassed by it—and so you should be. The committee heard evidence that this first test case for the government's new voting system actually resulted in the highest informal voting rate in that election in the past 30 years. That was confirmed by evidence supplied by the ABC's election analyst Antony Green's election blog. The veracity of that was questioned gamely by the member for Capalaba, but he eventually accepted the confidence in Mr Green's analysis.

The other particular issue on the day of the estimates hearing related to the government introducing legislative changes to deal with sexually explicit or offensive outdoor advertising such as that displayed by Wicked Campers. That was a matter that had been dealt with by the previous government. A solution had been sitting there for many months and not acted upon by this government. A parliamentary inquiry had recommended an outcome, which we accepted. The Attorney-General in her evidence confirmed that her solution, which is essentially to ban the vehicles from Queensland roads, will not guarantee that all Wicked Campers and similar vehicles with slogans in breach of the Advertising Standards Bureau's code of conduct will be banned from Queensland roads. That is because many of the vehicles have interstate numberplates.

In the same hearing we heard from Mr MacSporran, the chairperson of the Crime and Corruption Commission. He confirmed that his warnings about motorcycle gangs regathering in light of the potential softening of the laws by this government is still a concern that he has. Of course, the LNP remains concerned that the government's response to the task force on organised crime, which supported the recommendations to scrap the VLAD laws, will water down our strong penalties and remove the ability of police to prevent and disturb organised crime—something that is of concern to our side and, of course, to the good people of Queensland.

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (7.40 pm): I want to start by giving my thanks to the work of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and the Department of Education and Training for the great work that they do every day in serving the people of Queensland and their tremendous effort in the preparation work in the lead-up to budgets each year and the work that they put in for estimates to ensure that accurate information is available through that important process. I want to acknowledge their tremendous efforts. The people of Queensland are well served by the talent and dedication of these hardworking Queenslanders. I thank them for the work that they do to deliver for Queenslanders every day of the week. I thank those who helped in the preparation of the estimates process. I know that it is a hectic time, but their work is very much appreciated by me.

I thank the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee—I think it is the hardest working committee in the parliament—the chair, the member for Ferny Grove, and the secretariat. I know that a large amount of legislation goes to that committee every year. I am really grateful for their work. We have a lot of legislation that goes through our portfolios in addition to public inquiries and policy work that the committee undertakes. I thank the members from both sides of the chamber for their work.

I want to pick up very briefly the comment that was made by the member for Bundamba about committee members being more vocal at estimates. One point that I think is worth raising is that I appreciate the importance of shadow ministers coming into estimates hearings and asking questions of the government. Of course, they should. That is part of the estimates process. I believe that all committee members should have the opportunity to ask questions. I believe that the opposition members who are on that committee every day and do a tremendous job should also be given the opportunity to ask questions of the government. I am not trying to score political points; I am simply saying that all members, including those committee members who work tirelessly all year, should get the opportunity to ask questions as well.


The estimates hearing showed that the Palaszczuk government is absolutely committed to all facets of training in Queensland. From the shadow minister's questioning we heard what we have heard from the LNP time and time again in government and in opposition, which is the cherrypicking of figures—not even going as far as referring to the notes in the SDS that state why the figures are what they are—to criticise completion rates being in significant decline and to not look at those apprentices'

and trainees' completion rates for the 2014-16 year and 2015-16 year. When do members think those apprentices started? Under the former government. When we see a decline in completion rates for apprentices and trainees, of course, we have to look at the decline that happened under the LNP in government in the commencement area. Those opposite certainly do not want to talk about those figures, which are extraordinary. We look at a total drop of 27,900 apprentices and trainees when the LNP was in government.

Today, we heard from the shadow minister for training that TAFE did not need rescuing. That shows that the opposition has learned nothing since the last election. It has not listened to the people of Queensland, who wanted investment in our TAFEs as opposed to assets being stripped out of our TAFEs and funding being stripped out of our TAFEs. We are very proud of the work we are doing to support TAFE in Queensland and to see TAFE grow and be the premium training provider in this state.

I would have to say that there were not a lot of questions from the opposition that went to the core areas of the Justice and Attorney-General portfolio. The comments about Wicked Campers are just disappointing. When the member for Southern Downs was the Leader of the Opposition, we spoke about this issue. We agreed to take a bipartisan approach. When the opposition was in government, there was no answer. It did not have a solution. It had not acted on anything. I thought that was one issue that we would have bipartisan support on but, unfortunately, we did not.

I will pick up on the comments made by the member for Everton about overcrowding in prisons. When the LNP was in government, it never invested in courts, it never invested in the DPP, it stripped away diversionary programs and wonders why there is overpopulation. This government is getting on with the job. We are investing in the Justice area and we are proud of our record.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (7.45 pm): I will make a short contribution on a couple of points that were examined by the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee in its estimates hearing. Firstly, in relation to training, earlier tonight the member for Kawana very eloquently set out the failure of this government to establish Jobs Queensland. As he said, it was the centrepiece of Labor's election campaign. Since the election 18 months ago, no permanent board of Jobs Queensland has been created. Jobs Queensland was created to drive job creation and also to advise the further education sector about where training money should be directed—something that was carried out by the ministerial advisory council when the LNP was in government.

I table a news article from the *Courier-Mail* of just a few days ago titled 'Tourism crying out for workers as visitor numbers climb'.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Courier-Mail* online, dated 8 August 2016, titled 'Tourism crying out for workers as visitor numbers climb' [[1256](#)].

It states—

The demand for workers is on the back of a surge in Chinese visitors to Australia which has created boom-like conditions.

According to the industry, operators are having to bring in 457 visa workers to fill the specialised areas in the tourism industry. The article states further—

'It's a numbers game (but) the skill shortages are definitely now emerging,' Queensland Tourism Industry Council chief executive Daniel Gschwind said.

...

'It's tough for us and if we grow the industry as we hope to skills shortages will occur.'

This situation is occurring against the backdrop of a government that has failed to create Jobs Queensland—failed to set up any body at all—to advise it about where to direct training funding so that we can fill those skill shortages. The LNP's ministerial advisory council had representatives from all parts of business and other parts of this economy to advise where training funding should be going so that skill shortages in areas such as tourism and any other areas that are going to experience skill shortages can be avoided through directing money into training in those areas.

This government has failed to establish Jobs Queensland. In the 18 months that it has been in office, it has failed to lay down a path for further education and training. Now, sectors such as tourism, which are experiencing booms, which are experiencing good times, are struggling to fill jobs with locals because of this government's failure to create training places. I wanted to touch on that, because, despite all of its rhetoric, the government is still failing jobseekers in Queensland.

I will touch on another issue. It relates to the police portfolio and the fact that the police minister continues to have his head in the sand about police vehicle numbers in Queensland. We do not have enough police vehicles in Queensland. The Queensland Police Union has stated categorically that it needs another 200 vehicles to be able to fill the shortage of police vehicles across the state.


I have a very real example of this shortage in relation to two stations at Canungra and Tamborine Mountain in my electorate. Each station has eight officers and they have one vehicle per station. If someone goes out from Canungra to Lamington National Park to pick up a bushwalker, or a lost hiker, or whomever, no-one else at the Canungra police station can use a vehicle to do any police work.

Mr Costigan: Do they ride a horse?

Mr KRAUSE: They do not ride a horse, but maybe they need to. That is what this police minister would have them doing. Sometimes at the Tamborine Mountain station the police officers there get on a bike to attend to jobs on the mountain, or they take their own vehicles, but it is not satisfactory. For the police minister to sit in the estimates hearing and actually say we have enough police vehicles in Queensland when there is all this anecdotal evidence to suggest that there are not enough vehicles is just absurd. We have more examples, the Police Union has more examples and the minister needs to act to fix this issue so that police can get on and do their job properly to protect our communities.

In relation to police facilities in my electorate of Beaudesert, the police minister has previously shouted across the chamber that if I come over to his side and join his team I will be right and Beaudesert will get its new police station. It is absolutely disgraceful to politicise the allocation of police resources and make it dependent on what party you are in in this parliament. Beaudesert needs a new police station. The minister should hang his head in shame for saying things like that. We need that new police station. The police minister knows that we do and the people in the Logan district know that as well. This matter should not be politicised like that.

In relation to the VLAD laws, we heard from the CCC in the hearing that they want to keep them. In my consultation with Gold Coast tourism chiefs, the only thing they can say about the police minister is that they hope he keeps the VLAD laws because it has made the Gold Coast a lot safer than it was before them. Minister, take that message on board from the tourism industry on the Gold Coast and elsewhere in Queensland and keep the VLAD laws. The lockout laws have been a terrible failure. Even Dr Lynham thinks they are a failure. People in Cairns and on the Gold Coast know they are a failure.

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (7.50 pm): I start by thanking my staff, departmental officers and the committee staff who, frankly, made the estimates a very enjoyable event for me. We did a number of rehearsals leading into estimates which were far more searing and ruthless than anything the opposition put on in the committee. In fact, I was well prepared for a thorough interrogation of the budget papers. We were not prepared to go into a committee where there was virtually no reference to the budget papers, budget allocations or issues or priorities that came out of the budget papers. In fact, in the last committee process that we went through the opposition revealed that it could not read an SDS or any of the budget papers. A comment that I made in this debate last time was that my shadow at the time had not read the SDS.

Clearly they made a very positive decision not to bother with the budget papers at all in the interrogation of the budget. All we saw from the member for Everton, coming in to play his role as a shadow, was the rolling out of a series of newspapers or ideas or things that he had heard, but there was very little reference back to the budget papers, there was very little reference back to the substance of what that committee was entitled and expected to do which was to look at the appropriations of this government, hold the government to account and ask the government to explain those allocations. There was virtually none of that and there was all this other puffery that came from the opposition madly trying to find a six o'clock sound bite.

There are two lessons one has to learn in politics, especially if one is the shadow police minister: the first is do not criticise the Queensland Police Service. Those opposite can belt me as much as they like. The commissioner says there is an adequate supply of vehicles in the Queensland Police Service. That is the advice given to me from senior police. Those opposite do not believe it. They stand up in this House and belittle the reputation of the Queensland Police Service and the commissioner. They have not learned their lesson. There was no focused interrogation of the budget papers whatsoever.

Mr KRAUSE: I rise to a point of order. I ask that the member withdraw his comments about impugning the reputation of the Police Commissioner because I did not mention the Police Commissioner at all.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): There is no point of order. Minister, continue.

Mr BYRNE: Thank you. I will try, for the rest of my speech, to address matters that came out of the budget. What do we see in the budget papers? We saw 266 new police officers delivered in the 2016-17 period. We saw 2,200 body worn video cameras for front-line police—we did not hear anything

about that from the opposition in the committee process. It builds on an additional \$6 million that we allocated to that initiative in the previous budget. Under the Liberal National Party the hardworking police service that they espouse to have an empathy with had to use their own money and purchase their own cameras. Now they have 2,200 body worn cameras thanks to the Palaszczuk government.

The Palaszczuk government has also moved quickly to ensure Queensland is safe with more than \$16 million set aside for police to improve counterterrorism capability and capacity in response to the sustained national threat level—there was no comment from the opposition about any of that—including \$788,000 for operational equipment and vehicles. There was no comment from the opposition about that. An amount of \$5 million has been allocated to develop a business case for a contemporary counterterrorism and community safety centre at Westgate Police Academy—no acknowledgement from the opposition.

The Palaszczuk government has also provided the Queensland Police Service and other agencies with increased funding of \$39.1 million over four years to target serious and organised crime and to implement the government's response to the Queensland Organised Crime Commission of Inquiry report—no acknowledgement from the opposition again; nothing about any of that. The amount of \$3.2 million has already been put in for two years to tackle child exploitation and implement the interim response to the report. Importantly, that funding will enable a statewide blitz on child exploitation material by building the capacity of specialist officers, providing additional civilian staff and regional travel and training costs—a very important component. This is just one small part of the police budget allocation. There was absolutely no interrogation from those opposite, an appalling exhibition of laziness and a lack of understanding of what their role in this parliament is.


Report adopted.

Agriculture and Environment Committee

Report

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): The question is—

That the report of the Agriculture and Environment Committee be adopted.

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (7.55 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion that the Agriculture and Environment Committee's report No. 20 on the 2015-16 budget estimates be adopted. The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure for the committee's area of responsibility as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2016 be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

I would like to thank my fellow committee members for their contributions and questions of the ministers and staff during our day and evening of estimates hearings a few weeks ago now. It was our privilege to welcome the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef to appear before us in our public hearing. I congratulate both ministers on their impressive attention to detail and knowledge of their portfolios which greatly assisted the committee in its deliberations. I also thank the directors-general, deputy directors-general, the CEOs and their advisers for their professionalism during the hearings.

I know how much work goes into preparing for these hearings and I make special mention of the ministers' staff for their efforts in preparing for the day. I need to make special mention of our committee secretariat, particularly research director Mr Rob Hansen but also Paul Douglas, principal research officer, and Marion O'Connor, our committee support officer, for their work. I thank them for their extremely capable assistance which ensured a smooth running of proceedings.

I was pleased to hear from the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries that the support to provide counselling services and other drought relief measures would continue; in addition establishing the Queensland Climate Risk and Drought Resilience program to improve farm business capacity, seasonal forecasting and decision support tools to better manage climate risk. Another great initiative mentioned during the hearings was the Rural Assistance Package aimed at reducing financial sustainability to assist the sector service their debt.

I was also pleased to hear that the minister is continuing to support agriculture industries in reef catchments to improve Great Barrier Reef water quality which is vitally important, particularly in my electorate with the southern Great Barrier Reef just off my doorstep. That will be supported by coordinating on-ground support services, including extension capacity building and specialised extension services such as economic analysis to support the industry led best management practice

programs. It also includes validating improved management practices against specific criteria, monitoring the adoption of these practices by producers and funding innovation for new technologies such as developing a spray rig for the precision application of herbicides.


Under Biosecurity Queensland, I was pleased to see an additional \$10.8 million over four years allocated to improve the capabilities of Queensland's biosecurity systems. For my North Queensland colleagues, the investment of \$7.3 million for the ongoing management of Panama disease tropical race 4 in bananas should be most welcomed. As the chair of the committee that reported on the illegal puppy farming bill, I was pleased to hear that an extra \$500,000 per annum would be allocated to the RSPCA to ensure adequate regulatory compliance with new dog breeding provisions.

The portfolio of environment in particular has a huge bearing on my electorate. I commend the minister for his continuing support for the implementation of the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan and the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan. With the southern Great Barrier Reef right on our doorstep, as I mentioned before, it is vitally important that work and investment in our reef continues.

Another exciting prospect for Gladstone is the future biofuels industry. I welcome the minister's announcement of an additional \$1.1 million to develop a best practice regulatory framework and enhanced compliance and licensing activities for Queensland's new biofuels industry, which is happening right on my doorstep as we speak, and a further \$140,000 to implement the biofutures road map and action plan. I know that often a lot of rubbish gets spilled around here, so it was great to hear that the minister has allocated \$1.9 million to facilitate improved waste management and resource recovery to help grow the waste management industry and improve associated employment opportunities.

To finish off, I welcome the minister's action in coming up with new ideas and innovations for national parks. I am not a big fan of Pokemon Go, but I have seen many people of all ages walking around my electorate, searching for those elusive little critters. I think this will be a great initiative to get people into our parks, enjoying the fresh air and wonderful rainforests, even if they are hunting for pokemon. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): Order! Before I call the member for Gympie, I acknowledge in the gallery tonight representatives from the Australian Parents Education Association, as well as parents from the Chinese community in the Sunnybank electorate.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (8.02 pm): I rise to speak on the Agriculture and Environment Committee's budget estimates report. Anyone present at estimates would have walked away with serious concerns that the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries is not across her portfolio. Options for answers fell into three categories: either there was a complete lack of knowledge about issues, there was a default to callow answers demonstrating an inability to grasp the broader concepts of industry issues or, in the case of Dorothy Dixers and knowing the questions beforehand, there was a reliance on being spoonfed the well-rehearsed answers by a political adviser handing across sheets of paper to read.

With 2.5 per cent spending cuts and several vague new policy projects being pursued, the minister has little grasp of industry issues, with patently inadequate responses demonstrating absolutely no understanding of the impact of government policy on issues within her portfolio. It was revealed that the minister had not even lobbied the Deputy Premier over the controversial vegetation management laws, which are being driven by inner-city greens who congregate in concrete jungles. Those laws are set to devastate our agricultural industries. The minister continues to bury her head in the sand, despite repeated warnings from stakeholders, including AgForce, who warn that the laws will damage farm productivity and profitability.

Time and time again, it was clear that consultation with industry stakeholders was either non-existent or inadequate. The minister again demonstrated either a complete disregard or, more seriously, a lack of knowledge about serious issues in the beef industry. As a result, the minister's own Labor Party colleague, the member for Bundamba, cuttingly and humiliatingly described her answer about beef processing as a 'rissole led recovery'. The minister could not clearly articulate what consultation had been undertaken with Queensland's 19,000 commercial beef and dairy producers regarding the decision to dump Queensland's protected zone status for bovine Johne's disease. The minister totally ignored the clear advice from the dairy industry and was unable to point to any genuine consultation with the broader beef industry.

The biosecurity issue of the tick line highlighted inadequate decision-making, policy concerns and a lack of consultation and commitment to listen to the wishes and needs of landholders who have invested significant time and funds in dealing with ticks. There appears to be no fallback containment


plan for fire ant eradication and its potential cost to taxpayers. The release of the Fisheries green paper a day before estimates, clearly aimed at approving a policy shift without a shred of scientific data, shows the contempt this government holds for those in the industry.

The thought bubble of a new \$2 million Office of Rural Affairs looks to be destined to waste funds. The minister could not provide detail about its charter, where it would be based or whether it would be headed by a full-time or part-time commissioner, let alone what the staff would actually do. With a funding package of \$250,000 in new money and \$250,000 in kind over four years for the new office, a commissioner's potential salary package and on-costs, including travel, there is very little left for staff or resources to undertake real work.

No thought has been given to the federal government's announcement of a regional investment corporation to administer drought and hardship concessional loans, which would make redundant much of the work of the 100-odd staff of the revamped new Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority. The minister is not consulting with key stakeholders, is running policy that is entirely based on politics and undermines large sections of regional industries that support smaller family run businesses and thousands of jobs, and is unable to grasp the fundamentals of the industries for which she is responsible.

It is also particularly concerning that the Environment and Heritage Protection, National Parks and Great Barrier Reef portfolio is being run as a political tool and is being driven by the need to pander to green activists in exchange for preference deals. Policies appear to be about demonising our agriculture, fishing and mining industries. This one-size-fits-all policy and approach is just lazy. Nature conservation policies ignore best management practice undertaken by stakeholders, and insufficient resources for implementation, a loose interpretation of policies and serious questions about whether they have the correct declarations are not addressed. Plans for further World Heritage listings, particularly around Tin Can Bay and Hervey Bay, by the minister appear to dismiss the economic impact this will have on many family run businesses and the hundreds of local jobs that they directly support.

Estimates has left with me little confidence that the members of this government have any idea what they are doing. Before I conclude, I would like to thank Rob Hansen and the secretariat staff for the wonderful job that they have done, not only prior to the estimates but also during that period, to pull the report together. I commend them on their efforts. I look forward to working with the committee members over the next few months.

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (8.07 pm): The Palaszczuk Labor government's 2016-17 budget gives little confidence to any business in the rural industry, the fishing industry or even the mining industry. People in the bush say it is really tough, even in the mining industry. There are about 18,000 to 19,000 commercial beef and dairy producers. A lot of those people do not have any confidence, because the greens are running the agenda all the time. They do not have the confidence to put money back into the land. At the moment, there are still places in drought. However, even when the rain comes, people will need money to restock. We do need those loans. Why can we not work together with the federal government? We have QRIDA, there are federal government schemes and different things. Why can we not work together, to get the most for the people in the community? Otherwise, we will all lose out. You are not going to get the returns. You are not going to get the taxes back into the country. At the end of the day, we will all miss out.


One thing that really concerns me is the dumping of protection zone status on the bovine Johne's disease. The minister totally ignored the clear advice and wishes of the Queensland dairy industry and was unable the point to any genuine consultation with all those stakeholders. I come from a rural background and I know how hard it is to get rid of diseases in cattle. When I was young it was TB. We had to make sure that we tested every beast on the property. It costs an enormous amount of money to do things like that and yet we are willing to make this decision. Why? What is it going to cost the industry in the long run if we do not contain this disease? One day a country will not want to take cattle from us as a result. They will use this as a reason. We saw it with scabby mouth years ago when sheep went to the Middle East. We have to contain these types of diseases and make sure it does not cost all producers a huge amount of money down the track. It is important that we make sure that we keep our product clean and green.

One of the things that concerned me greatly was the release of the green paper by the government just prior to the committee hearing. It was absolutely ridiculous to do that. Why did they not have that out before the hearing so that we could have asked questions about it?

When we look at the issue of biomass, what is the biomass at the end of the day? They are going to cut the catch from 60 per cent to 30 per cent of the biomass. Fishermen are asking me what the tonnage of biomass is at the end of day. There is concern among fishermen as to what it is. It is not just net fishermen around coastal areas who will be affected but also trawler operators who will be affected. They are going to reduce the catch to around 30 per cent of the biomass.

How can we cope with all of these reductions in the seafood industry and keep going? In Hervey Bay we rely on the fishing industry to ensure that we have employment. We have one of the highest rates of unemployment in Queensland and yet we are doing away with jobs. Why? Just tell me why? Why are we giving the fishermen such a hard time? One person said, 'How old are those trawlers?' He said, 'About the same age as you.' We have not had any new trawlers built. Why have we not had any built?

It is ridiculous to keep pounding these small businesses all the time. Do not give small businesses a hard time because we need those small businesses to create jobs. We need to get on and help producers.

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (8.12 pm): I rise to speak as a member of the Agriculture and Environment Committee on the examination of the budget estimates as detailed in report No. 20 of the 55th Parliament. I thank my fellow committee members, those other members of the 55th Parliament who participated in the hearing, the secretariat staff as well as the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef, Steven Miles, and the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, Leanne Donaldson.

I would like to make specific mention of the contribution made by Minister Miles in outlining how Queenslanders will benefit from the recently introduced Community Sustainability Action grants program that will be funded for \$12 million over three years. These grants will allow individuals and community groups to undertake on-ground activities to conserve and restore Queensland's heritage listed buildings.

Our government is investing in projects that support: restoring, conserving or improving public access to Queensland's heritage listed places, including development of conservation management plans; improving the condition of Queensland's unique wildlife and natural environment through a range of activities, including weeding and revegetation, removal of litter and marine debris and pest animal control; and investigating the issues affecting Queensland's koala populations and developing and trialling methods to encourage protection of these iconic species.

We all know that maintaining heritage listed properties can be costly. Individuals and community groups are often left to shoulder the costs, but this grant will provide them with much needed assistance. Everyone's Environment grants was an election promise made by the LNP government in 2012. The Newman-Nicholls LNP government had no intention of continuing these grants, with the funding expiring at the end of the 2014-15 financial year. Queenslanders can be assured that the Palaszczuk government's Community Sustainability Action grants program is locked in for \$12 million over the next three years.

I was pleased that during the estimates hearing Minister Miles made mention of a conservation project close to my heart—St Brigid's Catholic Church in Rosewood. The minister was also good enough to give me some credit for the introduction of the Community Sustainability Action grants program. As he said, it was a conversation with me about the dire situation with maintenance work required at St Brigid's that convinced him that the government needed to find a way to support community organisations struggling to maintain heritage listed buildings.


Subsequent to our conversation, the minister and I visited St Brigid's where we talked to Bernie Lenihan, a St Brigid's parishioner, and Janelle Van De Weyer, the office administrator for the Ipswich Catholic community, whose love for St Brigid's was clear. They explained the difficulties they faced raising funds needed to meet the large costs for reroofing and painting St Brigid's.

St Brigid's Church was built in 1909 and has a rich history. It was designed by Reverend Andrew Horan to accommodate a congregation of 1,000. It is said to be the largest wooden church in Australia. It was added to the state's registry in 1992. Significant alterations were undertaken to the church prior to the 1935 jubilee celebrations. On the northern wall, three stained glass windows and flanking murals by the important Queensland artist William Bustard were added.

Applications for Community Sustainability Action grants are now open for the heritage component of the grants. At the estimates hearing the minister said he hoped that an application would be forthcoming to reroof and paint St Brigid's Church. St Brigid's is just one of a number of churches that

comprise the St Mary's Catholic parish in Ipswich, of which I am a proud member. I wish St Mary's priest, Father Peter Dillon, all the best with his Community Sustainability Action grants application for St Brigid's.

There are a number of other heritage listed buildings in the electorate of Ipswich West and they include the Lowood Dental Surgery, Bowden's Marburg Hotel, the Marburg Community Centre, Woodlands, Rosewood Police Station, Rosewood Scrub Historical Society building, Grandchester saw mill, North Ipswich railway workshops and the Jets Leagues Club, as well as the North Ipswich, Tarampa and Prenzlau state schools. It is great to know that all of these heritage listed buildings could potentially benefit from the Community Sustainability Action grants program.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (8.17 pm): I rise to speak to the Agriculture and Environment Committee's budget estimates report. The recent budget brought down by the Palaszczuk Labor government has confirmed what many of us have known since those opposite assumed government in Queensland. That is that agriculture is at the bottom of the pile when it comes to funding and support. With spending cuts of 2½ per cent and little in the way of major new projects, I have significant concerns over the Palaszczuk government's commitment to agriculture and fisheries and the delivery of key, front-line services that our primary industries need.

Estimates showed this government's most junior minister has little grasp of industry issues and time and again was unable to provide direct answers to simple questions, constantly deferring to departmental staff during the hearing. The minister failed to clearly answer what consultation had been undertaken with Queensland's 18½ thousand to 19,000 commercial beef and dairy producers regarding her decision to dump Queensland's protected zone status for bovine Johne's disease.

Clear advice and wishes of the Queensland dairy industry were totally ignored and the minister was unable to point to any genuine consultation with the broader beef industry despite having the database at her disposal to do so. The decision and the failure to properly consult stands as lazy and reckless with the minister unable to provide any assurance to allay fears BJD will spread into clean herds because of her decision.

The tick line was another biosecurity issue where the minister was found wanting, not just on policy but on lack of consultation and listening to landholders along the line, particularly those who have invested a lot of time and money in dealing with ticks. This continues to be a significant issue for those graziers who border the tick line and a major impost for those property owners previously deemed clean who now find themselves on the infected side of the fence.

The response by the minister regarding the containment and eradication of fire ants in Queensland highlights the challenges facing our state. While national funding for eradication looks to be continuing for the foreseeable future, there is no fallback plan for containment and what that will mean for Queensland taxpayers.

The department's capital budget is based around maintenance and some upgrades. Allocations are there for a research farm in partnership with GRDC and for the RSPCA for facility upgrades.


The minister seems content on wasting scarce resources with her new \$2 million Office of Rural Affairs when there is no charter and no idea whether its 'commissioner' will work full-time or part-time, let alone what any staff would actually do, with the minister revealing funding would be \$250,000 in new money and \$250,000 'in kind' a year over four years. With the commissioner's salary and oncosts, there will be nothing left for any staff or resources to undertake any real work. Furthermore, there was no indication from the minister on where this office or commissioner would be based which hardly inspires confidence that this initiative will actually deliver results for the rural sector.

Following budget estimates, I have grave concerns regarding the future of the fishing industry in Queensland. The minister conveniently released a fisheries green paper the day before estimates which was an insult to stakeholders, particularly in the commercial seafood industry. Whilst the minister attempted to spruik the benefits of her green paper, it was readily apparent that dark clouds are on the horizon for the seafood industry in Queensland. The fact that the minister indicated in her response that she would implement a net-free zone in Moreton Bay when she was good and ready highlights the arrogance of this government and its contempt for the fishing industry.

The online feedback pages, with their simplistic motherhood questions, are aimed at drawing readers to tick and approve a policy shift that is little more than a reallocation of fish stocks without a shred of supporting scientific data. The new policy to slash commercial and rec fishing takes by 40 to 50 per cent threatens many businesses and hundreds of jobs in regional Queensland.

Plans for QRAA and its revamp into the new Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority, QRIDA, highlighted the lack of thought given to the federal government's plans for a Regional Investment Corporation to administer drought and hardship concessional loans which would render redundant much of what QRAA and its 100-odd staff currently do.

The figures speak for themselves. This government has cut spending in the agricultural, fisheries and forestry industries at a time when these industries have the potential to pull this state out of the economic doldrums that it finds itself in. Instead of grasping the opportunity to develop agribusiness in this state, the minister has reaffirmed the status of agriculture as the poor cousin in this do-nothing government.

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (8.21 pm): I rise to address the Agriculture and Environment Committee 2016-17 budget estimates report No. 20. I would like to thank Ministers Donaldson and Miles and their staff for their participation and preparation of information for the committee. I would also like to thank the parliamentary staff—Rob Hansen, Paul Douglas and Marion O'Connor. I also thank the committee chair, the member for Gladstone; the deputy chair, the member for Gympie; and my fellow committee members, the members for Mount Isa, Hervey Bay and Ipswich West.

The Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries presented budget highlights that show that the Labor Palaszczuk government understands agriculture and is supporting the sector to develop and grow and to thrive now and into the future. In recent years we have seen many shires in Queensland hit by drought. The government, through the minister's department, has set up counselling services. When the committee toured out west last year, we heard a lot of people telling us how important these counselling services are. They were highly praised indeed.

The department has also established the Climate Risk and Drought Resilience program to improve farm business capacity, seasonal forecasting and decision support tools to better manage climate risk. It is important that we learn as a state how to manage the inevitable changes in weather and climate and better prepare for the impacts. The government is also implementing the rural assistance package aimed at reducing financial stress and improving financial sustainability to assist the sector service their debt.


We must be forward thinking and be looking for new produce and new ways of growing and producing crops and livestock to keep our farmers relevant to the world demands and also to improve the type of farming on land. Advancing Queensland's agriculture innovation through the implementation of a 10-year agriculture, food and resource development and extension blueprint will do this, as well as developing innovative ways of commercialising the department's intellectual property. On the minister's advice, I sampled some of the new fruit produce at the Ekka. The fruit nectar of the Queen Garnet was particularly good and also the Daintree chocolate.

Safe Food are a Queensland government statutory body. They recognise that innovation in agriculture should include aerial drones. They can be utilised in agriculture. They can also be used for a wider range of conditions at any time as a cost-effective solution when the use of home resources is not a viable option. There is remote monitoring of fences, stock and water. These are just a few examples of how technology can be deployed. It can also be effective in areas of pest management, imaging, mapping, irrigation management and animal welfare. This is another way that this government is moving forward with technology.

Minister Donaldson did table her green paper. For the member for Gympie and the member for Hervey Bay, who said that they did not have a chance to read it and discuss it, on page 3 it outlines what a green paper is. It states—

A green paper is a document prepared on a specific policy area for discussion and comment from interested parties. Green papers do not commit the government or minister to the views expressed in the document or to a particular direction or course of action. They are designed to put forward concepts and options and to seek broad views on these proposals. The objective of the green paper is to arrive at a general consensus before developing future policy initiatives and changing legislation.

The green paper is out there, so people should comment on it. That is what it is meant for. It is great to see that the green paper is out there. It is important that we protect our fish stocks and our aquatic ecosystem. By maintaining fish stocks at higher levels, Queensland's marine ecosystems, including those in the World Heritage listed Great Barrier Reef, will be preserved. They will also be healthier and more resilient and will attract more tourists from interstate and overseas, while allowing Indigenous, recreational and commercial fishers to enjoy a better fishing experience.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (8.27 pm): I rise to address this year's budget estimates for the Appropriation Bill 2016 and specifically the Agriculture and Environment Committee's area of responsibility in scrutinising the relevant estimates papers and proposed expenditure by the Palaszczuk Labor government with respect to Environment and Heritage Protection, National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef.

The LNP opposition is very concerned with many areas of this portfolio, especially the obvious exploitation of the portfolio by the government and the minister as a political tool on key hot button voter issues such as the Great Barrier Reef, koalas and World Heritage listings, as opposed to developing and implementing evidence based policy. At estimates the minister was unable to provide simple and clear answers on mining application approvals and at times appeared to be almost deliberately vague, eventually agreeing to take a number of straightforward questions on notice, particularly with respect to approvals in Great Barrier Reef catchment areas.

Estimates revealed there is no new money for koala habitat areas compared with the \$15 million that was provided in 2015-16. The minister's vagueness on this point and his inability to cite any specific data for his decision not to fund further purchases of habitat areas was puzzling and worrying and appears to be a complete reversal on the focus that was held up as necessary to save the species last year. This can only be described as policy inconsistency at taxpayers' expense.

Turning to national parks, an area of concern was the projected growth in visits which certainly did not appear to be evidence based and will probably not be achieved. The forecasts from the government appear inflated. As they are tied to predicted income from user fees and charges, projected to be up 20.5 per cent to \$26.311 million, this leaves a cloud over operating funds for national parks.


Like his predecessor in the Agriculture and Fisheries session, the environment minister would appear to be playing politics with the businesses and jobs in the commercial fishing sector, particularly around the Fraser Coast, Tin Can Bay and Hervey Bay, with plans for further World Heritage listings. The environment minister appears to have no regard for the economic impact any additional area listing would have on many family run businesses and the hundreds of local jobs that are directly supported by commercial fishing. Coming on top of the release of the government's green paper on fisheries management, the minister's move to expand World Heritage listed areas around the Fraser Coast is a very worrying signal from a government that has been shown up for running fishery policy on base politics with not a shred of supporting scientific data.

There is little doubt that the Palaszczuk Labor government's \$1.8 million—\$6.8 million over four years—climate change strategy could include the further development of a carbon tax for Queensland. Both state and federal Labor have always been supporters of carbon taxes with little regard for the impost or cost impacts on hardworking Queenslanders. There is no doubt that whilst climate change is real and has occurred over thousands of years, what has always been in scientific dispute is the extent of man's contribution. Having said that, Queensland must be part of delivering both national and international evidence based strategies for our environment in a collaborative and balanced manner which recognises and mitigates not only economic impacts but also cost-of-living pressures on ordinary Queenslanders, including my constituents in Moggill. Whilst also valuing and respecting our current energy sources and industries, ongoing strategies with respect to affordable renewable energy solutions must be developed and supported in a collaborative and coordinated manner with respect to other state jurisdictions and the Commonwealth of Australia. Labor's budget could have done more in regards to this.

Given the minister's and the Palaszczuk Labor government's continued legislative demonisation of the mining and resources sector along with rural landholders and graziers with extremist green rhetoric, I remain somewhat dubious as to the government's real agenda with respect to balanced environmental policy and subsequent funded initiatives in this year's budget. Despite the government allocating \$1.7 million—\$5.8 million over three years—to crocodile management, both Labor and the environment minister delayed doing anything for nearly 16 months simply because this is a Labor government intent on reviewing and not doing. Whilst the principles and policy objectives of an environmental chain of responsibility framework are supported by the LNP, what is clear and is not supported by the Liberal National Party is Labor's poorly drafted legislation. This year's budget provided no clarity as to projected impacts on the resources sector, prohibitive financial assurance impacts or any information on the proposed progress of statutory guidelines to resolve a lack of legislative clarity.

I do acknowledge the collaboration of both the Queensland and federal governments with respect to the conjoint implementation of the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan and the Great Barrier Reef Water Quality Protection Plan.

In concluding, I make an overall assessment and comment with respect to this year's budget. We know this year's budget is one of raids, rip-offs and writedowns. Without realistic and sustainable economic strategies, the Queensland government will be forced to adjust and cut spending with respect to my shadow ministerial portfolio areas, and this year's state budget would appear to be the beginning of reduced funding.


 **Hon. LE DONALDSON** (Bundaberg—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries) (8.32 pm): Before I turn to the estimates committee, I wish to advise the House of the tragic death of Andrew Thwaites, the acting Executive Director of Fisheries in the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. Andrew, a passionate, experienced and accomplished diver, lost his life while diving off Moreton Island. After completing his science degree at the University of Queensland, Andrew joined the Queensland Public Service 23 years ago to pursue a career in the management of the marine environment. Since then he worked for the old Queensland fisheries management authority and for the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. He became one of Australia's most respected fisheries managers and was recently appointed chair of the fisheries management committee of the Australian Fisheries Management Forum. His knowledge and passion were well known. However, it was the dignified and respectful way he conducted himself that was his hallmark.

Fisheries management is a challenging profession. There are often disputes over the conflicting interests of stakeholders, and so it is a mark of respect he earned from all quarters that commercial and recreational fishers were united in their grief and in their tributes for Andrew. He served governments of all persuasions with distinction and dedication. His advice to me was always measured and considered and no job was too hard. I would like to place on record my condolences to Andrew's immediate family, in particular to his partner, Kelly-Anne, and also to his colleagues, his friends and all those from the fishing sector who have been affected by his premature passing. I would also like to thank all of those who assisted in the search for Andrew: Queensland Police Service, the Volunteer Marine Rescue Services, the Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol, Fisheries Queensland and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

Andrew worked tirelessly on the fisheries management green paper, which was published prior to the committee's consideration of the 2016-17 budget for the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. As has been previously mentioned, public consultation on this important document is underway. This discussion paper is designed to stimulate consideration of the actions necessary to implement world's best practice fisheries management in Queensland. The Palaszczuk government is delivering on its election commitment to ensure the sustainability of our fish stocks.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the committee, its members and the secretariat for the way the estimates process was conducted. I also want to thank the committee for its recommendation that the proposed expenditure as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2016 for the committee's area of responsibility be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

It is a \$454 million investment in Queensland's agriculture and fisheries sector for 2016-17 and contains an unprecedented package of financial assistance and practical measures to support primary producers. My sincere thanks goes to departmental staff for the considerable effort they made to prepare for the examination of the departmental budget. I believe our agricultural producers and those connected with the fisheries and forestry sectors are very well served by those who work for the department, QRAA, QATC and Safe Food Queensland. Their knowledge, their passion and professionalism is exemplary.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (8.36 pm): I am delighted to speak on report No. 20 of the Agriculture and Environment Committee. However, I am disappointed by the lack of plans to grow agricultural profitability in the state of Queensland. I would like to thank all of the departmental staff who have prepared and participated in the estimates committee process for the Agriculture and Environment Committee estimates hearings.

I did a search of the Service Delivery Statements for a mention of 'profitability in agriculture'. It only appears once in the 52-page statements. In many parts of the state, food and fibre producers cannot increase their productivity. They are actively seeking ways to increase the profitability of their businesses so they can meet the challenges presented by climate variations and be competitive in a world market. I note in the budget highlights that in conjunction with industry, the minister will undertake outbound trade missions showcasing Queensland's agricultural products, expertise and areas for investment in agriculture and the food and fibre supply chain. There are large populations of macropods in South-West Queensland and I take the opportunity to highlight the need for trade missions to be focussed on seeking markets for macropods—

Mr Rickuss: Better tell them what a macropod is. They probably don't know.


Ms LEAHY: I will take the interjection from the member for Lockyer. Macropods are kangaroos. In some cases macropods are causing drought conditions. They are breeding like a rabbit plague. They are causing environmental damage and competing for scarce pasture during drought times and when it does rain. Rather than disposing of the macropods, it would be a much better outcome to find a market for their products. They produce a wonderful leather and they are a cholesterol-free meat. The state government can do much more to find markets for macropod products. The minister needs to focus some of the government's trade efforts on the macropod industry and products. It does not matter if it is steak, leather, salami or a 'roo-bana'; we need to find a market.

I note the state budget allocates funds jointly with the federal government to construct cluster fencing in central and South-West Queensland to help keep out the scourge of wild dogs. Wild dog numbers are the highest they have ever been. They, too, seem to be breeding worse than a rabbit plague in some areas. I am advised that in the last financial year scalp numbers in the Murweh shire were some 3,000; Tambo shire, 2,500; Barcaldine shire, 3,000; the Maranoa Regional Council, 2,800; and the Paroo shire, 88. There are not enough biosecurity officers and I am advised that the position in Cunnamulla is actually vacant. The LNP government put on five wild dog officers on the front line and I am advised that there are two left under this Labor government.

I would have thought that a government which was focused on increasing the number of public servants and the Public Service would have at least filled the front-line positions that take the fight up to the wild dog menace. It is important to acknowledge that the federal government has also provided the lion's share of funding for cluster fencing in central and south-west Queensland, and I thank them for their commitment. Again in the estimates process there was an opportunity for the government to explain their plans for the Queensland Rural and Adjustment Authority and its intention to revamp QRAA to the new Queensland Rural Industry Development Authority. This is a missed opportunity to explain how the changes will benefit agricultural industries and grow the profitability of the sector.

I am also rather interested in the government's establishment of the Office of Rural Affairs with a proposed budget of \$2 million. Just out of interest, if you use the rate of \$2,240, which is the maximum subsidy provided to landholders for cluster fencing, that \$2 million would build some 892 kilometres of cluster fence or, to put it in comparison, two Morven-sized cluster fences or two Bulloo Shire linear fences, which is currently being investigated by an active group of landholders in the Bulloo Shire with assistance from the Bulloo Shire Council.

What are the key objectives of this office, where will it be based and will the commissioner be full time or part time? I hope the office will be based near or in a community that does not have traffic lights. The government did advise that the new office will cost \$250,000 in new money and \$250,000 in kind over four years. Given the likely salary package of the commissioner and on-costs, including extensive travel, I hope the commissioner has been given a good fuel card, as they will need it to move effectively about rural and regional Queensland.

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (8.40 pm): I rise to speak to the Appropriation Bill for the Agriculture and Environment Committee, and I will begin by thanking the chair. As in my previous experiences with the committee system, I think he has conducted himself with fairness and enough latitude that the process worked very well, so I thank him sincerely for that.


The need for a Rural Debt Survey was raised in the Appropriation Bill. The Rural Debt Survey is absolutely critical for moving forward in the formulation of rural policy in this state. Rural debt is one of the best barometers we can use to measure the health of the industry. There has been a lot of equivocation, argument and rhetoric about conditions in the industry. Whoever is in government at the time likes to say that things are great and they paint a different picture, so it is very important that we have a Rural Debt Survey. It is something that I am highly supportive of and I know there is work being done in that area.

One of our questions was about the dairy industry, and I do not think that has ever been properly addressed. I would say that the question we put to the minister was similar to questions asked of previous ministers. There is a lot of emphasis in the budget reports on productivity but not enough on profitability, and there is an inherent difference. For example, people say that the deregulation of the dairy industry has been terrific because productivity has been enhanced, but for dairy farmers 'productivity' can mean that one 60- or 70-year-old dairy farmer is working until 11 o'clock at night doing the job of two people. If profitability is not there in the industry it is not healthy. There are many aspects to rural industries. Some can be measured by rural debt and some can be measured by profitability, and I think that is something that policymakers in this place have failed to properly address for some time.

We spoke a lot about the recommendations that came from the Rural Debt and Drought Taskforce, which is something that I am very interested in. I would like to go through them. Recommendations 1 and 2 concern a Farm Debt Reconstruction Authority and are not really addressed in this budget. All I can say about that is someone should show me a better idea of how we begin the process of rebuilding in rural areas of Queensland. I can certainly speak with authority regarding my area when I say that there are some big problems which still need to be addressed. Recommendation 3, multi-peril crop insurance, has been addressed somewhat. Giving people that funding now works in two ways: people need to be financially literate, and if they are going to get through these areas they need coaching; also that money can be used for accounting production records to contribute towards the multi-peril insurance industry, which is effectively disaster management which is done through the private sector or people doing it for themselves. It is very clever and innovative policymaking. We are in the space that we should be, so that covered it very well.

Another area in the budget that I would refer to is the Office of Rural Affairs. An interesting point to make is that since I have been in this place DAFF has said that drought concession loans and the like have been doing their job. In December last year I found out that, of the 265 drought concession loans, only four had gone out in my electorate. That shows it is a failed policy. It has not helped those people who are in trouble because of the drought one bit, so a different approach needs to be taken and it needs to start somewhere.

The reconstruction of QRAA so that it will do the job of rebuilding agriculture properly has been brought to light in those recommendations, and I welcome that. It is something that the LNP called for previously. One issue that was not addressed is the desilting of dams. I think there is something in the space of solar pumps and watering units that can help with productivity in rural areas, and we are still waiting to hear from the government on that. That would be of great benefit and it definitely needs some work from this government.

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (8.45 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to provide a reply to the House following the Agriculture and Environment Committee's estimates hearing on 22 July. I greatly appreciate the time and effort of the committee in its review of the budget for my portfolio areas of Environment and Heritage Protection and National Parks.

The budget allocation I received in 2015-16 in my portfolio areas allowed me to stop further cuts which were built into the forward estimates by the former treasurer, the member for Clayfield. This budget sees the Palaszczuk government begin to rebuild after three long years of LNP disregard for Queensland's environment. This budget will allow my department to address and regulate impacts of industry on the environment, to protect the Great Barrier Reef and to respond to climate change. In my portfolio it is climate change where the Newman-Nicholls government was most dangerous. With a budget allocation of \$6.8 million over four years we can begin to rebuild our capacity to manage this global threat. It is a shame that we have to start from scratch, but I am confident that we will once again become leaders in this area because a healthy and resilient environment is essential for maintaining the quality of life that we as Queenslanders are accustomed to.

This budget reaffirms the Palaszczuk government's commitment to managing and protecting the environment, with a \$23.5 million boost to the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection's operating budget. This will allow us to implement new programs for koala conservation, crocodile management, action on climate change, recycling programs such as a container deposit scheme and much, much more. It will also ensure the continuation of services that deliver on our environmental priorities such as protecting the Great Barrier Reef, enhancing Queensland's ecosystems, protecting our significant heritage places and safeguarding our environment from harm.

We continue to work with our Commonwealth partners to implement the Reef 2050 Plan and the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan on the ground in local communities. We also continue to engage with farmers on improving reef water quality by reducing sediment and nutrient run-off through better agricultural practices. The Palaszczuk government has accepted or accepted in principle all 10 of the Great Barrier Reef Water Science Taskforce's recommendations, and there is \$22 million in this budget to implement them. This will allow us to implement perhaps the most important recommendation of the task force: two new major integrated projects in the Burdekin and Wet Tropics catchments at a cost of \$33 million.

This budget also prioritises wildlife conservation. We know that our koala populations in the south-east have been struggling, so we have provided \$12.1 million to protect koalas and their habitat. We have delivered funding of \$5.8 million for crocodile management that will also safeguard the jobs of 10 staff based in regional Queensland. Plus, we will use \$2.7 million to research flying fox roosts and travel patterns.

The new Community Sustainability Action grants program will encourage community groups to be more active in their local areas. This \$12 million program aims to encourage innovation in environmental conservation activities and increase volunteer participation at a community level.

The state's national parks are also getting a budget boost. We have delivered up to 31 new park rangers over the next four years across Queensland for the ongoing management of our national parks. In addition, an implementation team of up to 10 officers will be recruited by 2020 to support the transition of national parks on Cape York Peninsula to jointly managed parks with traditional owners. The additional positions followed a recent expansion of the state's protected area estate and are supported by new funding of \$35.9 million over four years to establish and manage these areas.

This budget will ensure Queensland is in the best position to effectively manage our changing climate and ensure the long-term viability of our economy, communities and industries. I am pleased that the committee recommended that the proposed expenditure for the committee's areas of responsibility be agreed to without amendment. Again I thank all members of the committee for their contribution during the hearings, especially the member for Gladstone, who did an excellent job of chairing the committee. Finally, I thank my directors-general and acknowledge the efforts of the departmental staff as well as the staff in my office in preparation for estimates.


Report adopted.

Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee

Report

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): The question is—

That the report of the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee be adopted.

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (8.51 pm): I rise this evening to speak to report No. 16 of the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee on the estimates hearing conducted on Tuesday, 26 July 2016. First I thank ministers Jones and Enoch for the depth of their responses and the breadth of knowledge of their portfolios in providing fulsome answers to all questions.

Today is the day that the people of Queensland will realise that the opposition members of this House do not support teachers or schools across this state. They do not support the tourism industry or science and innovation in this state. What is worse, they do not support the mum-and-dad small businesses that are the backbone of this state. The opposition members of the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee could not support the recommendation that the proposed expenditure as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2016 for the committee's areas of responsibility be agreed to.

It is believed that this is the very first time an opposition has not supported the expenditure contained in an Appropriation Bill—the first time ever. What does this say about the opposition? It says that the opposition do not want to pay our teachers. They do not want to support the age-old saying of a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. They do not stop there. They do not want to pay the teacher aides, the business services managers, the admin assistants, the facilities managers and the hardworking cleaners who start their day at 5 am.


What about their favourite pet project, the school maintenance program, worth \$300 million over three years? With this opposition, that program is out the window as well. We heard under the former Newman government that school maintenance issues would be fixed and fixed quickly. Under the Nicholls leadership and their decision to not recommend the expenditure, there will be no painting program and no new carpets—not even the money to replace the school toilet seats. I wonder how the members for Broadwater, Buderim and Albert will be received in their schools when their communities find out that they did not support the expenditure for Education in this state. I am sure there will be no scones and cream or hot cups of tea for morning tea on those visits. More likely it will be the cold shoulder. What about the new school for Burdell in the electorate of Hinchinbrook? The committee members have let down the member for Hinchinbrook. There will be no new school in his electorate because the opposition members could not recommend the expenditure in the Education portfolio.

What else does this decision to not recommend the expenditure for Education look like? The \$57.6 million as part of the \$147.3 million total funding over five years to begin construction of three new primary schools in Caloundra, Coomera and Yarrabilba in Logan—gone. The members for Kawana and Coomera would not be happy with that decision, I am sure, considering the amount of growth in their electorates. The \$19.3 million as part of \$22.5 million to finish the construction of a new special school in Cairns—gone. I know that the member for Cairns has fought hard to get that funding. He would not be happy, either. The government initiative on early years education by delivering greater access to kindergarten in the remote communities of Aramac, Augathella, Bedourie, Birdsville, Boulia, Dingo, Greenvale, Muttaborra, Pentland, Thargomindah and Valkyrie—

Mr Molhoek: Have you been to any of those places?

Mr STEWART: Many—through the remote kindergarten pilot in state schools—gone. The members of the Katter party will be seething when they hear that one. The allocation of 290 additional teachers to Queensland schools to reduce class sizes and provide further support to teachers and principals, and the provision of an additional 15 guidance officers or equivalent to state high schools to improve counselling and career advice services to students—gone. These are dark days indeed from the members of the opposition.

Finally, on a more positive note, I wish to thank the research staff of the ETISB Committee—namely, Sue Cawcutt and Maureen Coorey—for their professionalism, hard work and support. I also wish to thank the government and non-government members of the committee for their participation and acknowledge all of the shadow ministers who attended the estimates hearing.

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (8.56 pm): I look forward to correcting the record. As the member for Townsville will see, it is not the intention of members of this committee to vote against the appropriation. It is the intention of the non-government members of this committee to draw to the attention of the House the very serious concerns we have about some of the budget measures. These were concerns that had been raised by members on this side of the House in the lead-up to the estimates process, were raised during the estimates process and have been raised in the report. I say to the member for Townsville that he signed this report. It has his name on it. It is his report as the chair. The member for Townsville had an option to not agree to this report, and he as the chair agreed to a report that said that the committee could not agree with the appropriation.

In a spirit of bipartisanship, I acknowledge the work of the member for Townsville on the day as chair of the committee. It must be acknowledged that he was incredibly fair when it came to the management of time, ensuring that the shadow ministers had equal opportunity to put to ministers the very serious questions they had. I acknowledge the work that he and the secretariat did in the lead-up to, during and after the estimates process. I also acknowledge my colleagues on the education committee—the members for Buderim and Albert—who I know would like to make a contribution to this report debate. However, given the limited time frame and the number of shadow ministers who wish to speak, they will unlikely have the opportunity to do so. I thank the shadow ministers who took the time to come to the education committee's estimates hearing to raise the very important issues that have been detailed in our statement of reservation on behalf of all Queenslanders. I refer to my good friend and colleague and partner in crime—I am Robin to her Batman, as Amy Remeikis would say—the member for Aspley; the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Clayfield; the member for Beaudesert; the member for Mount Ommaney; and the member for Indooroopilly.

This was a budget of raids, writedowns and rip-offs. That is why the members of the education committee felt compelled to draw the attention of the House to the grave concerns that we have. In the estimates hearing neither the Minister for Education nor the director-general could be clear about who is responsible for the school in Aurukun and how they are going to address the concerns of the community. As the member for Maroochydore highlighted in her contribution on an earlier estimates report, she, the member for Aspley and I had an opportunity to visit that community during the week and we are very concerned about how these issues are going to be addressed. We also saw the Minister for Education flippantly disregard statistics with respect to the number of teachers who are being assaulted by students. We have seen the minister completely disregard those statistics, but for each and every one of those teachers it is a very big concern.

In the area of Tourism and Major Events we saw a clear lack of cooperation and coordination between departments with respect to very major tourism infrastructure, with the Minister for Tourism saying that she was not responsible for something that appeared in her glossy brochure, and I think at that stage it was edition No. 6 by the time she had been able to fix it up. In that portion of the estimates when considering Tourism and Major Events we also saw some very significant concerns raised about our ability to tender for, manage and retain minor and major events. That was highlighted by not only the breach of confidentiality with respect to the NRL World Cup but also concerns—

Ms JONES: I rise to a point of order. I find the comments made by the honourable member offensive and I ask for them to be withdrawn. As I told the estimates hearing under oath, there was no breach of confidentiality by the state government. I reject that and I ask you to withdraw. It has serious consequences. Stop playing games. I ask that she withdraw it.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! Thank you, Minister.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member, I am already dealing with one point of order.

Mr STEVENS: I would like to raise a point of order—as you are well aware, I am entitled to—on that point of order.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hope the member is not showing disrespect to the chair.

Mr STEVENS: I am raising a point of order which, as the chair knows, I am well allowed to do.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr STEVENS: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. My point of order—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: And I warn you not to show disrespect to the chair in the manner in which you are addressing the chair. You may make your point of order and do so in a respectful manner please.

Mr STEVENS: Please explain to me how I am disrespecting the chair. I am not disrespecting the chair.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: You may resume your seat.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I would draw to your attention that in fact that very question is showing some level of disrespect to the request that you had made and I ask that you draw the member back to order.


Miss BARTON: Madam Deputy Speaker, if I could speak to the minister's point of order.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Would you please resume your seat? I was not at the time able to hear. There is some debate about whether the matter was personally offensive. However, I am going to rule in this instance that if the minister did find it personally offensive I ask the member to withdraw please.

Miss BARTON: Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker; I withdraw. What we saw—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! One moment please, member for Broadwater. Are there any other outstanding points of order? If not, I call the member for Broadwater.

Miss BARTON: What we saw during the estimates process was evidence that there had been a breach of confidentiality and the opposition has raised concerns about what that means for our ability to gain, continue and retain major and minor events. We also saw significant concerns in the area of science, technology and innovation in that it is \$500,000 for every job created and, despite the minister's obfuscation, she simply could not hide the fact. We also saw in the area of small business that she was unable to identify whether or not the Chamber of Commerce was supportive of the Small Business Champions. She did not know how many Queenslanders were employed in small business and she was not able to understand how the payroll tax scheme works in Queensland, and nor was she able to say whether or not this government supports the effects test for small business. What we have seen is a continued shambles by this asleep-at-the-wheel Labor government demonstrated in estimates.

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (9.04 pm): First of all I want to thank the chair, the deputy chair and all members of the committee for their hard work during the 18 months I have been on the committee. I also want to thank the staff because if we did not have great staff on the secretariat none of us would be able to get our jobs done correctly. I thank members of the parliamentary staff for all of the hard work they have done on the committee in the last 18 months that I have been on the committee and especially during the estimates. I want to look at expenditure in terms of the difference between the two governments and what is happening in the Maryborough electorate.

Mr Russo interjected.

Mr SAUNDERS: I take that interjection from my colleague: yes, we do have plenty of time. Since the Palaszczuk Labor government was elected the education expenditure and what has happened in my electorate has been brilliant. We have extra teachers for the first time ever at the school and

guidance officers. Given today's press release by the minister, the minister is probably one of the best education ministers I have seen. I have been around politics a very long time. I have been around the political scene a very long time and class stress is dropping because we are providing extra teachers and we are making sure that the kids are getting an education.

Ms Jones: We're going to pay them, too!


Mr SAUNDERS: I take that interjection from the Minister for Education and the member for Ashgrove: we do pay them. One thing that this side of the chamber does very well is we appreciate our teachers. We appreciate everyone who works in schools. We appreciate the business service managers, the cleaners, the gardeners and everyone who is associated with the schools. We appreciate what they do for the future of this state, and that is what we are talking about with education. I have noticed the difference in my electorate with the NAPLAN results and when you go into the schools now the teachers are happy because they have funding and they are doing a very good job.

Ms Jones: They're doing a great job.

Mr SAUNDERS: So are you, Minister. You are doing a very good job. If we look at the expenditure, we are providing families with a 12-month membership of Playgroup Queensland upon the birth of their child. That is a great step for young families to get going on the education merry-go-round. We are delivering greater access to kindergarten in remote communities, and as a person who was born in the west and who has a lot of friends out there who have children that is a great step and I thank the minister very much. We are providing money to kindergartens to support children with disabilities, and that happened in my electorate. The minister intervened when children in my electorate with disabilities could not go to kindergarten because of the federal cutbacks. Because the minister intervened, there are some very happy families at the moment and I once again thank the minister very much. There is \$102 million in ongoing funding over four years to implement the findings of the review of admin and support staff. This is a big issue. I have had admin staff who have not had lunch because they have to work through their lunch hours because they are snowed under with work and their remuneration was very little.

This committee is very fortunate to have two great ministers—two good ministers who are looking after the welfare of the people of Queensland. Minister Enoch, the member for Algeester, is doing a great job in her portfolio. She has come to my electorate and met and talked to many people in the innovation industry. The feedback is that they are very happy with this government and they are very happy with the way we are heading with education and tourism and small business and innovation. I get pulled up countless times in the street by people saying, 'Thank you. What a difference this government is to the previous government.' These comments are coming from the traditional supporters of those opposite. These people are stopping me in the street saying, 'We are grateful that the Labor government is in power because of the difference and the attitude towards teachers, towards small business people and towards tourism,' which has thrived in my region in the last 18 months under this government. It has absolutely thrived.

It was supposed to be one of the four pillars of the previous government. I am glad it was not holding me up. When the previous government was in power, its pillars were very shaky. On behalf of my electorate, I would like to thank both ministers, the member for Ashgrove and the member for Algeester.

 **Ms DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (9.09 pm): I rise to speak to the Appropriation Bill and the committee report into the examination of the budget estimates for the Education portfolio. Firstly, I would like to put on record my utmost confidence and support for our teachers, our teacher aides and school staff who give tirelessly to the education of children across this state. I firmly believe that education is one of the most significant formative experiences in our lives. We should always be focused on providing the means for our young people to reach their aspirations and our teachers are right at the forefront of helping with that. They have the enormous undertaking of shaping young minds into the next generation of doers, thinkers, creators, leaders and entrepreneurs.


The estimates hearing highlighted that, despite record spending in the Education portfolio, there was a sense that the portfolio could do better or, more to the point, that spending more and more does not always mean achieving better results. It is what happens in the classroom that makes the greatest difference. Having great teachers equals great results. Despite this year's budget being sold by the government as a record spend in the Education portfolio, we discovered before the hearing had even begun that 14 key performance measures set by this government were not met—not one, not two, but 14.

It was disappointing to see the minister use the parliamentary estimates process as an opportunity to grandstand with an announcement of importance around reducing violence against teachers. The timing of this announcement was dubious. Prior to the hearing, non-government questions on notice were asked about WorkCover claims, specifically relating to assaults on teachers, and the next thing we see a glossed-up announcement by the minister. Violence against anyone is unacceptable and the minister's response to deal this issue was to print a glossy brochure and poster. There were 174 accepted WorkCover claims relating to assaults on teachers. These were accepted claims—the most serious—not the number lodged with WorkCover, nor the actual number of assaults that were reported to the department.

The violence by students against teachers was only the tip of the iceberg. Further questions were asked about the increased number of short- and long-term suspensions and the lack of planning to address the incidence of violence in our schools. I was disappointed and equally concerned at revelations exposed during the hearing that the Minister for Education was not advised of growing violence and safety concerns raised by locals in Aurukun in the months leading up to the rushed closure of the Aurukun school. Had this government taken an all-agency approach to the law and order issues challenging the Aurukun community, the issues around teacher safety could have been addressed and the school could have remained open for the children in Aurukun.

I know from my former role that Queensland teachers take very seriously their mandatory reporting responsibilities when suspicions of abuse and neglect of students exist. During the hearing, I simply asked the minister if she had an obligation to support this process, particularly following what has been exposed of backlogged investigations occurring in Child Safety. It would have been reassuring to know whether the minister at the very least had at any time picked up the phone to her colleague Minister Fentiman to check whether teacher reports were not sitting as part of a growing list of backlogged investigations in Child Safety. This is a very serious issue and one of great public interest and concern following the hapless lack of attention by the child safety minister. The only clarity I was able to glean from Minister Jones in terms of obligations for the safety and protection of students where abuse concerns exist is that, once concerns are reported through to Child Safety, it is that department's responsibility, not hers. It is one thing for the minister to say that student welfare is her top priority, but it is an entirely other thing to demonstrate it.

Questions were asked about the level of accountability and reporting when it comes to delivering education supports to children who live in out-of-home state care. Achieving the desired educational outcomes for young people in care is generally more challenging and it is incumbent on the minister to ensure that more attention is paid to delivering effective education support plans to these children. It is vital for the minister and her government to be absolutely clear about the exact nature of the problems facing our education system. The education of our children is about securing the future of our state and so much is at stake. I conclude by thanking the departmental staff and the committee, along with everybody else who was there on the day for the consideration of this most important portfolio.

 **Mr DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (9.14 pm): As a member of the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee, I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the report of the estimates hearing. The Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee was established by the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 18 February 2016 as a portfolio committee with responsibility for Education, Tourism, Major Events, Small Business, Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy.

During the estimates hearing, I was able to raise one issue with the Minister for Education. I was contacted by a family in relation to their son, who is expected to attend year 7 in high school next year when his current intellectual capability is that of an average year 2 student. His mum and dad attempted to obtain an intellectual disability verification for their son to attend a special school, as that was their medical team's recommendation, and have been refused a review of the guidance officer's decision not to grant this verification. These parents tried to contact the minister's office for an urgent meeting to discuss their situation, but had difficulties in obtaining that response.

I raised this issue during the estimates hearing and the minister offered to meet directly after the estimates hearing to get further details so that she could follow it up. I would like to thank the Minister for Education for following up this issue. I understand that the department of education is working very comprehensively with the family, which is making a big difference in their lives. I thank the minister.

I am afraid that is where the accolades end. I am yet to see the innovation that has been added to this committee's responsibilities. I am yet to see meaningful initiatives—things that go beyond doing the bare minimum, beyond the mere rewinding of what the previous LNP had put in place. The only 'innovation' that I have seen in the Tourism portfolio is the introduction of ecotourism opportunities in Queensland's protected area estates. That was an initiative of the previous LNP government.

After accusing the previous LNP government of allowing resorts and casinos to be built in national parks and basically putting up a parking lot and paving over paradise when it was in opposition, this Labor government has changed its tune dramatically, with the Minister for Tourism and the Minister for National Parks on 22 July this year heralding the opening up of new ecotourism opportunities in our pristine national parks. They have seen the light. The Minister for Education stated that this is—


... a new era of working with the ecotourism industry to deliver high-quality, sustainable tourism experiences that showcase the beauty of our state. This is proof that when industry and government work together we can provide new opportunities for investment in ecotourism.

Although I agree with the minister's sentiment, it would have been courteous of the minister to recognise that her government was reaping the benefits of the previous LNP government's vision and hard work.

This government is lacking vision—an ability to look at the big picture. There is a real need for investment in infrastructure on the Sunshine Coast that will also assist locals get to school safely and on time. I have spoken at length in this House about how the new Sunshine Coast University Hospital will soon have a range of new and expanded free public hospital services on the Sunshine Coast. Unfortunately, that hospital will not be supported by the road network that is needed for people to get there safely and on time. When it comes to its plans for catering for growth on the Sunshine Coast, reducing traffic congestion in the area and providing easy access to the Sunshine Coast University Hospital precinct, I still do not have answers from this government. Where are the plans for the LNP's \$440 million Mooloolah River interchange upgrade project?

I want the people of my electorate of Buderim to get to school, to work and to the new hospital safely and on time without having to sit in traffic jams. Again, I call on this Labor government to provide clarity in terms of the funding and the delivery of the MRI to the people of the Sunshine Coast as well as other much needed infrastructure projects, such as the duplication of the Bruce Highway between Caboolture and Caloundra roads. All things considered, we can conclude from the budget and from the estimates process that the Labor government's budget does not live up to its promises. All it does is deliver more debt, more deficit and a decline in infrastructure.

We have learned that this budget again proves Labor has no plans for jobs, no plans for growth, no plans to improve business confidence and no plans for infrastructure delivery on the Sunshine Coast. It has no plans to avoid the debt, deficit and disaster that it left behind last time it was in government. It has learned nothing from its past mistakes and is continuing down a path where it will not deliver the necessary infrastructure regardless of whether it is infrastructure in education or elsewhere.

 **Mr WILLIAMS** (Pumicestone—ALP) (9.19 pm): I rise in the House today to speak to the estimates hearing on the examination of the budget Appropriation Bill held on 26 July 2016 for the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee. Sadly I must say that consensus was not reached on expenditure, which is the first time in the history of this parliament. A denial of transparency by those opposite not wanting to disclose facts and figures to the people of Queensland had occurred in an attempt to gag debate in this House. This political gamesmanship, pointscoreing and, in fact, absolute shambles engineered by the LNP Nicholls opposition was reckless and disgraceful before the people of Queensland, attempting to block discussion and supply to schools, tourism and small business support. One might ask why. Advancing Queensland has delivered \$3 billion in debt reduction and a further saving of \$7 billion, in stark contrast to Queensland's projected financial position if left in the hands of the off-the-rails, financially failing LNP. It beggars belief.

The Small Business Strategy is vitally important to the people of Pumicestone. Those opposite would leave Queenslanders with no money for expanding Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow, no money for grants helping small business, no money for the Small Business Advisory Council, no money to help small business prepare for the 2018 Commonwealth Games and no money to support regional small business—remembering that those opposite would have Queenslanders believe that they are the champions of small business. What a joke! What a farce!

On a larger scale, without the Advance Queensland initiatives there would be no money for PhD scholarships, no money for encouraging entrepreneurs to look globally for expansion while staying local, no money for ecosystem start-ups, no money for North Queensland small business and no money for scientific research that delivers economic outcomes for our social and environmental requirements that Pumicestone people are so passionate about. This act of proposed vandalism by those opposite would continue to allow our brightest and best Queenslanders to leave our shores, rip support away from women taking time out of their careers, no improvement of digital literacy skills so important to our seniors, no money for the digital economy or improving water quality for the Great Barrier Reef. Those

opposite allowed this to happen in National Science Week. As governments stress over international economic standards, the opposition's actions would result in the downgrading of Queensland's reputation as a world research leader across the globe. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr KRAUSE (Beaudesert—LNP) (9.23 pm): The Labor government's second budget is best characterised as a budget of raids, writedowns and rip-offs with no long-term cohesive economic plan to create jobs and grow the Queensland economy. This committee reviewed the budget for the Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events and I wish to thank the parliamentary staff and departmental officials who participated in the hearings. In another display by Labor of its complete disregard for contractual arrangements, the committee heard that the contract for the Rugby League World Cup contained confidentiality provisions yet the member for Ashgrove may have breached the confidentiality clause by releasing information to the *Courier-Mail* on Saturday, 16 July.

Ms JONES: I find those comments offensive and I ask them to be withdrawn. They have serious consequences. You shouldn't play with this. I am already on the public record saying that I had not breached them.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! Could the minister please explain to me what she found personally offensive.

Ms JONES: I find it personally offensive, after I have already been on the parliamentary record saying I had not breached confidentiality, that the honourable member just said I may have done so. I never did and I ask him to withdraw it. This has serious consequences. I find it offensive and I ask him to withdraw it.

Miss BARTON: To the point of order, I do not wish to comment on earlier rulings because in earlier rulings you had not heard whether or not there was a personal reflection, but if the member for Beaudesert is making comments about the government—

Ms Jones: It was not, it was about me.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please allow the member for Broadwater to speak.

Miss BARTON: The member for Beaudesert is able to make reasonable comments on the basis of what had occurred in estimates and the issues that arose.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Broadwater, there is no point of order from you. I have asked the minister to explain why she found the comments personally offensive. I am satisfied with her explanation and I ask you to withdraw.


Mr KRAUSE: I withdraw. What I will say is that major event proponents should not have their promotional and marketing plans gazumped by minister's press releases and photo opportunities as it appears could have occurred this time. The LNP opposition raised the issue that under the minister's watch Queensland had already lost the hosting rights for a State of Origin game to Perth and we believe that the allegations about confidentiality could threaten our ability to host a NRL grand final or other major events in the future. We say again that the error-prone Queensland Tourism Investment Guide—I have version 5 here—is a thorn in the government's side. The \$8 billion AQIS resort is missing from the Cairns pipeline of major tourism infrastructure. Just six small words were mentioned in the infrastructure guide. It is just a small \$8 billion oversight. It is hard to keep track, but at the time of the estimates hearing the Queensland Tourism Investment Guide was up to version 5. I suspect version 6 could soon be on the way. For a government that has spent more time reviewing than doing it is truly remarkable that the Queensland Tourism Investment Guide could be pulped again.

The member for Ashgrove also admitted under LNP questioning that she did not even consult with the Treasurer about significant projects to be included in the Queensland Tourism Investment Guide. This raises some fairly serious questions about Labor's commitment to seeing the AQIS resort development proceed in Cairns, a development worth an estimated \$8 billion that will generate nearly 4,000 jobs during construction and will become another international drawcard in Queensland. One would think that with 36,200 jobs lost in Queensland since January, an unemployment rate in Cairns that has increased to 8.6 per cent and youth unemployment so bad in Cairns that more than one in four young people cannot find a job, Labor would actually want to kickstart major tourism projects. Six words in the investment guide is not much of a plug for the project. In this dysfunctional, asleep-at-the-wheel government the tourism minister has not even consulted with the Treasurer, who also happens to be a member for the Cairns region, about the AQIS resort development.

The estimates hearing highlighted these concerns. It also highlighted a significant amount of public money being invested in attracting major sporting events to Queensland with little clarity on how that money is actually spent. The opposition supports attracting major events to Queensland, but we also believe that it is critical that taxpayers get best value for money and it is incumbent upon the

government to use taxpayers' dollars wisely in an open and transparent manner. The lack of detail regarding major events funding that was provided at estimates makes it impossible to say whether Queenslanders are getting the best bang for their buck. The Brisbane Baroque Festival is a clear case in point. The media had reported issues around non-payment of musicians, performers and creditors following the 2016 event. This is an event which had attracted funding from Tourism and Events Queensland over a three-year contract period. Despite significant concerns around the event and whether it will continue in 2017, there was a distinct lack of information provided to the committee despite extensive questioning. The LNP believes that it is vitally important that, where public money is used to attract an event to Queensland, the many people who provide services with the expectation of receiving fair payment receive what they are owed.

I will use my remaining time to move back to the AQIS development. The six words in the Tourism Investment Guide are not much of a plug for the project. If it was a real priority, the guide, put out with the imprimatur of the minister—it has her face on about page 4—would have gone into a bit more detail and made more of the project to encourage people to invest in North Queensland, because we have this wonderful opportunity coming through AQIS. However, the minister did not even consult with the Treasurer, who is one of the local members. It is not hard to see why it missed out in the Tourism Investment Guide. I look forward to version 6 of that guide coming out shortly.

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (9.30 pm): I begin by thanking all the members of the committee, my directors-general, the hardworking public servants of my department and, of course, the hardworking members of my ministerial staff. I am delighted to have another opportunity to talk about how the Palaszczuk government's Advance Queensland initiative and the Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy will deliver jobs for Queensland. Advance Queensland is about building the future of our state. The shifting world economy means we have to change if we are to remain globally competitive. For Queensland to excel, we have to innovate to make our existing industries stronger and develop new industries to create the jobs of the future.

Therefore, it is disappointing to have to once again correct misleading claims made by the member for Mount Ommaney when it comes to expenditure for Advance Queensland and the jobs the initiative has created. The correct numbers were made clear at the estimates hearing and I table the relevant page from *Hansard* that explicitly outlines the expenditure for the initiative. The day following the estimates hearing I issued a media statement, which I also table, to clarify the misleading figures, yet they were repeated again today by the member for Mount Ommaney in this House.

Tabled paper: Extract from the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee transcript (proof) of public estimates hearing on 26 July 2016, p 72 [\[1257\]](#).

Tabled paper: Media release, undated, from the Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business, Hon. Leeanne Enoch, titled 'LNP misleading public on innovation outcomes' [\[1258\]](#).

I am concerned that the member for Mount Ommaney continues to deliberately mislead the House. I will be writing to Mr Speaker in accordance with standing order 269 to request that the matter be referred to the Ethics Committee.

It is clear that the LNP does not believe in science or innovation, so let us see how they go with the maths. I will outline it one more time. For the benefit of the member for Mount Ommaney, the funding of \$8.29 million allocated from the Advance Queensland initiative has created 121 direct jobs. A further \$25.589 million has been committed from the 2015-16 budget for Advance Queensland, which will directly create a further 327 jobs. The equation is pretty simple: the total funding commitment of \$33.879 million will directly create a total of 448 jobs. In addition, this investment will leverage a further \$58 million in private sector investment for our state.


There is much more to come. Advance Queensland has attracted global companies such as Johnson & Johnson, Siemens, Emory University and Boeing to set up or expand their operations in Queensland. In 2015 Boeing invested US\$4.35 billion globally in R and D. The Palaszczuk government wants to see a greater proportion of that money being spent right here in Queensland, despite the LNP's attempts to block this. By their actions, the LNP is broadcasting to the world that Queensland would stop innovating and building the new economy if they were indeed in government. They are effectively telling Queensland innovators, entrepreneurs, researchers and small businesses that have sought to be part of the Advance Queensland innovation movement that they do not deserve the support they are receiving.

Today the member for Mount Ommaney stood in this place and quite rightly extolled the virtues of Hear and Say and the excellent work it is doing to help thousands of Queenslanders. I remind the member for Mount Ommaney that Hear and Say received nearly \$50,000 of Advance Queensland

funding through a Knowledge Transfer Partnerships grant, in partnership with QUT. That funding is being used to create a next-generation prosthetic ear for children with microtia, using advanced 3D computer modelling and printing technology. Through their actions on this committee, the LNP is trying to block the type of funding that Hear and Say receives.

The LNP is not just intent on trying to block Advance Queensland; it also wants to deny small businesses support and assistance to help them start, grow and employ. Failing to support programs to be delivered by our Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy will negatively impact on Queensland's 406,000 small businesses. It will stop the rollout of programs designed to increase the resilience of early-stage small businesses and help establish small businesses to grow and thrive. It will also deny small businesses critical support to help them enter the digital economy.

The opposition talks about small business being the engine room of the economy, yet by denying small businesses the support they deserve its actions speak far more loudly. The LNP opposition has presented no plan for small business and no plan for innovation, science or the digital economy. In fact, the silence is deafening. In stark contrast, the Palaszczuk government is setting an absolutely cracking pace to advance Queensland.

 **Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (9.35 pm): What did we learn in estimates for the portfolio of Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy? In her opening statement at estimates, the minister again said that the government had set a cracking pace. Let us see how that worked out, shall we? My opening question was straightforward enough. I asked the minister what her total budget was for this portfolio. The minister replied, not once but twice, that it was \$700,313,000, when in actual fact the transcript shows that it was recorded as '\$7,313,000'. The SDS indicates that it is \$361,000,625 and yet now I have a different set of figures again. In the report today, it is now \$360,441,000. We have four sets of figures that vary wildly from \$7 million to \$700 million. Is it any wonder that Queensland is in such bad shape? The state of Queensland slides further into a fiscal quagmire and we have now seen four different sets of figures. For the fifth time, the minister needs to try to tell us what the budget is for her department.

As members will recall, at the time of the election the centrepiece of the Palaszczuk government's campaign was jobs, jobs, jobs. Therefore, during the estimates hearing I felt that it was important that my next lot of questioning was around exactly how many jobs had been created. We have heard about Advance Queensland and the \$180 million that has been spent. We heard from the minister that it was creating jobs now and for the future. There were a few little tete-a-tetes going on, but in the end we found out that 148 jobs have been created in the past 18 months that this government has been in power. The minister was so proud. In the transcript, she says, 'There you go! Over 140 jobs have been created.' She was very proud of that. However, you should never ever say 'never', because who would have thought that the member for Bundamba and I would be on the same page as we were when we asked about the expense of the program. The member for Bundamba worked out that it was about \$405,000 for each job that had been created in the past 18 months. It was interesting that the poor director-general had to come in 15 minutes later and say, 'Guess what? No, we have actually lost 27 of those jobs, so it is only 121 jobs'.


How can we honestly have confidence in the minister and the credibility of the figures when they are wildly different? This has been there on display. We cannot get correct figures on job numbers. How can Queenslanders trust that all of these jobs will be there in the future when we cannot even get solid answers and data now? It does not stop there. Wait there is more. The minister and the government are full of wonderful sounding statements such as—

... what we are doing is setting up all of the right programs, initiatives et cetera to create the right environment in which we are going to be able to support start-ups and innovation in our state.

Doesn't that sound great? Then we asked about the methodology of how it was actually going to be managed. We asked how we are going to evaluate the spending of this taxpayers' money. It is a fair question, I say. She stated—

These methods may include in-depth case studies and interviews, surveys of benefiting firms, econometric analysis, and other low-cost experimental techniques that draw on latest private sector approaches.

I say it is a load of waffle.

 **Mr EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (9.40 pm): As my colleague the member for Mount Ommaney has indicated very clearly, the minister struggles with the basic details, with the basic facts and with the basic mathematics. What we saw during her contribution was clearly a complete lack of understanding of small business. We saw example after example after example where she clearly demonstrated a complete lack of understanding of that important sector. She could not say how many

people were employed in small business in Queensland. The minister could not say how many small businesses sat below the payroll tax exemption threshold. It was extraordinary to hear her answer when that issue was being discussed. She stated—

We have the lowest payroll tax threshold in mainland Australia. That is a very positive position to be in.

For the record, Queensland has the highest payroll tax exemption threshold of any mainland state and the lowest overall payroll tax rate. The Minister for Small Business should be aware of these simple facts, but, worryingly, as evidenced through the estimates process, she has no idea.

The minister refused to say whether she supported the federal government's proposed effects test. She was unable to provide a list of red-tape-reduction initiatives, including actions implemented by the government. She was not even aware of the Queensland Chamber of Commerce and Industry's concerns about the establishment of a small business champion. The establishment of that champion raised the obvious question given that the champion is supposed to be fighting for small business. We wonder what this minister does. Is it not her job to fight for small business rather than put another bureaucrat in place to do that? She should be fighting for small businesses across Queensland. Instead she wants to give that job to a bureaucrat. She was not even aware that the peak body, the CCIQ, had indicated its opposition to that. Clearly in her response to that the minister was clueless.

Ms ENOCH: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I take offence at that and I ask the member to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): I will have you withdraw, member for Indooroopilly.

Mr EMERSON: I withdraw. As I said, the evidence was very clear that the minister had no idea about the CCIQ submission—no idea at all. This is the peak body across Queensland and the minister was not even aware of their submission to the government. That is the quality of this minister.

As the member for Mount Ommaney has indicated, she lacks the capacity and the ability. She has not done enough basic homework in terms of that department—not knowing about payroll tax, not knowing how many people are employed in the sector, not even having a view about the federal government's effects test. That is why we have seen report after report after report into this government from organisations like the CCIQ and the CommSec State of the States report saying how this government with its antibusiness policies is failing this state. The CCIQ, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland, stated—

... a string of anti-business decisions from the State Government are hurting investment and jobs.

CCIQ Director of Advocacy Nick Behrens said the government could not ignore this mounting concern from the business community.


CommSec State of the States report, the latest quarterly report, shows Queensland is ranked last on construction work and second last on employment and economic growth. In the July quarter Queensland fell further down the rankings on a range of other indicators including overall economic performance, retail spending and house finance. As the CCIQ put it—

From our perspective the State Government unfortunately has significant form in respect to bypassing consultation to arrive at policy implementation.

There has been a litany of Bills appearing before Parliament that quite simply have not been canvassed with impacted stakeholders.

These are all anti-business and lacked any semblance of meaningful consultation prior to their entry into Parliament.

In conclusion, the Palaszczuk government has not provided the certainty needed to stimulate investment and job growth. Given the performance of this minister, we can understand why business confidence has slumped under the Palaszczuk government.

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (9.45 pm): I rise to speak to the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee's estimates hearing report. I note that those opposite do not actually support the report. They do not want to see any funding given to schools in Queensland. Despite what the member for Broadwater said in her speech, she actually reaffirmed that position by saying, 'We could not agree with the appropriation proposed by the government.'

What part of the appropriation could they not agree with? What would they amend? What would they change? I have just listened to six members of the opposition speak, hoping and praying that they would give an alternative and say what part they wanted to defund and what they wanted to fund differently. They gave zilch, zero, nothing—absolutely nothing—like we have consistently seen from the LNP since they have been sitting on that side of the House.

Miss Barton interjected.

Ms JONES: I take the interjection from the member for Broadwater. Would she like to see us not fund the 67,000 teachers and teacher aides in Queensland schools? Is that the bit that the honourable member would change? Maybe she would like to see us walk away from the record infrastructure spend in schools.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, take your seat, please. Member for Lockyer, you can withdraw that comment; it is unparliamentary.

Mr RICKUSS: I withdraw.

Ms JONES: Always drop to insults when you have to. That is because he does not want to listen to what I have to say. What would they propose to do—walk away from the record funding on infrastructure in Queensland schools? Maybe the member for Broadwater would like to ring the Queensland Catholic Education Commission and tell them that they should not get their share of the \$850 million going to Catholic and independent schools across Queensland.

They have no options. They sit there and grandstand, but when it comes to actually making the tough decisions they fail like they always do. Today we saw that the member for Broadwater was sent packing and hung out to dry because we all know they are trying to roll her.

I thought maybe there had been a change of position from when they had a position opposing the report. Tonight all of a sudden, 'Hang on; we are not going to vote against the report. We just did not want the report to go to parliament. When it goes to parliament we are going to vote for it.' That is a very sensible proposition!

Maybe it is because all of them are already out there spending the money. Maybe that is what has happened. The memo from the honourable member for Broadwater saying that they are not going to support the appropriation for schools in Queensland did not get to her friend the member for Glass House. He is spending the money and has had a lovely picture taken with the cheque spending my money. Andrew Powell is again spending our money. That is the money in the appropriation that they do not want to support in the parliament tonight. Ros Bates, the member for Mudgeeraba, is spending the money that we are giving to state schools. That photo was taken on 8 August.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, you know the standing orders in respect to placards or diagrams.

Ms JONES: I can table them all if you would like.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: If you can, that would be great.

Ms JONES: I table photos of all of the shadow ministers who are spending our money, the appropriation for which they do not want to pass in the parliament tonight.

Tabled paper: Extract, dated 8 August 2016, from the Facebook page of the member for Mudgeeraba, Ms Ros Bates MP, regarding funding for Mudgeeraba State School [[1259](#)].

Tabled paper: Extract, dated 14 August 2016, from the Facebook page of the member for Glass House, Mr Andrew Powell MP, regarding work on new school in Caboolture North East [[1260](#)].

Tabled paper: Extract, dated 8 August 2016, from the Facebook page of the member for Mudgeeraba, Ms Ros Bates MP, regarding funding for Mudgeeraba Creek State School [[1261](#)].

Tabled paper: Extract, dated 17 July 2016, from the Facebook page of the member for Caloundra, Mr Mark McArdle MP, regarding proposed Caloundra South primary school [[1262](#)].

Tabled paper: Extract, dated 8 August 2016, from the Facebook page of the member for Mudgeeraba, Ms Ros Bates MP, regarding funding for Robina State High School [[1263](#)].

Tabled paper: Extract, dated 9 August 2016, from the Facebook page of the member for Chatsworth, Mr Steve Minnikin MP, regarding funding for Camp Hill State Infants and Primary School [[1264](#)].

Tabled paper: Extract, dated 15 June 2016, from the Facebook page of the member for Southport, Mr Rob Molhoek MP, regarding the state budget and funding for Southport Special School [[1265](#)].

Tabled paper: Extract, dated 21 July 2016, from the Facebook page of the member for Glass House, Mr Andrew Powell MP, regarding new state school on Pumicestone Road [[1266](#)].

What a joke! What this highlights is how deeply divided the LNP still are. We saw the member for Clayfield stab his good mate in the back—the member for Southern Downs, who has backed him for years and years and years. He stabbed him in the back. We know that half the team do not even want the member for Clayfield to be the leader. The fact that you cannot agree to a position on the funding of schools just demonstrates—

Mr Rickuss: It's a poor play at the leadership, Katie.

Ms JONES: Mate, have you got any more insults for me?

Mr Rickuss: Remember you lost your seat.

Ms JONES: They don't like it when women talk tough.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): Stop the clock. I call the minister.

Ms JONES: Thank you. What we saw was that they are still deeply divided—

Mr Cramp interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Gaven, you are now warned under standing order 253. Your interjections are not being taken.

Ms JONES: What we saw was that the LNP continue to be deeply divided and they cannot hold a position from breakfast to lunch. What we also heard was the new shadow minister for tourism, the member for Beaudesert, saying that we should broadcast to New South Wales and Victoria how much we are spending to bid to get major events to Queensland.

Ms Trad: Genius!

Ms JONES: I take that interjection—genius! We should tell the competition how much we are proposing. That is a brilliant idea! It is like Kevvy Walters giving his game strategy to Laurie Daley. Both of them are un-Queensland in my opinion.

Mr Pitt: They still wouldn't win.

Ms JONES: No, they still wouldn't win and they are both selling out Queensland. It just shows the naivety of the member. I apologise. I know that he is trying to bat for the honourable Leader of the Opposition, who never fronts up even though he wants the tickets to major events.

What was very clear tonight is that the LNP tried to grandstand on this committee but, when you had half an hour and six members to articulate an alternative appropriation plan, you had nothing. You had nothing. What every Queensland school and every Queensland teacher and every Queensland principal and every Queensland student knows is that you will always play politics with education. That is your history. That is what you stand for. Whether it is the LNP federally or at a state level—even the council are doing it too—that is what the LNP stand for: walking away from funding for schools.

(Time expired)


Report adopted.

Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee

Report

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): The question is—

That the report of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee be adopted.

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (9.51 pm): I rise to speak on the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee's report on the 2016-17 budget estimates process. The committee made one recommendation—that the proposed expenditure be agreed to. It was a pleasure to have the portfolio areas of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services added to our committee remit in February of this year. One of the most important hallmarks of any government is how it delivers the services Queenslanders need and depend on when they are at their most vulnerable. Surely there is no Queenslanders more vulnerable than a child or family in distress.

The committee heard that the total operating expenditure to deliver targeted early intervention, support and recovery services to vulnerable Queensland families will exceed \$1 billion in 2016-17 and will include: two new Family and Child Connect services, new and enhanced domestic and family violence services, perpetrator interventions, integrated response trials, training for front-line professionals and home safety upgrades as part of the continued rollout of reforms under the *Not now, not ever* report—and I acknowledge the new Wellbeing Service recently opened by Minister Fentiman in my electorate at Zillmere and I thank her. It will also include \$45.7 million for intensive family support services across the state to assist families with multiple and complex needs; \$10 million to support the expansion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family support and child protection services; and \$1.8 million to establish the Office of the Child and Family Official Solicitor, to achieve better outcomes for families and children involved in child protection court proceedings.

The continuation of funding over two years for the delivery of parenting support for families through the Triple P program was a key initiative I raised with the minister during the estimates hearing. I have spoken many times in this House about my support for the Triple P program and the hundreds of families that have participated in Triple P sessions I have organised in my own electorate. I believe that positive, encouraging and evidence based programs like this provide practical tools that strengthen families and, in so doing, build resilience in our local communities. Financial inclusion programs, such as the Good Money stores and 20 financial resilience workers included in the budget, do likewise and were also discussed during the hearing.

Combating social isolation experienced by seniors, the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility project business cases, NDIS trial sites, jobs, demand for services, training and workforce requirements and readiness initiatives were raised in committee questioning of Minister O'Rourke. I was pleased to see \$5 million allocated to NDIS readiness initiatives in the budget and I thank the minister for her continued advocacy of people living with disability in my electorate and across Queensland as our communities make the significant transition to the NDIS.

Turning now to Health, in 2016-17, the Queensland Health budget will exceed \$15 billion, with the bulk of this—\$12.6 billion—to go to the 16 hospital and health services to meet growing demand for front-line health services. However, despite pressure from rising demand, the minister outlined for the benefit of the committee that Queensland hospitals are undertaking more surgery and seeing more patients through emergency departments than ever before.


The number of Queenslanders waiting longer than clinically recommended for a specialist outpatient appointment has been slashed from 100,000 when we came to government to fewer than 60,000. The health system is also delivering strong elective surgery performance, with 98 per cent of category 1 and category 3 patients having received their elective surgery within clinically recommended times, as well as 94 per cent of category 2 patients over the last financial year.

These are strong results, and I am proud to be a member of a government that has rebuilt the nursing workforce through new nurse-to-patient ratio legislation, our nurse graduates program and the introduction of nurse navigators; revitalised the Mental Health Act and improved mental health services; and continued to invest in our QAS with additional paramedics, vehicles and kit. My electorate of Nudgee and all of Queensland will be well served by these investments.

I would like to reflect now for a moment on the conduct of the hearing. I have watched, assisted with or participated in estimates hearings for many years. I believe in the estimates process as a genuine opportunity for scrutiny. When ministers come genuinely willing to answer questions about their respective portfolio expenditure and committee members likewise come prepared to ask genuine questions rather than attempt to score cheap political points, the public interest is served. This was not the case for the first half of our hearing.

I appreciate the tremendously emotive nature of child safety. None of us can help but be moved by it and we must all be moved to greater action, but in no other workplace would one colleague, or in this case four, condone yelling at and verbally attacking another in the workplace. This is what occurred. It did not serve vulnerable children and families. It did not serve the public interest. It only served to besmirch us all in this House.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge and thank Ministers Dick, Fentiman and O'Rourke for the genuine willingness they displayed to answer questions related to their portfolios. I would also like to acknowledge the chief executive officers of agencies within the committee's portfolio area, my fellow committee members, Auslan interpreters, Hansard and the committee secretariat. I commend the report to the House.

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (9.56 pm): I rise to comment upon the report before the House. I commence by acknowledging the members of the committee and the chair, the member for Nudgee, Leanne Linard; the secretariat from Ms Deborah Jeffrey, the research director, to all of those who work to make our lives easier in regard to that hearing and other inquiries we conduct; plus shadow ministers who appeared and ministers who appeared before the committee on that day.

I will initially focus on the issue of domestic violence and the relevant minister. In her report Dame Quentin Bryce, in chapter 2 and in particular at 2.3, dealt with the issue of gender as it applies to domestic violence. Without doubt there are many more women than men who are victims of domestic violence. On page 73 it is stated that, between September 2013 and September 2014, 15,656 protection orders were made in favour of women, whilst at the same time there were 4,486 orders made in favour of men.

Further, without doubt, domestic violence has a long reach. On page 77 of the report is a list of psychological and behavioural impacts. There is no question more women suffer from domestic violence, but it is a fact that men are and will be victims. This is recognised in the Bryce report on page 73, where it states—

... domestic and family violence is perpetrated by both genders within a range of intimate and non-intimate relationships.

The minister at estimates and as recorded on page 21 utters the intent of these words where she says—


That is the thing about domestic and family violence: it does not discriminate.

However, though stating the fact its reality escapes the minister. *Hansard* on the recent estimates hearing records the minister rightfully stating the impact of domestic violence on women and children, but she ignores the fact that men are also victims. No-one doubts the impact of domestic violence, but this government is blind to its full reach and ignores the impact on men as victims.

This government has one focus and in doing so ignores the full issue. Governments are elected to act on behalf of all the people and, in this case, all Queenslanders. However, this minister's performance at estimates shows a bias and a neglect of the suffering of men. If one woman is a victim—and that is one too many—then equally if one man is a victim, that is one man too many. It is time this government and this minister acts for all Queenslanders and protects all Queenslanders. She and this government need to acknowledge the fact that domestic violence does not cover one gender alone. The government should stop the politics and do what it is paid to do: act for all equally.

As if that is not bad enough, the saddest effort by this minister at the estimates hearing was in answer to questions about the death of Mason Lee. This minister has failed the basic tenet of her ministerial position: to protect the children who come to the attention of or under the control of her department. Today we saw her position as minister further eroded as she was not endorsed by the Premier when directly asked to do so. The only endorsement she received was when the Premier said she would support all ministers, which occurred some time after the initial question was asked. The minister's performance was to blame the LNP. The minister has been in her role for 18 months. The time for blame is over and the time for obligation and responsibility is well and truly here. I note the Premier could not even state the minister's name in question time today when asked to endorse her in the role as minister. In those circumstances, why should the people of Queensland endorse her?

The performance of the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland brought back the efforts of Chris Cummins when he was a minister in this place. Those of us who remember him note that at one point he oversaw no act of parliament yet had a roomful of advisers, and so it applies with this minister in this role. It is obvious that the minister's role is one of title only with no teeth or impact. North Queensland deserves better than this. Queensland deserves better than this Labor government.

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (10.01 pm): I speak in support of the report that has been tabled on the estimates hearing of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee. The opportunity to scrutinise three fine ministers and senior officials from their departments was one that I welcomed. All of these portfolio areas—Child Safety, Disability Services, Communities, Health, Ambulance Services, Domestic and Family Violence Prevention—are areas where the community rightly demands high standards of service not because they personally may need it but because as a society people recognise that empowering people with disabilities, keeping children safe, promoting and restoring health, and building families based on solid and healthy relationships are all inherently good for our community.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme is the most significant shift in public social policy since the introduction of the universal healthcare schemes in the eighties. Economists have been theorising about such a scheme for many decades. The people I know with a disability just want greater control over their own lives. The scheme offers great hope to people with a disability, but there is no doubt that such a massive change can create challenges for all involved.

I was pleased that the minister was able to outline how the appropriation will be used to manage the rollout of the NDIS and the safeguards that will be in place to support people with disabilities, their families, their carers and the organisations that seek to serve people with a disability. I am so pleased to have Vision Australia, the Queensland Narrating Service, the MND and Me Foundation, Grow and Carers Queensland all based in my electorate. It was a great pleasure recently to take the minister out to visit Vision Australia and the Queensland Narrating Service to discuss their preparations for the NDIS rollout.

I was particularly pleased with the budget initiatives supporting parents who are ageing who support people with a disability as well as those measures aimed at supporting people with disabilities who have highly complex needs due to challenging behaviours. I know many parents in my electorate


who devote their entire lives to caring for their son or daughter with a disability. I know that for all parents who are caring or supporting a son or a daughter with a disability there is a constant and ongoing fear of what will happen in the future. This budget contains measures that help to answer that question.

I would be the first to admit that I am more familiar with the area of health than of child safety. However, it seems to me that the old adage in health that prevention is better than cure certainly applies in both portfolio areas. I was very pleased to hear that both Ministers Fentiman and Dick discuss the focus that their departments have on early intervention and prevention and the measures in the budget to achieve these objectives. There are numerous highlights I could mention, but I just want to focus on a couple.

I was particularly pleased to see that pre-exposure prophylaxis demonstration unit funded. I for one will never forget the young men I cared for in the eighties who were dying of a disease that we now consider to be preventable and treatable. This initiative is another great step in the journey to eradicate HIV and AIDS from the world.

Education is empowerment and I am particularly pleased about the \$1.2 million allocated in the budget to support 100 young women leaving care to access higher education. This is an incredibly important initiative that will have intergenerational impacts. Whilst that program aims to break the cycle of disadvantage, I was pleased to question Minister Fentiman about another program aimed at breaking the cycle of violence. The Walking with Dads program aims to work with perpetrators of domestic violence to help them accept responsibility for their actions and change their behaviours. It is easy to mouth 'get tough on crime' mantras, but it is much harder to use evidence based programs aimed at achieving real change. The minister is to be complimented for this.

I read the statement of reservation from the non-government members. I have to question whether they were in the same room as me. They clearly did not listen to any of the minister's responses. In fact, I am pretty sure they did not read the transcript or they chose not to understand it. The issues they raised all received reasonable and thoughtful responses. Minister Fentiman clearly articulated who has responsibility for child safety in this state and the process for releasing departmental data. Minister Dick and Minister O'Rourke both responded to questions put to them about the recovery of overpayments and the role of the Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland. These ministers demonstrated that they are committed to their portfolio areas, are committed to continuing the Palaszczuk government's work of restoring and improving front-line services, and are listening to the people of Queensland and implementing important programs of immense social and community benefit. I commend this report to the House.

 **Mr CRAMP** (Gaven—LNP) (10.06 pm): I rise today to speak to the budget estimates report of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee. Communities, child safety and domestic and family violence prevention are certainly important areas of concern for all Queenslanders. I know from speaking with many people in my community that any danger or violence towards children, women and men—any family member—is never acceptable under any circumstance. Only last week I had the opportunity to meet with Vicky Rose from the Nerang Neighbourhood Centre to discuss many issues including domestic and family violence. The Nerang Neighbourhood Centre is continuing to work to reduce domestic and family violence in our community through many great initiatives. They are looking forward to receiving the funding for their Community Connect worker that was announced in the budget. It has not happened yet but is certainly something which I would expect should occur as a priority.

It is disappointing that during the estimates hearing Minister Fentiman would not acknowledge or take responsibility for the performance outcomes and failure to meet key performance measures that have occurred under this Labor government. The minister's failure to provide a clear response to the delay in releasing key performance data and the unexplained gaps in her diary demonstrate her absolute disregard for the duty of care she has as the minister responsible for some of our most vulnerable Queenslanders. The minister's lack of concern was exemplified by her avoidance to addressing her actions specifically relating to the Caboolture Child Safety Service Centre which resulted in the death of a young Queenslanders. The non-government members of the committee share a real concern that the minister and the Labor government have no long-term plan to address the growing backlog of child safety investigations and, most importantly, the ongoing and increasing risk to children being left in abusive situations.

Minister O'Rourke, the Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Seniors, continued along the same lines as the previous minister in displaying both her own and the Labor government's lack of forward planning and direction for meeting the needs of people with disabilities and seniors. This was especially apparent when, under questioning, the minister failed to identify any planning of forward


investment beyond the NDIS for the more than 22,000 people living with a disability who are listed on the register of need. These are Queenslanders who are deemed eligible for disability support but no money is available to assist them.

I am very proud to have so many community groups and their hardworking representatives in the Gaven electorate such as Max Vardanega from the Nerang office of Carers Queensland. Max works tirelessly for Gaven electorate locals with disabilities and I know from having the privilege of working with Max that he would welcome any further funding to continue to expand his very valuable contribution to our community. This lack of policy direction and planning of funding by the minister and the Labor government will be of little comfort to Max and all community workers and groups in Gaven who are invested in this area.

The committee's scrutiny of Health Minister Dick highlighted that Labor have learnt nothing from their previous health department bumbles that occurred when they were last in government. Whilst there has fortunately been no maladministration issues such as Labor's now infamous fake Tahitian prince scandal, Labor is again wreaking havoc on hardworking front-line health staff through ongoing payroll issues with the minister's idea of taking responsibility for his department being to allow the director-general to make the decision to let out a \$900,000 contract to a debt collection agency without first advising the minister.

Disappointingly, the minister sought to blame the previous LNP government for the ongoing payroll issues; however, he conveniently overlooked the fact that this is the same payroll system that the director-general was in charge of under the Bligh Labor government when one of the largest pieces of public maladministration occurred in the nation's history. The minister's and director-general's refusal to provide the cost of the fix for the payroll system—over and above the \$1.2 billion price tag we are already aware of—shows their absolute disregard for the Queensland taxpayers who have to foot the bill. Meanwhile, the payroll system continues to make overpayments which, at the time of the estimates hearing, totalled some \$62 million to existing and former staff.

Labor have again proven that they are asleep at the wheel. As noted in the committee's non-government members' statement of reservation, the Palaszczuk Labor government's second budget is best characterised as a budget of raids, writedowns and rip-offs with no long-term cohesive economic plan to create jobs or grow the Queensland economy.


 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (10.10 pm): I rise to contribute to the 2016-17 budget estimates process in relation to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee. We examined the allocated budgets for all of the relevant ministers: the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland and the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services and their respective chief executive officers. I firstly commend all of those relevant departments that do the work in the background to provide the fine detail of how taxpayers' money is spent throughout the Queensland Public Service to ensure that service delivery of the highest level is achieved throughout the state for the people of Queensland. Our committee—and I thank all of those on it—all know the workload that we have. I make special mention of the secretariat and thank them for their outstanding work in the various and broad areas that we cover such as health, domestic violence, communities, disability services and child safety.

There have been numerous attacks by the LNP during estimates and again in this place today on the child safety minister, and those members should hang their heads in shame. Since coming into this place I have learned through mistakes and experience that there is a time to be a politician and a time to be a parliamentarian, and on that I am not afraid to make mistakes. I take exception to those who attempt to apportion blame to the minister for the very tragic loss of young Mason Lee. To my mind it is most disgraceful. To the members opposite who constantly attack the minister on this I say, 'Shame on you! Do not use this place to politicise the death of a child.' It strikes me as a new low, and we should all be doing what we can—our measured best—to ensure that this tragic case is not repeated. I commend the minister for her professional and appropriate response in having this tragic case independently reviewed and employing more staff to adequately resource this vital and important sector. The previous Newman-Nicholls government slashed 200 staff: shame on the LNP!

On a brighter note, I see a significant investment in the combined \$12.9 million to address the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the child protection system through co-leading and facilitating the development of an action plan for these vulnerable children. There is \$10 million to address family support and child protection services and a trial in seven discrete Aboriginal communities of early intervention services. In the disability sector we saw a 10 per cent increase, or \$1.7 billion, and we will need it as we transition into the NDIS. I commend the minister and the department for their enormous amount of work in this area.

Health is an enormous portfolio. We have a record budget of \$15 billion to ensure that the important and vital area of service delivery in our 17 hospital and health services is done appropriately throughout the state of Queensland. Of course we need to see that increase in the Health budget as we have seen the cuts from the federal LNP government. Typical! Some of the great things we have seen delivered is the nurse-to-patient ratio and employing more nurses in this vital space. I also see an increase in funding for the Queensland Ambulance Service of \$39.8 million to ensure that prehospital service delivery is well resourced. As we can see in the estimates process, that funding goes towards recruiting 110 paramedics to provide enhanced roster coverage to better manage increased demand for ambulance services in our state.

There are a number of other key areas such as prehospital thrombolysis to advanced care paramedics to ensure the early recovery of those people having a heart attack out in rural and remote areas of this state so that they get the best possible care, and I commend the minister for that.

 **Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (10.15 pm): Our committee examined three portfolios. I say three portfolios because for the second year in a row we learned that the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland has no public servants, has no legislation to be responsible for and has no budget allocation. To my mind you cannot properly scrutinise a minister's performance and how she is delivering on her responsibilities when there is nothing to measure it against except her word that she is doing her job. We see the title and all the trappings and trimmings that go with it, but ultimately when we get down to transparency and accountability there is nothing to measure that against. I think that is a bit disappointing.

Turning to child safety, I think it is reasonable that non-government members have concerns regarding the blowouts in child safety investigations. There are growing concerns because there is a backlog. The previous member said that we should all work together and no-one should be blamed, but while there are vulnerable children who are not being seen I think it is important that every single member in this place asks the question why and what can be done better. I will harp on because when it suits the Labor government they say, 'It is the LNP's fault that this happened.' Let us be very clear about child safety and what we inherited when we came into government.

We came into a child safety department that was unsustainable. We tripled the budget in 10 years and yet the numbers went up and up and up. I remind the Deputy Premier that we instigated the \$406 million Carmody inquiry and allowed it to continue for 12 months. There were 121 recommendations in the report, and had the recommendations been followed to the letter it should have been an absolute reform. It was this side of the House that put in \$406 million towards that 10-year road map. It is critical that when children are not being seen in the recommended time frames—be it 24 hours, five days or 10 days—there are serious repercussions because there are lives at stake and it is the government which has the responsibility. I think it is vitally important that we ask the questions that we ask. Our shadow minister is being diligent in the way that she is pursuing this because so far the answers are not acceptable.

I raise an issue regarding the debt collection agency about which I will be writing to the minister. The situation of a constituent who came into my office last week is very distressing. To give members a bit of an understanding, in 2010 she had an overpayment. She was contacted about the overpayment and she paid it back. She heard nothing for another year. In 2011 she received a letter stating, 'We think you have been overpaid. Please fill out this form and send it back to us.' She sent back the form and heard not another word for four years. She thought it must have been resolved.

A government member interjected.


Mrs SMITH: Four years went by and she had not heard anything.

A government member interjected.

Mrs SMITH: But she had not heard anything. I am not going to waste my time with you, yappy man. She received another letter in 2016. After 2011 she heard not another word. The letter states—

During our most recent conversation you outlined you would look at the overpayment information—

which she never received. All she is asking is for a fair go to understand, because the amounts coming to her are completely different. It is only fair and reasonable that all of the information is provided to her so that she can see whether she has had an overpayment. Given the information that has been provided so far, it is nothing short of sloppy work.

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (10.20 pm): I rise to speak to the Appropriation Bill and in response to the report of the committee examining the budget estimates for communities, child safety, domestic and family violence, disability services and seniors. What we saw from this year's budget and

estimates process was a dog whistle of calls by both ministers claiming record spending, yet, as we see in Child Safety performance, outcomes and key performance measures under this Labor government have dropped significantly.

I, like most Queenslanders, was disturbed to hear the Minister for Child Safety refuse to accept that the protection of children who have been abused is her responsibility. I was deeply disappointed at the overall lack of accountability and oversight of the child safety portfolio displayed by the minister in her responses to questions. The limited time available to examine the portfolio undermined the process, given the significant level of intervention wielded by the department over families and abused children.


The minister has failed to explain adequately why it took her almost four months to release the March performance data, and most concerning was the fact that this information was not being used to inform forward policy direction. Despite claims by the minister of major policy directions and reforms occurring in meetings with the department in October 2015, under questioning the minister failed to explain gaps in her diary, which was supposed to contain this critical briefing information in response to investigation time blow-outs. When asked specific questions regarding the actions of the minister around being briefed on specific issues relating to the Caboolture Child Safety Service Centre she stated that she had not been briefed on this issue specifically.

What has become clear from the estimates process is that the minister or the government have no plan to address the growing backlog of child safety investigations not being commenced in required time frames and the ongoing risk to children being left in abusive situations. We heard a lot of talk from the minister during estimates but have seen very little action when it comes to child safety resources for front-line workers.

The minister noted on a number of occasions that the protection of children is everyone's business. Yes, protecting children is a role we must all take seriously; however, the minister would know that the issue of protecting children from a statutory perspective relies on the proper resourcing of the child safety department to ensure it can do its job. Not everyone can put new resources on the front line so that vulnerable children can be protected, so that cases can be investigated in a timely manner. It is the minister's job to resource her department to do the job they are legislated to do. Whilst protecting children is indeed everyone's business, the minister must make it her business to resource her department so that it can protect the very children it is there to protect.

I want to address the hearing process for disability services which highlighted a lack of forward planning and direction from the Labor government, which has walked away from disability services policy. People living with a disability in Queensland can expect nothing more from this Labor government after it was revealed a significant lack of forward investment beyond NDIS to address the significant level of unmet need for Queenslanders living with a disability. With more than 22,000 people on the register of need, and growing, the minister was unable to explain what happens to these people over the next three years as they wait in hope of the NDIS eventuating. I express my concern at how the government was willing to override the recommendations of both audit and legal advice to re-fund organisations that had demonstrated serious noncompliance with their contractual obligations for service delivery.

In conclusion, I express my disappointment about this year's estimates process and what it delivered—lots of talk and no real action from a government asleep at the wheel on critical social policy issues.

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.24 pm): I start by again thanking the chair of the committee for her management of the committee's important work. The Palaszczuk government continues to implement the recommendations from the child protection commission of inquiry to ensure we are doing everything we can to keep our children safe, and we are investing a record \$1 billion to support Queensland children and families.

Our renewed focus on early intervention has seen 10,000 families receive help before they come into contact with the child protection system. We have introduced specialist investigation teams and early intervention programs targeted at dads and invested \$2.9 million to improve family engagement services. We have 166 more front-line child safety staff than we did two years ago—after the LNP cut 225 full-time jobs from Child Safety during its term in office.

Frankly, I think the people of Queensland expect more from their opposition. It is, after all, their job to ask questions, to probe the actions of government and to inject their own alternative ideas into the debate. That is not what we saw at estimates. We saw an opposition more interested in shouting and interrupting than in a sensible debate. I was asked approximately 25 questions and experienced approximately 74 interjections—three to one.

Tonight I will specifically address a number of statements made by the opposition in their statement of reservation contained in the report. The opposition expressed concern at limited time available to examine my portfolio. The committee minutes show that the timetable was endorsed unanimously by the committee following a motion moved by the member for Caloundra.


The opposition also claimed in their statement of reservation that there is a gap in my diary reports. Let us be clear: my published diary refers to my regular meetings with the director-general, in the same way as the previous minister for child safety's did. After demanding a copy of the agenda for that meeting, the member for Mudgeeraba was caught out when it was revealed that she already had it in front of her as part of an RTI request that she had continually referred to over the previous couple of weeks.

I have repeatedly stated that I was briefed about quarterly data by my director-general at the 28 October meeting. However, as the member for Mudgeeraba well knows because, like my diary, it too is published online, the quarterly data does not detail any specific child safety service centre and no particular centre was flagged at that meeting. The continued suggestion that I have failed to act on concerns raised at that meeting about resourcing at Caboolture Child Safety Service Centre is simply untrue.

Finally, the opposition try to suggest that the Palaszczuk government is lacking a long-term plan to improve the child safety system. We are three years into a 10-year program of reform that is overhauling the child safety system. There are seven more years of reform ahead, but we have some runs on the board already: \$100 million invested in a new practice framework; \$45 million for intensive family support services; Family and Child Connect services established; and \$150 million for family wellbeing services to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

The community and stakeholders rightly question whether the LNP are walking away from their previous bipartisan support for vital child protection reforms. As per our election commitment, we will continue to honour our bipartisan support for these important child and family reforms. Judging by their behaviour, the LNP appear to be walking away from some of these reforms simply in order to score more political points.

Before resuming my seat, I want to take this opportunity to provide an answer to a question I took on notice earlier today. In relation to that question, I can confirm that all children to whom the cipher refers are currently subject to assessment orders made by the courts as part of active investigations and matters before the Childrens Court and, as such, it is not appropriate that I comment further.

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (10.29 pm): It is my pleasure to rise to speak to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee estimates report. At the outset I thank the member for Nudgee and the member for Caloundra—the chair and deputy chair—the secretariat, the parliamentary staff, departmental HHS staff and the statutory office holders, not all of whom we got to query in the estimates process. I want to thank the committee for allowing me to attend this hearing and to ask questions about Health.

My concerns and the LNP's concerns about the Health portfolio are typified by the minister who just spoke, the member for Waterford, in terms of outsourcing responsibility. Any queries that we on this side ask are somehow interpreted by the government as an attack on front-line staff when that is not the case. We on this side would say that we expect ministers to be able to not outsource responsibility but to be able to answer questions. My concern with the Minister for Health, the member for Woodridge, in this estimates committee was that he was often speaking about a record Health budget but when it comes to the specifics, whether it is a global issue like theatre usage in our hospital systems or specific patient issues such as post-surgery rehabilitation, it is easier for us to go to the HHS and often the CEOs of those HHSs to get specific answers because the minister will say, 'That's not the responsibility of me as the minister from Charlotte Street. The responsibility is with the HHSs.' I want to give the parliament some advice—


Mr Dick interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: We are happy to devolve power, and I take the interjection from the minister, but devolving power does not mean absolving the minister of all responsibility. It means being able to come in here to answer questions about security issues at Ipswich Hospital, and I know the member for Mount Ommaney has spoken to me about this and it was an issue raised by the member for Everton today in question time. That is a concern for nurses at Ipswich Hospital. The minister just says, 'It's up to the HHS to make sure that security is okay.' When it came to a question I asked the minister today about baby Mason, he very carefully worded the answer to say that he is confident that doctors are abiding by their reporting obligations but there was no specific information in answer to the very specific question that I asked, once again absolving himself of any responsibility.

Another classic example in the estimates committee was the Heart of Australia bus—a service that Dr Rolf Gomes, a cardiologist, is providing throughout regional Queensland as seen on *Australian Story* just a few weeks ago. That was funded by the member for Southern Downs as the former health minister but that funding is not happening under this government. When I asked the minister about that, it was, ‘That’s back out to the HHSs and it’s their responsibility.’ We would contend that it is important for ministers, whether it is the child safety minister or the health minister, to be able to come into this place and be able to answer very specific questions. I would be the first to acknowledge that the questions I was asking were about getting the best information—not just to hear about record budgets, not just to hear about how much more is being done or how many more people are being employed. However, it turns out that a \$99 million deficit across the health department means that we would see over 600 job losses in about three different areas—the Metro South HHS, the Wide Bay HHS and the Cairns HHS with 243 positions, 164 positions and 247 positions, and it is this Labor government that is getting rid of those 600 health workers.

When it comes to the Health payroll—and I know that a number of members such as the member for Gaven and the member for Mount Ommaney have mentioned this—it is true that these policy failures are still being reflected out in the electorates, and all members of parliament must be getting these because they are coming to our side as well. If Queensland Health and this minister are going to demand repayments from former staff and workers, they need to be able to detail exactly how the overpayments were made so that they can cross-check against their records. Former workers are not getting much information from the Health payroll support area. One former worker who contacted us recently left Queensland Health in 2010. Some six years after the fact, they received a letter of demand from a collections agency demanding they pay \$900. They have asked for a concise printed pay advice for each fortnight relating to these payments and up to now they have had no reply. On top of this Queensland Health is now demanding nurses pay back money they never even received. We have concerns that this is the Health payroll system brought in by Labor and administered by Labor that is still overpaying \$700,000 each payroll, and that is not good enough for the people of Queensland.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. CJ O’ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland) (10.34 pm): I begin by thanking the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee for its consideration of my 2016-17 budget. I am proud to be an advocate for people with disability, for seniors and for North Queenslanders and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to speak on all three of my portfolio areas as part of the estimates process. I am pleased to say that the Palaszczuk Labor government continues to make significant additional investment into the disability services system in Queensland, with an additional \$156 million in the 2016-17 budget compared to the previous year.


The government is focused on the transition to the NDIS. As the largest disability reform this country has ever seen, we as a major investor are striving to ensure the potential of this life-changing system is introduced as seamlessly as possible into Queensland. It was disappointing that those opposite are concerned at this government’s commitment and focus on the NDIS. It shows a lack of understanding at the true transformational nature of the scheme for all those affected by disability. That is why \$119 million has been earmarked for funding the clients who transition to the NDIS during this year. In addition, this government has provided \$5 million in 2016-17 for readiness activities. An important election commitment of this government was to ensure the essential services of the Accommodation Support and Respite Services continue, and I am extremely pleased that we have kept this election commitment. In fact, we were able to negotiate in the bilateral agreement with the Commonwealth current costs for these services over the next three years as part of Queensland’s in-kind contribution to the NDIS. This ensures that there is no additional cost to Queensland from continuing these services.

The estimates process also allowed me to talk about my role as Minister for Seniors and our commitment to, and investment in, prevention of elder abuse, a one-stop shop to connect seniors with the services that they need as well as an action plan to transition to an age-friendly community. We made an election commitment to establish an advisory task force on the residential transition of ageing Queenslanders to address the important issue of affordable and accessible housing, and I look forward to this task force reporting back to the government at the end of this month on ways we can support older people to maintain control over how and where they live as they age.

Regarding my role as Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland, I am held to the same high standards of accountability as every other minister. I have a ministerial charter letter which clearly outlines what I am responsible for, and I was pleased to have had the opportunity at estimates to talk about this government’s commitment to the north. On 24 June this year I released the Advancing North

Queensland document which outlines five priority areas I am focusing on. After extensive consultation, these areas were identified to grow the northern economy and include roads infrastructure; water security; research and innovation; tourism, trade and investment; and the North Queensland stadium. I will report on these areas every six months and I am looking forward to keeping the House updated on this progress.

As this document and my charter letter make clear, my role is to engage with stakeholders and work collaboratively with relevant ministers to ensure these priorities become a reality, and I make no apologies for working hard to maximise and leverage any opportunities from the federal government that will benefit North Queensland. I have no doubt that lobbying by both myself and my ministerial colleagues was a factor in the decision to locate the NAIF office in Cairns. Now that the NAIF is up and running, I am encouraging prospective proponents in North Queensland to consider how they access this program to support the development of important infrastructure for the north. In closing, I want to thank all those whose hard work has gone into this year's estimates process, including the committee, its secretariat as well as my departmental and ministerial staff.

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (10.38 pm): For the second year in a row I attended the budget estimates for the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland to continue my investigation into exactly what the minister is responsible for in relation to North Queensland. It is worth noting that, for the second year in a row, on Tuesday 19 July this year, despite being listed as a responsible minister in the Service Delivery Statements, the minister did not appear at the estimates hearings for the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. To date, no explanation has been forthcoming to explain why the minister did not attend those estimates hearings.

Again, for the second year in a row, we have been able to establish that the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland is not responsible for any legislation, any budget allocations, or any public servants in her role of representing North Queensland, but the minister has consistently defended this situation by explaining that she is an advocate. However, in terms of the estimates process, for the second year in a row, unlike every other minister in the cabinet, the committee and the parliament have been expected to scrutinise the performance of the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland without any service measures being included in the state budget papers for her role relating to North Queensland.

After these same observations were made last year during the debate on the budget estimates for the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland, it is extraordinary that the Premier has not acted to ensure that a satisfactory level of transparency and accountability is in place for one of her ministers. That demonstrates a contempt of the parliament. It has become clear that the failure of the Premier to ensure that there are satisfactory service area objectives, service area descriptions and service measures in place associated with the responsibilities of the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland is because the Palaszczuk government is covering up her underperformance.


The underperformance of the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland is a serious issue. Sixteen months after being sworn in, this minister has produced one planning document titled *Advancing North Queensland*, which, in fact, pins most of its hopes for the future of North Queensland on the success of the federal LNP government's Northern Australia white paper. Amazingly, most of the priority areas nominated in the *Advancing North Queensland* document rely on federal LNP government initiatives within the Northern Australia white paper framework, including the Northern Australia Roads Program, the Beef Roads Program, the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund and the Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia.

However, in an all-too-familiar acknowledgement of her political and administrative redundancy, the minister confirmed that she is responsible for administering none of the programs, initiatives or budgets associated with any of the five priority areas in the *Advancing North Queensland* document—an admission that North Queenslanders should find outrageous and ridiculous. For example, the priorities in the *Advancing North Queensland* document are roads, water, innovation, tourism and a new stadium for North Queensland, which in and of themselves are uncontroversial. But sadly for Minister O'Rourke, the Palaszczuk government already has ministers for all of those portfolio responsibilities and projects, leaving her with nothing to do.

I was particularly concerned to learn at the estimates committee hearings that the Palaszczuk government has not yet submitted any business cases to the \$5 billion Northern Australia infrastructure fund with a view to ensuring that North Queensland secures its fair share of funding through this unique opportunity to drive infrastructure development throughout the region. Given that the investment guidelines for the Northern Australia infrastructure fund were released in March 2016 and its enabling

legislation went live on 1 July this year, this lack of progress is unforgivable. The Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland has failed to progress initiatives to help North Queensland take full advantage of this unique opportunity.

Given the Premier's repeated assertions that her government is committed to transparency and accountability, the lack of clarity around the role of the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland must be addressed by the Premier. In the absence of any measured performance outcomes or real responsibilities to answer for, the estimates process for this minister is a farce.

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.43 pm): I am delighted to contribute to the debate on the estimates report of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee on the appropriation for the Health and Ambulance Services portfolio for 2016-17. This debate allows me to address some deliberate misrepresentations that the members of the LNP promoted during the estimates hearing and subsequent to the estimates hearing. I want to tackle some of those issues first and foremost in my contribution.

Firstly, the LNP ran its budget estimates strategy around the bloated Queensland Public Service—how many more people we put on in the Public Service. Of course, after the estimates hearing we were then attacked by the shadow minister for health for cutting staff. If cost cutting were an event in the Rio Olympics the Newman-Nicholls government would have been gold medal performers. The member for Clayfield was the cost cutter in chief for Campbell Newman. No-one in Australia has done more to slash and burn public sector employment than the member for Clayfield. No-one has done more in Queensland's history to cut services for Queenslanders from the Health portfolio. That is his record.

When it came to the estimates for the Health portfolio, the members opposite were all over the place. I am proud to say that Queensland Health has added an additional 4,183 full-time-equivalent employees, which is a 5.4 per cent increase. The majority of that increase has been delivered in hospital and health services, which increased full-time equivalents by 3,894. Ninety-three per cent of the increase in staffing has occurred in organisations responsible for front-line service delivery. At the election we made the commitment to rebuild the front line. We are doing that with more doctors, more nurses and more allied health professionals and, as a consequence, we are getting performance. I will say a little bit more about that.

I also want to comment on the issue that the member for Surfers Paradise put forward in his contribution tonight that ministers should answer questions. Ministers are happy to answer questions at estimates hearings if they are asked questions by the opposition. On my calculation, in a hearing that started at 2 pm and finished at 6.45 pm, I was asked precisely three questions by the member for Surfers Paradise. On my calculation, on 17 occasions I intervened in the hearing to provide further information to assist the committee. Ministers are happy to answer questions, but I am not going to be criticised for not answering questions when I am not even asked a question and those members opposite cannot even be bothered.

For the member for Mount Ommaney and the member for Gaven, the estimates committee process was an exercise in taking money under false pretences. They sat there for almost five hours. The member for Mount Ommaney did not ask me or anyone related to the Health portfolio one question. The member for Gaven built himself up over almost five hours and asked one question. That is the contribution that their electors need to know they are making to the health system. In the case of the member for Mount Ommaney, she did not even bother to ask one question, and the member for Gaven asked only one question. He was happy to comment at length on the estimates hearing, but he could not even be bothered to participate in it. This is probably one of the best funded yet laziest oppositions that we have seen in Queensland's history sitting on the other side of the chamber.

I also want to address very briefly the issue of the Health payroll. The dissenting report signed by some of the members opposite also referred to debt collection services aimed at people who were employed by Queensland Health but have since left but who were overpaid when they worked for Queensland Health. It is exactly the same payroll system that existed under the LNP that is being implemented by our Labor government. There are no changes; however, we are trying to make it more efficient. The LNP government did not implement many of the recommendations of the Health payroll royal commission. We are now trying to do that to make the system more efficient. We simply rolled over one of the contracts that the LNP government had to ensure that Queenslanders could appropriately recover money.

In all cases, we offer former staff hardship arrangements. We are always happy to ensure that they are treated fairly and properly—something that they never received from the previous government. They were more likely to be sacked than treated with fairness by those members opposite. Of course, we will continue to roll over a contract that the former LNP government entered into.

We are delivering for Queensland, with a better performance in ED, a better performance in elective surgery—a better performance across the system—and reducing the number of people waiting for an—

(Time expired)


Report adopted.

Transportation and Utilities Committee

Report

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): The question is—

That the report of the Transportation and Utilities Committee be adopted.

 **Mr KING** (Kallangur—ALP) (10.49 pm): I rise to speak to the 21st report tabled by the Transportation and Utilities Committee, this being a report on the Appropriation Bill 2016. The process around setting of times for the hearing involved some negotiation. However, we were able to agree on timing, order and conditions for the examination fairly quickly and I have to say we worked well together during the day.

I would like to thank all committee members—Deputy Chair Rob Molhoek, committee members Chris Whiting, Jason Costigan, Matt McEachan, Linus Power and our proxy member for the day, Duncan Pegg—for their work and the amicable way all issues were resolved. I hope our committee can continue to work together in this way as I think that would be what the people of Queensland would want and expect. I would also like to thank the ministers, their staff, directors-general and their departments and the GOC executives for their participation on the day. We had a number of non-committee members who attended on the day to question the ministers, directors-general and CEOs. I would also like to thank them for their participation. Thanks also to Hansard, attendant staff and also the Transportation and Utilities Committee secretariat for their hard work in preparing for and work on the day: Kate, Rachelle, Julie and Lisa, thank you all very much.


On the day we started with questioning over energy and water supply. Questions were raised around the topics of the deregulation of the South-East Queensland energy market and what impacts this may have on consumers. The answers were around why our government chose to delay deregulation to consult with advocacy groups to better tailor our education campaign so that consumers can make more educated decisions around deregulation instead of just being hit with it. There was also questioning around the merger of Energex and Ergon which, by the way, was an election commitment of the Palaszczuk government, and the energy services businesses. The answers poured more water on the scare campaign the opposition is running in regard to the energy services business and the fact that they are not looking to compete in the existing markets where there is already capacity.

Mr Hart interjected.

Mr KING: If the member had been listening on the day, he would have heard that. I was pleased to see the investment in capital works to connect 100,000 Moreton Bay residents to the South-East Queensland water grid. This capital works program will effectively decommission the Petrie water treatment plant and is cheaper than a necessary upgrade to the plant.

During the Transport and Main Roads examination of the budget, I was particularly pleased to see more flashing school signs being installed in my electorate as well as throughout the state. The Dakabin station options study was also looked at and that will no doubt reinforce what my community knows, and that is that Dakabin station is past its use-by date and needs an upgrade. What did surprise me was a line of questioning from the Auditor-General's report No. 8 of 2015-16 on signalling from the shadow minister for transport which appeared to me to threaten to prejudice the current independent review into the Moreton Bay Rail Link holdups. Once we sorted out the integrity of the review would be intact, the CEO of Queensland Rail informed us there were no signalling issues identified which were large enough to warrant a holdup to the program during the period of the Auditor-General's report in question. However, it was noted from the document provided by the shadow minister that QR signalling engineers had raised concerns with the MAcroLok system in 2014 before construction started and when the LNP were in government. The line of questioning ended very quickly.

The last area of examination went well and I commend the shadow minister for the Commonwealth Games for asking the most relevant questions of the day from the opposition side. As usual there was a fair bit of ideology and political game play carried out by the opposition, as well as a few very tired slogans. However, in general this year went better than the last with fewer speeches instead of questions, fewer imputations and interjections and fewer hypothetical questions. This aside, I still managed to give the opposition members a larger share of the time allotted and largely the process was a bipartisan examination of the Appropriation Bill for the portfolios examined which our committee has agreed should be passed without amendment. Despite the opposition's very political statement of reservation—or should I say statement of rhetoric—this examination provided a satisfactory interrogatory look into the Appropriation Bill. I commend the report to the House.

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (10.54 pm): I rise to speak in regard to the estimates process and particularly the committee report from the Transportation and Utilities Committee. I acknowledge the role that Mr Shane King, member for Kallangur, played. He certainly was very gracious in the amount of time that he allotted to opposition members in pursuit of their line of questioning. I also want to acknowledge the other members of the committee: Mr Jason Costigan, member for Whitsunday; Mr Matt McEachan, member for Redlands; Mr Linus Power, member for Logan; Mr Chris Whiting, member for Murrumba; and our replacement member for the estimates hearing, Mr Duncan Pegg, member for Stretton. I acknowledge the great work of the committee staff, particularly Ms Kate McGuckin, Ms Rachelle Stacey, Ms Lisa Van Der Kley and Ms Julie Fidler, the executive assistant.


On the day we heard from the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply. We also heard from the Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games. It was a jam-packed day. Earlier tonight we heard from the Minister for Health, who suggested that the Labor government of today are doing a sterling job. I think he said something about the opposition should be given the gold medal for its previous performance. The Labor government deserves the gold medal for unbridled borrowing and unbridled spending. The chair of our committee said earlier that he thought that our statement of reservation contained some rhetoric. It is not rhetoric when you keep spending money meant for our kid's future. It is not rhetoric when you start raiding superannuation funds to prop up the budget.

It is a shame that members of the government have such short memories. It was that side of the House that brought in standards for local government across Queensland back in the era of Peter Beattie that said that councils have to balance their budget. They actually introduced the standards—international accounting standards, I must add, and finance standards—for councils across Queensland that insist that the councils balance their budget. I know firsthand from the experience I had at Gold Coast City Council that we were not allowed to deliver a budget to the ratepayers of the city without being able to balance the books. There was a little bit of latitude for a variance. One year we were \$43 million in surplus and another year we were \$12 million over. What we see in this budget that is presented is reckless, irresponsible spending with no eye on the future. They are absolutely burgering the state of Queensland. Under the Beattie government we had the Beattie burger logo. This government is burgering the Queensland state economy.

I want to talk briefly about a number of issues that came up during the committee hearing. One was the response from the minister in respect to the Commonwealth Games. We heard that there has effectively been a shadow bureaucracy put in place in Brisbane to shadow and duplicate the great work that Goldoc are already doing on the Gold Coast. Labor do not understand that you do not keep adding more and more people who do not produce something. I am absolutely in favour of more staff for front-line services, people who actually help people, but I fail to see why we need another 81 bureaucrats in Brisbane simply to shadow the work of Goldoc down on the Gold Coast. I could understand if the minister said we need four or five people in Brisbane to keep an eye on what they are doing and to monitor their activities and provide intelligent and timely reporting to government on how things are progressing and if there were, in a sense, an audit process in place, but 81 more bureaucrats here in the centre of Brisbane to monitor the activities of Goldoc is absolutely ridiculous and this from a government that is saying it is committed to the regions and to growing Queensland.

We heard from Minister Bailey about the wonderful Solar 120 program and how it will create more jobs. It will create installation jobs. We do not make solar panels in Queensland. They are imported from Germany and China. We do not make the battery storage systems that we heard so much about in estimates. I fail to see where these miraculous jobs are coming from apart from a few installation jobs. By the way, those solar cells have a life of 30 years so once they are installed they will not be creating any more jobs.

(Time expired)

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (10.59 pm): Tonight I rise to make a contribution in relation to the budget estimates process in my capacity as a member of the Transportation and Utilities Committee. Before I get into it, I echo the sentiments of my colleagues the chair of our committee and member for Kallangur and the deputy chair and member for Southport by thanking all participants in the hearing that took place on 28 July this year. I thank the ministers who fronted the hearing and also their staff. I thank the DGs, the departmental staff and the statutory office holders who participated, not all of whom partook in the questioning, particularly from the opposition perspective. Last but not least, I acknowledge the dedication and professionalism of the secretariat. Often we get up here and heap praise on the secretariat. We do so with great sincerity because invariably they go beyond the call of duty in getting papers to us and so on. Their dedication, commitment and professionalism is admired and appreciated by all members in this House, regardless of their political persuasions.

I draw the attention of members to some of the responses in the hearing, particularly from the minister in relation to Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply. In the estimates process, from what we could deduct Energy Queensland—the new entity, the new super power; no pun intended—that has been established seemingly has no staff. I am sure that the members for Southport and Redlands would back me up on that. We did not ask if they have robots working there, but there is no staff. The acting CEO of Energy Queensland was unable to provide those answers.

Mr Whiting interjected.

Mr COSTIGAN: Not from our perspective. I hear the interjection from across the chamber. I do not recall hearing the response from Mr Effeney.

I come back to a comment made by the member for Surfers Paradise earlier this evening, that there seems to be a growing trend that I do not think happened in previous parliaments. Maybe I will catch up with some of our predecessors to ask them about it. There is a growing trend whereby ministers outsource responsibility when it comes to feeling the heat and getting grilled at estimates. Basically, they flick the ball to the left or the right, saying, 'Listen, you hit it up, because I'm not interested.' To be blunt, this is of concern. It should be of concern to people who follow the game, because at the end of the day we are here to hold the government to account, to look at where the government spending is going and so forth.

The other thing that seemed to be apparent at this estimates hearing is that the government has no business case whatsoever for the new energy service business. The mum and dad electrical contractors of North Queensland to whom I speak continue to have reservations about it. The minister also seemed to dodge the question in relation to the cost of water coming from the Burdekin Falls Dam to the Ross River Dam. In my role as shadow assistant minister for North Queensland, I would say that the alarming levels of water in the Ross River Dam are a concern for the people of Townsville. Certainly that is a concern for the ratepayers of Townsville. The minister did not seem to have a clue about what was going on in terms of how much the cost would be. In fact, I draw the attention of the House to his response. I asked, 'But do you know how much the cost is?' The minister responded, 'It depends on how much water you need.' Well, der! It is pretty well known—


Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! I ask you to withdraw that. I do not think that is appropriate language.

Mr COSTIGAN: Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank you for your guidance.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask you to withdraw.

Mr COSTIGAN: I do withdraw and I thank you for your guidance. In round figures, it is about \$200,000 a week. That is a concern for the ratepayers of the City of Townsville, yet neither the DG nor the minister had any idea what the cost was. In fact, the minister started spruiking about the various water supply schemes across regional Queensland. He talked about the Burdekin Haughton water supply scheme, but he could not even pronounce the name of the scheme. He referred to it as the 'Burdekin Houghton'. For a while, I thought he was referring to a certain newspaper columnist. I was pleased to pick him up on that. If he is the minister for main roads, heaven help us if we are to build a new bridge across the Haughton River.

(Time expired)

 **Mr WHITING** (Murrumba—ALP) (11.04 pm): I am happy to speak to the report by the Transportation and Utilities Committee. I always appreciate the chance to speak on the issues of appropriation. It is a good process where we can apply scrutiny to the government and also illuminate some of the government's achievements. I start by paying tribute to the Minister for Energy, Minister Mark Bailey. Certainly what we have achieved in terms of renewable energy is quite laudable. The minister said that we are in the process of turning the sunshine state into the solar state. I think that that is one of the greatest achievements so far in the Palaszczuk government.

The list of projects as part of this renewable energy push is truly impressive and I will go over a few of them. The Solar 120 project started as Solar 40, when we promised to deliver 40 megawatts of renewable energy sold off through a reverse auction. That is now Solar 120, because the price of what we can generate has actually gone down by one-third. The Clare Solar Farm will generate 100 megawatts. The Barcardine Solar Farm will generate 25 megawatts. The Lakefield Solar Farm is proposed in Far North Queensland. The Normanton project will generate five megawatts and the Mount Emerald Wind Farm 170 megawatts, which is 15 times the current wind energy capacity in Queensland.

A government member interjected.

Mr WHITING: Indeed, it is very clean energy. That can power a city the size of Mackay and generate indirect and direct economic benefits of \$900 million throughout that region.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr WHITING: We have good news for the member: there are many other projects coming along with development approval: the Whitsunday Solar Farm, the Lilyvale Solar Farm, the Ratch Solar Farm and the Forsayth Wind Farm. We noted the Bulli Creek project, which has the potential to generate 2,000 megawatts. We also noted the QIC and AGL will be forming a consortium in an attempt to own 10 per cent of all the renewable energy capacity within Australia. I think that is most laudable, as well. Obviously we talked about how we want to establish pathways to reach 50 per cent renewable energy generation by 2030. We talked about the one million rooftops project. We are aiming for one million rooftops by 2020 and we are already halfway there. In Queensland, solar rooftops are already the equivalent of the second largest power generator in Queensland. These are really great achievements.

What I get from all of this is that we have come so far. We have come a long way in a short time. We have come a long way from the time when solar panel owners were known as champagne sippers or latte sippers; I forget which it was. We have come so far from a time when there were no large-scale projects—that is, during the three years of the LNP, which was a shame. By 2018, we will be generating 300 to 400 megawatts of solar power.


Something that I thought was really great and that was illuminated by this process was how we are making great projects that are saving Queenslanders on the cost of living. I point out the Fairer Fares package. I congratulate Minister Stirling Hinchliffe for that project, which reduces fares, children with go cards travel free on weekends, jobseekers and asylum seekers get concessions for the first time and regional Queensland fares have been frozen for 18 months. Those are great achievements that we have illuminated through this process. On electricity prices, over the two years of the Palaszczuk Labor government there has been an average increase of just 1.2 per cent compared to the 43 per cent that we saw under the LNP.

I congratulate my fellow members of the committee. In our committee, members outside of shadow ministers asked 13 questions and I congratulate them. Up until that point, in all the other committees committee members outside of shadow ministers asked just 10 questions on these issues. Our committee went all out and the opposition doubled the number of questions that they asked the ministers at the committee hearing. I congratulate them for that. Well done!

I finish by saying that the hearing was a great opportunity to talk about local projects, such as the Rothwell roundabout. That is a great example of how we can all use this process as an opportunity to highlight great projects.

(Time expired)

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Before I call the member for Redlands, I point out that there has been a bit of a trend tonight to refer to ministers by their names. Could I remind members that they need to refer to ministers and all members by their proper titles.

 **Mr McEACHAN** (Redlands—LNP) (11.09 pm): I rise tonight as a member of the Transportation and Utilities Committee to make my contribution to budget estimates report No. 21. I firstly acknowledge my fellow committee colleagues the members for Kallangur, Southport, Murrumba, Logan and Whitsunday. I also make mention of the dedicated committee secretariat, ably led by Kate McGuckin.

There were several aspects to the line of questioning that I would like to comment on. Firstly, it was very disappointing during the estimates process to listen to the Minister for Energy and Water Supply's response to questions from members. The minister was completely unperturbed that Queensland families have missed out on a year of savings due to the deregulation delays and a seeming lack of interest.

The impact of these changes on consumers, given the lack of education and awareness campaigns, is unjustifiable and a direct result of the minister's failure to act. Consumers will be paying more for power as we heard in the estimate hearing comments of director-general Professor Simshauser. I particularly note his comment—

The general range that we have seen in the marketplace is between \$100 and \$400 difference between standing offer tariffs and market offers.

This is a significant figure, especially for those in our community who are struggling to make ends meet. It is a completely unnecessary burden on their household budget. This poorly executed electricity price deregulation has disadvantaged consumers, especially those who have unknowingly been rolled onto these standing offers and are already feeling its effects, resulting in them being out of pocket.

During the estimates process I, like many of my fellow committee members, was again concerned with the minister's lackadaisical and unconcerned attitude towards an education program regarding deregulation. I note the minister's comments in response to the member for Burleigh's question—

... he should give the campaign some time before he casts judgement on it. I know he wants to attack the government over it, and that is fine, but I think you have to give it a little bit more than three weeks or so before you cast judgement on what is going to be a substantial campaign over time.

He continued—


The ability to measure the campaign will only come over time. I think you should give it a fair go and see how it goes.

That sounds pretty reasonable, but the issue with these statements is the complete disregard they show for the impact of these changes on Queenslanders. The minister delayed deregulation for 12 months. As of 21 July, according to his own correspondence raised during estimates, the government was still yet to implement any sort of education program. I certainly appreciate the minister's point that the ability to measure a campaign will only come over time. It is this very point that is most concerning. Campaigns, as the minister acknowledged, take time.

Electricity deregulation took effect on 1 July, at which point, as I noted previously, no campaign had been launched. Even if a campaign had been launched on this date, by the minister's own reckoning, it would have taken several weeks for the campaign to reach consumers. It is unequivocally unacceptable that the minister would allow such significant changes to occur to electricity prices yet leave consumers in the dark about these very changes for almost a month. It would seem the minister has a proclivity to ensure his union mates are ahead of the game before Queensland consumers.

I would also like to highlight another key issue raised during the estimates, that of the Palaszczuk Labor government's flagship entity, Energy Queensland, lacking any staff or indeed a business case for the new energy services business. Of course, what more could we expect from a government that lacks direction or a plan for Queensland.

The people of Queensland deserve better. The Palaszczuk Labor government have clearly demonstrated their inability to manage the Queensland economy as well as showing a complete disregard for the hip pockets of hardworking Queenslanders.

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (11.14 pm): It gives me pleasure to rise tonight to contribute to the estimates committee report debate. It appears that the Labor Party have gone to sleep over there tonight and do not want to talk about this particular subject.

This is the fifth estimates that I have attended. I must say that estimates is not getting any better. The Labor Party has made a complete mockery of estimates. We are looking at hundreds of billions of dollars worth of assets in the energy and water sectors and yet we were given two hours to ask questions of the minister. One hour of that was dedicated to Labor government members asking their Dorothy Dixers and getting their prepared answers back and the minister criticising the former government. He spent all his time criticising the former government when we have people who are very worried indeed about the cost of electricity and they deserve answers to their questions.

I fired off my first question in estimates this year. I got about four words out of my mouth before one of the government members opposite wanted to know where in the SDS my question related. I had not even got to the point of my question before they wanted to protect their minister and ask about the SDS. At that point I said, 'Every question that I have today has a reference to the SDS. Do not bother asking me because I have one.' It kept coming all day.

I want to talk about a couple of issues involving the energy sector because that is what is really concerning the people of Queensland. I refer to the deregulation of energy. This was put in place by the LNP government in 2014 to come to fruition on 1 July 2015. When this Labor government was elected they said that the people of Queensland had not had an education program and they did not

know that deregulation was coming so they delayed it for a year. They did not bother to try to put an education program in place. Instead they delayed the whole process by a year. They blamed the lack of an education program for that.


After the Productivity Commission said that deregulation was actually a good thing for the people of Queensland and it would save them between \$100 and \$400 a year the Labor Party said. 'Let us put deregulation in place. We will set it to commence from 1 July 2016.' Would members not think that when they delayed deregulation for a year because of a lack of education that they would go out and get an education program going and tell the people of Queensland exactly how they are going to benefit.

They did not. They spent \$239,000 on a consultant to come up with an education program. They did not actually put an education plan in until three weeks after deregulation started. We only have one new company that has come into Queensland since deregulation has started. That is because of a lack of effort by this government. They do not care about electricity prices. They do not care that businesses are going broke. They do not care that people cannot afford the cost of living in this state because of the things they have done. They do not care about Queenslanders at all. We saw that at estimates.

I also want to speak about Energy Queensland. We have a \$24½ billion quango that has been amalgamated from Ergon and Energex. Given that this was an election promise by the Labor Party and they have been in power for 18 months we would think that they would have themselves organised. Energy Queensland is in place. It has a website.

If people do a quick google search they will not find Energy Queensland anywhere. It is not unless people know the website address of Energy Queensland that they can look it up. They cannot contact Energy Queensland. They cannot email them. They cannot ring them up. They cannot go and see them. We do not know who they are. There is no business plan for them. There is an amount of savings that could have been had. I will table part of the web page that shows that there are now four chief executives involved in Energy Queensland where there were only two before. How are we actually saving money by this merger when there are four chief executives?

Tabled paper: Extract, undated, from the Energy Queensland website, titled 'Coming together for the future of energy' [\[1267\]](#).

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (11.19 pm): Firstly, I must apologise for not being part of the estimates public hearing process; I was sick. I wish to thank the member for Stretton for filling in for me. No doubt he asked far more intelligent and insightful questions than I would have done.

I thank the committee staff—Kate McGuckin, Rachelle Stacey, Lisa and Julie. I also thank the other members of the committee—the member for Kallangur, the member for Southport, the member for Whitsunday and the member for Murrumba. As I said, they stepped into the breach when I was not there. I also wish to thank the ministers who participated—Minister Bailey and Minister Hinchliffe.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): I ask you to refer to the ministers by their proper titles.

Mr POWER: Certainly. I thank the ministers with their long titles. The committee has prepared the report looking at the budget statement and documents, examined the answers to questions on notice and also the answers given at the public hearing.

Viewing the hearing as an outsider instead of this time as a participant, I was struck by a few things. Firstly, I saw clear evidence that the opposition members of the committee were silenced, given almost no questions. They had a contribution to make but unfortunately they were silent—as I was, sick at home. Secondly, the blow-in special guests had little interest in the program of actually examining the estimates. Instead, they made a few misguided attempts at a media grab that often fell flat. They were asked again and again. We wasted valuable time with these failed media focused stunts. I will give the House an example.

At one point we asked the question: what is the Solar 60 scheme and why has it become the Solar 120 scheme? The minister made the assumption that the question was about how the Palaszczuk government would go about meeting its solar target and proceeded to answer as such. The opposition member raised a point of order—

I thought the question was to explain why the name has been changed ...

The chair interceded—

The question was regarding solar and Solar 120, yes.

The opposition member replied—

I am still trying to understand what the 60 means and what the 120 means.

Minister Bailey said—

I am happy to inform the member ... that 120 refers to 120 megawatts of power produced by large-scale renewable energy ...


Members should be asking questions that are not answerable by any 30-second web search. Before wasting the time of the committee, take 30 seconds to research. The very first line of the Queensland government Solar 120 page reads—

We have committed to supporting up to 120 megawatts of solar power generation in Queensland ...

Even worse was the interminable line of questioning from the member for Burleigh. It resembled one of those surrealist comedy acts. He constantly asked if there was a media campaign about consumer choice. He was quickly assured that there was a \$3.3 million campaign across TV, radio, digital, on the web and through social media. Yet he just could not get it. Again, a quick web search would have revealed that there was the 'Click! Call! Ask!' campaign. If the honourable member had gone to, as the ads advocated, qld.gov.au/electricity/energy-save, he would have learnt all about the campaign and not wasted the committee's time. The 'Click! Call! Ask!' slogan of the campaign could equally be applied to the need to research by those opposite during the estimates process. Please, next year at least google the answers to your questions. You may save yourselves a lot of time and ask more relevant questions.

There were insightful questions about the roads budget. If I had the chance, I would have asked for further details about the more than \$35 million investment in the Mount Lindesay Highway and pushed for even more. I would have been able to get an update on the \$40 million investment on the Waterford-Tamborine Road. However, I have put my questions directly to the minister and I thank him for his time.

The Minister for Transport outlined the Fairer Fares package. For my own area that means a \$2.06 saving on a fare from Browns Plains. I saw that the projections about increased patronage are fairly conservative. I know that every member here is out there advertising the Fairer Fares package, and we will see far more passengers on routes such as the 150, the 560 and on any of the Logan buses and other buses in the TransLink network. I commend the report to the House.

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (11.24 pm): I take this opportunity to thank the committee for its efforts, congratulate the member for Kallangur for his work as chair and acknowledge all members and staff involved. I would like to address the issues raised by the opposition in their statement of reservation—or perhaps regurgitation—a lightweight document devoid of accuracy, research or any understanding of the modern energy market.

The Queensland public elected us and gave us a mandate to keep our assets in public hands and to operate them commercially and efficiently. Part of that mandate was to merge these businesses and to generate savings. Last year, the Treasurer and I directed Energex and Ergon to not appeal the Energy Regulator's revenue determination to lock in price stabilisation. That direction meant that fixed charges reduced for the first time in nine years, and it locked in that price stabilisation after the 43 per cent electricity price increases under Tim Nicholls in Queensland.

New South Wales consumers are now facing double-digit price increases this year due to privatised power companies' legal appeals and gaming the system—exactly what Tim Nicholls wanted and still wants for Queensland. Stabilisation of electricity prices is working in Queensland. The average annual increase for Ergon households has been only 1.2 per cent over the first two years of the Palaszczuk government—below the inflation rate.

I can confirm that the merger of Ergon and Energex into Energy Queensland will save \$562 million over the next five years. This, along with efficiency savings from Powerlink and our generation businesses, will save Queenslanders around \$680 million over the same period. The new Energy Queensland board and interim CEO are establishing organisational structures for the merged entity which are necessary to finalise staffing arrangements during the transition. Opposition criticisms of no staff are simply puerile and juvenile.

It is a matter of public record that the focus of the energy services business will be on new and innovative products and services, creating greater value in solar, batteries and other emerging technologies. It would be irresponsible given the massive change that is about to happen in the energy market for us to do anything else. Those members opposite showed their absolute ignorance of the energy market and the trends that are occurring. It will create more opportunities to meet future demand. Again, all we hear from the LNP is distortions, trying to scare small business owners and bringing public ownership of our power assets into disrepute.


We are already seeing the benefits of deregulation in South-East Queensland with savings of \$100 to \$400 per year for consumers. Experience in other states has shown that savings can only be maximised when consumers are active in the market and regularly shop around and know how to do so. The Newman-Nicholls government did not lay that groundwork. They ignored the concerns of

vulnerable consumers, as evidenced by the concerns of QCOSS, the Queensland Consumers' Association and National Seniors. They ignored them. We work with them to ensure that we piggybacked off the offers that were put into the marketplace.

It is absolutely irrelevant and ridiculous to suggest that you should have a community education campaign before the private market actually put their offers out. What the opposition are actually suggesting is that we should put our campaign out there and, when they go online to compare offers, they will find no offers. It is illogical. It is nonsensical. Those opposite do not listen. They do not understand. They messed energy up for three years. That is why they are on that side of the chamber. They really should have learned their lesson by now. Amazingly, the member for Burleigh did not even realise that the comprehensive campaign across multimedia channels had started more than two weeks before the estimates hearing. He had no idea. His was an extraordinary performance—not exactly someone with their finger on the pulse.

We saw nitpicking over the accelerated works package when in fact 14 of the 21 projects had been accelerated by more than three months. In an amazing performance, we saw the opposition members have a fundamental misunderstanding of cooperative intelligent transport systems. They actually think that the government is investing in technology to directly compete with the likes of Google and BMW—a bizarre contribution from the member for Glass House, who went on to remind us about the horse and buggy era. That was a sage contribution, to the amusement of most of the people in the room. What an amazingly 20th century view! In closing, this government is delivering on stabilising electricity prices, getting ready for the tech revolution coming in battery storage—

(Time expired)

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (11.29 pm): I rise to address another year's estimates hearing and the report tabled by the Transportation and Utilities Committee. I guess the only thing we and Queenslanders learned is that this is another typical Labor budget. I pick up where the minister just left off; I want to start with the so-called Accelerated Works Program. The minister himself has just confirmed that the average acceleration is about three months. In fact, most were accelerated by only about one month and one was, heaven forbid, delivered the same month it was anticipated to be delivered before it was accelerated. I guess when you are asleep at the wheel and you put your foot flat on the pedal the best you can probably achieve is a one-month acceleration. I say well done to the Labor government on accelerating those works programs. I would hate to see what would happen if they were not accelerating them. We would probably be waiting for them for years to come.

I want to pick up also on the fact that, like a true Labor budget, what we see is the spending of taxpayers' dollars on aspects that are being well and truly delivered by the private sector. The first of those was the announcement by the minister that they spent \$300,000 developing an app for learner drivers—an app that the RACQ had already developed—and they are spending \$100,000 to keep that maintained year in, year out. Labor governments have such a great track record when it comes to IT! 'Let's recreate the wheel! Let's recreate an app that the RACQ already has!' It goes even further than that. They want to spend taxpayers' dollars getting our transport infrastructure ready for driverless cars when Google, BMW and Mercedes are spending private dollars getting their vehicles ready to drive on our transport infrastructure. Why we are wasting money on infrastructure—


Mr Bailey: They are two different things.

Mr POWELL: If they are two different things, why did the minister not take the question on notice? Why would he not come clean with the people of Queensland as to exactly how much taxpayers' money he is wasting doing the job of Google, Mercedes and BMW? It went even further than that. The minister did not even know that it was maritime services Queensland that have the contract for pilotage at the port of Brisbane. He had to take that one on notice and cleared it up to the effect that at least we may see some movement in that contract in coming years.

I turn now to the Minister for Transport. Like the Deputy Premier before him, when he was asked to rule out public transport levies as a means of paying for the failed Cross River Rail business case, the minister refused to do so. This is yet another Labor government that is refusing to rule out slugging Queenslanders through levies or through tax increases—this one being to public transport to fund Cross River Rail.

I want to pick up on some of the comments made by the chair. For the first time ever I saw a chair try to prevent a line of questioning on the basis that the government was undertaking an independent review. Crumbs! If that was the case, we probably could not ask any questions at estimates given that this government is reviewing everything that is nailed down and a lot of things that are not. The reality is that had we got to estimates and we were not allowed to ask questions simply because the government was reviewing things, there would not have been anything to ask.

It goes further. I am not sure which committee hearing the chair was at because he claims that the minister refuted what I clearly heard. The minister and the CEO of Queensland Rail disputed what had previously been seen in the media that Queensland Rail did not raise issues regarding the Moreton Bay Rail Link signalling system until late 2015, early 2016. The reason the questioning stopped is that made it abundantly clear that decisions made under the LNP government around this signalling contract were not involved in what has subsequently gone wrong. As we have seen through the RTI documents recently received by the opposition office and as we have seen through the media reports since, what has become abundantly clear is that the minister is caught in a turf war between two of his agencies. They are giving him contrary advice. The reality is that this Palaszczuk Labor government is asleep at the wheel on the Moreton Bay Rail Link, like it is on so many things. All this estimates hearing showed is that this a classic Labor budget.

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (11.34 pm): I also rise to speak to the estimates report of the Transportation and Utilities Committee. I thank the members for Kallangur and Southport, the chair and deputy chair, other members of the committee, the bureaucrats who came to the committee and representatives from Goldoc as well as the Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games.

One of the things we followed up in estimates was the number of people employed in DTESB who are coordinating the Commonwealth Games with Goldoc but are based in Brisbane. The member for Southport raised that earlier in this particular debate. I think 61 was the number, all of whom are going to be in Brisbane. Those on our side of the committee made the point that for a government that has been speaking about regionalising the Public Service for some time, that is of great concern. It does seem like there is a shadow bureaucracy in Brisbane working to supposedly supervise the work of Goldoc. It is of concern to us that none of those people can be based on the Gold Coast. That is something that we certainly expressed about legacy issues that these departments are working on coordinating.


We also raised our concerns regarding other areas such as Cairns and Townsville, where \$1 million is going to be spent just on overlay. The Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games came back to tell us that there are no permanent upgrades happening in Cairns and Townsville. There is \$1 million in contingency if any permanent works are needed. I certainly have concerns that there are no permanent upgrades in Cairns and Townsville and that that \$1 million is for movement around the venues, anti-doping, catering, transport and security. I have concerns—and I think the people of Cairns and Townsville would have those concerns as well—that only \$1 million is being allowed for in relation to the basketball that is going to be held in those areas.

We also raised other issues. I would have thought that the completion timetable for the Carrara Sports Precinct would be something that the minister would be across given that we had a new incoming chair of Goldoc only a few months ago, in May. When I asked the minister about when the Carrara Sports Precinct was due to be finished, it was of great interest to the committee that I was able to table documents obtained under the right to information. I tabled the brief for the incoming chair which says that the Carrara Sports Precinct was due to be finished in October 2016. However, when I asked the minister that very simple question—when is it due to be finished—he said April 2017. With great fanfare earlier in that committee hearing the minister was speaking about Coomera and how the Coomera facility had been opened just that day. In fact, he had been down there to open it with great fanfare. Of course that Coomera facility will now be able to be used by teams who want to prepare. That begs the question as to whether the Carrara precinct would be able to be booked by anyone who wished to from October 2016, which was the original intended completion date. They are not going to be able to do that because it will not be finished until April 2017, and the reason is the CFMEU.

In the middle of their enterprise bargaining negotiations with Hansen Yuncken, who are the contractors, the minister showed no interest—and he expressed it in the committee hearing—in meeting with the CFMEU. Even his predecessor, the member for Ashgrove, had met with the CFMEU in the term of this government. He had no interest in doing so and simply said there would be no cost to the state if there are any construction delays. It just shows that this government is not interested in trying to deal with the CFMEU in any practical way. It is the people of the Gold Coast and the people of Queensland who are going to miss out on potential revenue due to Carrara not being completed until April 2017.

When Queenslanders and Gold Coasters read about the CFMEU—and this has been reported in relation to a court case where it is quite openly announced—holding two-hour stop-work meetings twice a day with no work being done, it is obvious that what they are doing is industrial blackmail. We have seen that in the March quarter Queensland led the way in union disputes with more than double the days lost through union disputes than any other state. In the March quarter union disputes in

Queensland increased over 25 per cent from the previous quarter, up to 14,700 from 11,700. Our concern is that we want some great games delivered at the Gold Coast, similar to the ones we are seeing in terms of athletic prowess and ability in Rio. We are not confident this government can deliver them.

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (11.39 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Appropriation Bill and to respond to the Transportation and Utilities Committee report No. 21 on the budget estimates. I thank the member for Kallangur for his work as the chair of the committee. I also thank the other members of the committee and committee staff for their hard work in preparing this report.

I am very proud to stand in this House as the Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games in the Palaszczuk government. It is a government that has well and truly delivered for Queenslanders. In contrast, we have heard a number of criticisms reflected in the LNP's statement of reservation regurgitated during the debate tonight, and we have heard from the member for Surfers Paradise, the member for Glass House and other speakers opposite. It is notable to reflect that the LNP statement of reservation said that, given the government response to Varghese could be months away, the LNP fails to see the point of bringing the review forward. One would suggest that is not a criticism which has passed the test of time.

The Palaszczuk government is addressing the former LNP government's decline in patronage on public transport through our Fairer Fares package. This package makes fares cheaper for 93 per cent of Queenslanders while simplifying the TransLink zone boundaries from 23 down to eight. Under our package more people will be able to travel further for less. These Fairer Fares reforms are overdue, will encourage greater patronage of public transport and help ease congestion on our roads. Our Fairer Fares package delivers savings for commuters across the entire South-East Queensland public transport network. Under our package kids aged 14 and under travel free; seniors retain the popular One, Two, Free concession; after eight trips every trip is half price; we have extended the off-peak period to help early morning commuters; and we have provided concessions for the first time to jobseekers and asylum seekers.

We are also building infrastructure for the future. The Palaszczuk government values public transport infrastructure and is committed to working with the federal government, local government and private capital to fund it. Premier Palaszczuk led the charge in getting our fair share for Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 2, which will connect Gold Coast Light Rail and our Queensland Rail trains together. This vital piece of infrastructure will be delivered in time for the 2018 Commonwealth Games and makes a huge difference to the transportation task in relation to that event. Construction commenced earlier this month. We will see the station at Helensvale become one of the most advanced public transport interchanges in the nation. This comes combined with the vital duplication of the Gold Coast line from Helensvale to Coomera, providing that missing link and allowing for more services connecting the coast. I should add that under Fairer Fares for the first time ever the entire Gold Coast Light Rail will be a new single zone of travel.

Regional Queensland has not been left behind either, with the Palaszczuk government committing \$2.5 million to encourage more freight onto our rail network by constructing rail sidings at Oakey to benefit our beef sector. Further, we are investing in the lowering of the Toowoomba tunnels to support the movement of even greater amounts of rail freight. We have also dedicated \$100 million to upgrades across the length of the North Coast line.

In relation to the Commonwealth Games, we will deliver the best games ever by ensuring venues are open well in advance of the opening ceremony as well as strengthening governance with the appointment of a new chair and new board members. This has been highlighted by the Commonwealth Games Federation Coordination Commission delivering a strong endorsement of Queensland's planning and preparation for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games. The CGF acknowledged the work that the Queensland government has done with all games partners, including the City of the Gold Coast, to deliver the best Commonwealth Games ever.

GC 2018 is also partnering with TAFE Queensland to ensure that our volunteers are games ready. Up to 15,000 Commonwealth Games volunteers will be trained by TAFE to ensure that we are delivering a strong volunteer base. Volunteers are critical to any major multisport games success, and I know it will be a great opportunity to ensure that our workforce will inherit transferrable skills that will help them in other areas as well. Contrast the Transport and Commonwealth Games planning to that of the former government: they were slashing TMR's budget by over \$1.2 billion; they were bungling the reform of SEQ's bus network; there was no action on stage 2 of Gold Coast Light Rail; and there was a failed tertiary transport concession card system.


The Palaszczuk government is getting on with the job, ensuring a world-class public transport system with investment in infrastructure, fairer public transport fares and ensuring we have the best ever Commonwealth Games.

Report adopted.

Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.

Schedules 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading (Cognate Debate)

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (11.45 pm): I move—


That the bills be now read a third time.

Question put—That the bills be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Bills read a third time.

Long Title (Cognate Debate)


 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (11.45 pm): I move—

That the long titles of the bills be agreed to.

Question put—That the long titles of the bills be agreed to.


Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.46 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Whitsunday Reef Festival

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (11.46 pm): Tonight I would like to acknowledge the wonderful volunteers in my electorate of Whitsunday who every year put their hands up to support the Whitsunday Reef Festival. It is a tremendous festival and it concluded last Sunday. I particularly acknowledge the likes of Margie Murphy, Stacy Harvey, Jasmin Lear and Rebecca Scott just to name a few, because they go well and truly beyond the call of duty in contributing to an outstanding community festival in Airlie Beach—the heart of the reef, the place that I call paradise.

On the opening night of the festival I had the privilege and honour of officially opening the Art Whitsunday Annual Exhibition. It was significant this year too because, as many members would recall, there was a devastating fire in Cannonvale in early April this year and not only were a number of shops destroyed in that blaze but the local art gallery was completely gutted. Members have rallied and they have fought the good fight, and many of them showcased their talents at that exhibition. It was an outstanding success. Well done to president Lyndy Hill and her committee. I am particularly grateful to Kerry Kenyon for the opportunity to not only officially open the exhibition but also take a more active role in supporting the festival as a sponsor this year.

While that was happening there were fireworks on the foreshore. There were plenty of families lining the shores of Pioneer Bay looking out at the islands on a beautiful evening. The Telstra Family Fun Day was one of the key events, but so too was the Rotary Club of Airlie Beach street parade. I was one of the judges this year alongside Margie Murphy and Councillor Jan Clifford. It was an outstanding success for the schools and community groups involved. I particularly acknowledge Cannonvale State School—whose principal, Angie Kelly, was at Parliament House today—and also St Catherine's Catholic School and the Whitsunday Christian College.


The Rotary Club of Airlie Beach deserves special praise also. To president Dave Paddon and his fellow Rotarians I say well done. I would particularly like to salute the man we call 'Mr Microphone' in Airlie Beach, John Powell. He has certainly been an enormous contributor to making Airlie Beach a better place for a long time. It is no secret that he has been battling ill health of late, but is he still there

doing his bit for the local community. I say well done to John Powell, the schools and community groups and also the cruise ship ambassadors participating in the street parade. Judy Dunn and her team of volunteers do a marvellous job in greeting the passengers off the 40-odd cruise liners that drop anchor off Airlie Beach every year. It is a huge boost for local tourism.

The festival concluded last Sunday. On the same day I was out on the water for the Airlie Beach Race Week sounding the horn. It was a record fleet this year, and Don Algie and his team have certainly kicked a goal from kicking it off all those years ago.

It is disappointing that, in nearly 18 months in the job, the Minister for Tourism has only once visited Airlie Beach, which is so important to the tourism industry as part of the Whitsundays. She needs to lift her game. The locals who are passionate about tourism need to know all about it.

Queensland Mining and Engineering Exhibition

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (11.49 pm): Some of the leading names in Australian mining were in Mackay to attend the Queensland Mining and Engineering Exhibition, QME, held from 26 to 28 July. This expo is held in Mackay every two years and showcases the industry's ever-evolving strides in innovation. It showcases the latest equipment, technology and mining services. New technology and methods of production within the mining sector were the main focus throughout the exhibition along with discussions around the future of the coalmining industry globally.


With a strong customer base and distribution networks in the Mackay area, the exhibition presented an opportunity to connect and network with key industry influencers as well as the local community. More than 200 exhibitors from all sectors of expertise, ranging from conveyor belts to the latest in robotic technology and international supply chain efficiencies, showcased their newest developments at exhibition stands.

To kickstart this year's program, Resource Industry Network hosted a safety breakfast featuring guest speaker Craig Hamilton, mental health advocate and ambassador for beyondblue. His discussion focused on the cost to Australian businesses of mental illness in the workplace and what steps can be taken to address it.

International delegates included the Polish ambassador, and 11 representatives from Coal India attended this year's QME. The member for Mirani and I attended a Coal India networking forum hosted by the Mackay Regional Council. There is great potential for our region to work with Coal India, and QME provided a chance to connect with stakeholders and to identify future opportunities.

One of the key events at this year's QME was the thought leadership panel discussion, examining the position of coal locally and internationally. The panel of influencers provided well-informed feedback and compelling discussion on a range of hot industry topics and what is needed to keep coalmining a viable industry. Minister Lynham provided the opening address for the discussion panel, and thought champion of the World Coal Association, Mick Buffier, was a key participant. The event provided an open forum to discuss vital issues and illustrated how a collaborative approach from all industry stakeholders is vital to creating a sustainable and profitable industry. I also thank Minister Bailey for opening QME this year.

Moggill Electorate

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (11.52 pm): Tonight I rise to call on the Palaszczuk Labor government to deliver improved infrastructure and transport services in my electorate of Moggill. The Moggill electorate has long been neglected with respect to the provision of public transport to the suburbs of Karana Downs, Anstead and Mount Crosby. The only accessible bus service to this area runs between the city and the suburbs of Bellbowrie and Moggill. Local residents of the area west of Bellbowrie have no bus service at all and need to travel to Moggill Road to connect with the 444 Moggill-City service. This is clearly not good enough. I call on the Labor government to provide a reliable, direct and regular public transport service for residents of Karana Downs, Anstead and Mount Crosby.

I also call on the Palaszczuk Labor government to provide an additional high school in my electorate, which has 11 primary schools and only one high school. This one high school is located in Kenmore. Hundreds of schoolchildren have to travel to Kenmore every day or, alternatively, enrol at high schools in Ipswich. There is a growing need for an additional school given an increasing population and changing demographics.

I further call on the Palaszczuk Labor government to construct a footbridge at Colleges Crossing. Colleges Crossing is very close to Mount Crosby State School. There is a park on the Ipswich side of Colleges Crossing which the local community like to use, but to get there they have to drive or walk over the road bridge. The park provides facilities for exercise as well as a children's playground, and I join with local families who are concerned for the safety of the children who use it.

My last call is for urgent action to be taken to ease traffic congestion on Moggill Road, particularly through Kenmore. This is a busy arterial road used by thousands of vehicles in their daily commute as the only transport corridor in and out of the Moggill electorate. I am sure that an improved public transport service would greatly reduce the number of private vehicles using the road every day.

Despite the tabling of a petition by me in relation to the residents of Sugarwood, at Bellbowrie, the government has failed to listen to the transport needs of these locals. Local residents are becoming more and more frustrated every day with traffic congestion as they approach the roundabout which links Moggill and Brookfield roads. It can take up to 20 minutes to travel from Our Lady of the Rosary school past the Kenmore State School on the way to the Kenmore roundabout during morning peak hour. Then in the afternoon there is the same crawl from the Centenary Highway through Chapel Hill back to Kenmore. This is just not good enough. Serious consideration needs to be given to improving this traffic flow, as more and more families are moving into the areas of Bellbowrie, Moggill, Anstead, Karana Downs, Mount Crosby, Lake Manchester and beyond.

Given that Labor promised at the last election to deliver an integrated road and public transport plan for the electorate of Moggill, I call upon the Palaszczuk government to provide details of what planning has been undertaken and what services and additional infrastructure will be delivered during its current term of government.

In my remaining time I acknowledge the students, parents, teachers and P&C committees of a number of my local schools. Recently, the Upper Brookfield State School had its 100-year celebrations. That was a terrific event. Also, Moggill State School held its annual Mogganza in the school's 150th year. To Principal Darren Marsh at Moggill State School and everyone else involved in that special event: congratulations on another successful year.

Kallangur Electorate, Community Groups



Mr KING (Kallangur—ALP) (11.55 pm): I rise this evening to make a contribution regarding some great community groups in my electorate of Kallangur and my involvement with them. LinC, an acronym for Love in the Name of Christ, is a group of dedicated volunteers who, among other things, provide a transport service to and from medical and other appointments for the elderly and infirm in our community who cannot otherwise attend these important engagements.

LinC began in Michigan, USA in 1976 as a way to encourage churches to become more engaged with the needy in their communities. The founder, Dr Virgil Gulker, believed that in order for churches to better serve their communities they needed to assess community capacities, to be given a strategy to provide leadership, organisation, training and encouragement and to work together. Unemployment, an ageing population, increasing numbers of single parents and disadvantaged families, combined with a greater demand on state and federal funding in the human services area, underline the need for increased involvement of churches in their local communities. LinC started in Australia in Hornsby, New South Wales in 1991, and in 2015 some 14 affiliates were operating involving over 100 churches.


Our Pine Rivers LinC has been in existence for over 20 years. When chair Steve Howarth, secretary Gail Masters and treasurer Elizabeth Hoffman approached me to be their patron, I was more than honoured and proud to accept. I recently held a morning tea at Norths Leagues & Services Club to thank some of the tireless volunteers who help out this worthy group. I must go on the record and thank Norths Leagues & Services Club, in particular manager Troy Young and service manager Theresa Kiernan, for letting us use the new Barrel n Vine area at the club for this function at no cost.

I have introduced LinC to our local Lions group and my neighbouring MPs for support—I thank the member for Murrumba, Chris Whiting, for his contribution—and I will continue to share their story to try and get them some much needed funding. Good work like they do needs support, and as their patron I will continue to help them get this.

The second group I mention is our local Pine Rivers Meals on Wheels. Since being elected I have helped them out with donations for various fundraisers including their hugely successful annual fete. I have also intended to do a food run with them and recently finally found the time to participate. I must say that I will be back for more. What a great, well-organised group they are. Ian, my co-driver and leader on the day, made the time a lot of fun and he certainly knows how to charm the clients. As

with LinC, they need funding. Not only do I look forward to doing a lot more food runs with them; I will also be looking at what I can do to help with their fundraising efforts in future. I thank Wendy, Les, Jan and Ian for their efforts. I look forward to working with them again soon.


Charleville School of Distance Education

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (11.58 pm): I rise to inform the House of an important milestone achieved in education by the Charleville School of Distance Education and school of the air, which last Saturday celebrated 50 years of distance education. As a primary correspondence student from kindy to year 7, I am passionate about distance education. It was an honour to attend the celebrations and catch up with many distance education families. There were several generations of the McInerney family from Morven, the Bredhauer family from Charleville and the Tully family from Quilpie, to name a few. Many past students, teachers and staff travelled back to Charleville.

In 1966 the Charleville School of the Air commenced transmission on 24 January from the Charleville Flying Doctor base using the RFDS HF radio network. The teacher in charge and sole teacher, Anna Andler, had 44 students on her roll. In 1990 following the Charleville flood, the school moved from the RFDS base to its present site co-located with the Charleville high school. There was much loss caused by the flood—curriculum, learning and teaching materials, furniture, clerical and electrical equipment, including personal losses by staff and a muddy flood mess to clean up. Some of the items from the time capsule that were opened at the celebrations still showed a bit of flood mud. However, they survived. In 2001 the HF radio system was decommissioned after permanent approval to utilise telephone teaching. In 2005 the investigation into the use of technology to enhance on-air lessons continued with the trial of interactive distance learning and a higher speed internet, synchronous learning tool used in conjunction with the telephone for on-air lessons. The education delivery mode has evolved from radio to telephone to web conferencing, which is why reliable and affordable internet services are of such importance to distance education families.

I want to thank all the past and present teachers, particularly current principal Jenny Swadling, staff, children, administrators and parents of the Charleville School of Distance Education and school of the air for their passion and enthusiasm for distance education. I also want to thank Julie Hawker and Jennie Bucknell for authoring a wonderful book about 50 years of the Charleville School of Distance Education and school of the air. I will be donating a copy of this book to the Parliamentary Library so that all members can learn more about distance education and share the heartwarming stories of 50 years of inspiring and of a successful education journey—one that I will continue to champion at every opportunity in the future.

Karawatha District Instrumental Music Concert

 **Mr PEGG** (Stretton—ALP) (12.01 am): I rise to recognise the efforts of all those involved in the Karawatha district concert which recently took place in my local community. This was the second Karawatha district concert, with the first taking place in 2015. This was a significant event in my local area that involved 327 students from a large range of local schools including Calamvale Community College, Kuraby State School, Runcorn Heights State School, Runcorn State School, Runcorn State High School, Acacia Ridge State School, Coopers Plains State School, Algester State School, Sunnybank State School and Salisbury State School. Some of these schools are in the electorate of Sunnybank and I know the member for Sunnybank is a big supporter of the Karawatha district concert as well. Of the students involved, 52 participated in the intermediate strings, 53 in junior strings, 97 in intermediate band and 125 in beginner band. It was fantastic to see so many students and their proud families coming together to hear some wonderful music in Runcorn.


The concert finished with a performance from national champions Brisbane Excelsior Band who gave up their time to deliver a sensational performance and it was certainly something for the young musicians to aspire to. I understand that the Brisbane Excelsior Band is the only brass band to have successfully won four Australian national championship titles and two New Zealand national championships consecutively. It was fantastic to have a band of such quality in our local area that was willing to engage with young people. I do have to declare that I was involved in the instrumental music program myself when I attended a state school, so I know how vital the program is and how important concerts of this type are in assisting with the developing of the musical talents of young people.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr PEGG: I will take that interjection; it was actually the tuba. As I was saying, I do understand how important concerts of this type are in developing the musical talents of young people and I am one of the more than 160,000 students who have participated in Fanfare since it began in 1985 and I know

how important this festival is in encouraging participation, promoting the highest standard of performance and improving the quality of ensembles. I want to congratulate those people who gave up their time to organise this event and particularly recognise Matthew Stutz, Craig Millar, Dean Simmons, John Cosic, Lyndall Faragher, Tony Bryer, Jessica Long, Jamie-Lee Zhang, Catherine Erbacher and Melody Fawsett. It is important also to mention some of the local businesses that supported the event including Vivace Music, Runcorn Realty, Domino's Calamvale and Woolworths at Eight Mile Plains. The fact is that events of this kind cannot happen without the support of volunteers, local businesses and of course the students and their families. To all those involved with the Karawatha district concert, thank you for the music and I look forward to attending the concert again next year.


Sunshine Coast, Infrastructure; Art on Cairncross, Exhibition

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (12.04 am): It was with much pleasure that in the first week of August I and my Sunshine Coast MP colleagues welcomed Tim Nicholls and Deb Frecklington, the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, to the coast to show them firsthand priority projects around our great region. The tour started in the north of the coast at Noosa where the member for Noosa, Glen Elmes, showed us Beckmans Road and the importance of vital infrastructure upgrades in that part of the world. We then continued on to the Sunshine Coast Airport and looked at the possible expansion plans that the council has put forward—plans that can only materialise because of action taken by the LNP when in government, including gifting land, and I acknowledge the then deputy premier who assisted in gifting land to the council free of charge. Rather, he made sure that it got the land free of charge so that the expansion could go forward. On that note, I welcome the decision by the Leader of the Opposition to give the council an assurance that we would act as guarantor should we form government at the next election to its concessional loan from the federal government to make that expansion possible.

We then continued on to look at the Mooloolah River interchange and the diabolical mess that will be created once the Sunshine Coast University Hospital opens in terms of traffic in and around the hospital. I am sorry, but the \$22 million touted by the Labor government is not going to go anywhere near fixing that. We really do need to look at the full Mooloolah River interchange and sort that mess of roads and traffic out. At the university hospital we had an opportunity to tour the hospital and see firsthand how it is progressing—a hospital that is only possible because of the funding that was brought forward by the LNP when in government. Unfortunately under Labor we have seen delays and delays and it is not going to be open when it was foreshadowed to be. We continued on to look at roads around Caloundra, particularly at Nicklin Way and Caloundra Road and eventually ended up at Landsborough Railway Station where we looked at a project that is particularly important to me and my constituents, as I know it is to your constituents, Mr Speaker, and that is the north coast rail duplication. It was fantastic to have Tim and Deb on the coast for 24 hours. It was marvellous to show them our key priority projects and what we are fighting for and to have their commitment to work with us.

I want to briefly mention that it was not the first time I had the leader in the electorate, because on 25 June Tim Nicholls in his capacity as the shadow arts minister joined me in opening an exhibition at my good friend Tony and Jane's gallery Art on Cairncross titled *Mutual Respect* where we showed Rex Backhaus-Smith, Tom McAulay, Michael Nicholas and Rick Everingham—four wonderful senior Queensland artists, artists that I would implore the government to consider showing more and actually purchasing paintings from to really showcase what Queensland art is capable of.

Ipswich, Sinkhole

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (12.07 am): I rise to speak about the recent and now world famous sinkhole that appeared in a backyard in Basin Pocket in Ipswich on Monday, 2 August 2016. People right around the world saw images of an enormous hole around eight metres wide and some six metres deep filled with swirling water and threatening to swallow up Lynn and Ray McKay's much loved Hills Hoist clothesline. The McKays and their neighbours were just going about their routine Monday morning activities when they heard, in the words of Lynn McKay, 'a bang and a sploosh and when I looked over, there was a hole!' I commend the Mayor of Ipswich, Paul Pisasale, Councillor Wayne Wendt and Ipswich City Council officers who acted quickly. I commend engineers and officers from the Department of Natural Resources and Mines from the Abandoned Mines Unit who immediately assessed the situation to ensure the safety of the McKays and nearby residents.

Paramount importance was given to the safety and wellbeing of the McKays, with the Ipswich City Council arranging temporary accommodation for them and their visiting family. On 3 August the Minister for Mines and Natural Resources, Anthony Lynham, and I visited the McKays in their home to


assure them of this government's support and of our commitment to resolve the problem as soon as possible. The street was closed off and the media were out in force when we arrived. Helicopters and light aircraft were hovering above and the McKays had just done a television interview in what was left of their backyard. Not your average day in Coal Street, Basin Pocket!

I extend my thanks to Minister Lynham for his unflinching support of the McKays, both personally and financially, and for the government's forethought in not only maintaining funding of the Abandoned Mine Lands Program but for boosting the funds to \$42 million over five years. By 11 August, just nine days later, the sinkhole was nowhere to be seen. The McKays have a new back fence, newly laid turf and their beloved Hills Hoist fully intact.

Lynn and Ray McKay are people who represent much of what is good about humans and, despite the circumstances, I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know them. I know that I am not the only one. I recall on one of my visits a tomato plant had just been dropped off by Channel 7 reporter who had spent some time there.

While the McKays were visibly shaken—and who would not be—by their ordeal, their enormous courage, patience, pragmatism and good humour won the day as well as the hearts of everyone they met. I would like to acknowledge the McKays' daughter, Tracey O'Neill, who lives north of Toowoomba but who, with her two daughters, Anna, 11, and Ruth, almost nine, immediately came down to stay with Lynn and Ray to lend her support to them both throughout the disaster. The Ipswich electorate has much to offer and people like Lynn and Ray make me its very proud representative.

Wide Bay-Burnett, Housing and Construction Awards

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (12.10 am): I take this opportunity to acknowledge the great trades men and women in the Wide Bay-Burnett region. Dale and Helen Robinson from Gainsite Plumbing in Bundaberg were recently acknowledged in Brisbane at the Master Plumbers Association Awards. Jeff Lennox Builder and Steve Coates Constructions have taken out the major awards at this year's Master Builders Wide Bay Burnett Housing and Construction Awards, held on 6 August at the Beach House Hotel at Hervey Bay. Jeff Lennox Builder received the 2016 Wide Bay Burnett Project of the Year for the Friendly Society Private Hospital Medical Suites, while the Wide Bay Burnett House of the Year went to Steve Coates Constructions. Kleidon Masterbuilt Homes was acknowledged with the Wide Bay Burnett President's Award. I take this opportunity to congratulate all 31 winners, their staff and their subcontractors.

The standard that we saw this year was incredible and demonstrated the outstanding talent and expertise of the construction sector. The Housing and Construction Awards provide an opportunity to recognise this talent and it is great that, after 29 years, they continue to be sought after by the state's top builders and tradespeople.

The winner of this year's Wide Bay Burnett Project of the Year was Jeff Lennox Builder Pty Ltd. Jeff Lennox Builder took on the Friendly Hospital Private Medical Suites project under difficult circumstances and overcame them exceptionally well. Jeff regularly puts out projects in Bundaberg of a high standard. The result is a great facility for the Bundaberg region and, as reported, was the clear winner of this year's Project of the Year Award.


The winner of the House of the Year was Steve Coates. This magnificent home, built by Steve, had views from every living area. It was sheltered by a courtyard and, with its custom-built pool and landscaping, it was certainly a worthy winner. Kleidon Masterbuilt Homes was the winner of this year's president's award. It was a beautiful home and a perfect example of modern family living, with an impressive open-plan living and dining area, stone benchtop and a walk-in pantry—everything that you would want in a modern home.

It was great to see the team at Murchie Constructions also receive recognition for their project in retail facilities. The Refurbishment/Renovation Award was given to Adam Meech Constructions. I know that he has a great team behind him as well.

I want to acknowledge the Display Home Award for up to \$350,000 to JRZ Constructions. The Display Home Award for up to \$400,000 went to Kleidon Masterbuilt Homes and the Display Home Award for up to \$250,000 also went to Kleidon Masterbuilt Homes. Norm Wales Constructions was successful in the construction of the individual homes. I congratulate the Apprentice of the Year, Mitchell Curd. I also give a special mention to the recipient of the Rising Star award, Jesse Zielke, and for the Strong Support and Acknowledgement for Women in Building, Melissa Zielke was a proud and honourable winner. The Commercial Trade Contractor of the Year was Adina Designed Interiors.

I would like to acknowledge the work done by the local peak industry association, the Master Builders Association, in my region and for facilitating these great awards. This association can also help stakeholders with issues ranging from building industry legislative reforms, housing and construction industry trends, skill shortages and skilled migration to apprenticeships, industrial and workplace relations issues, work health and safety and, of course, our housing and construction awards program, which is held annually.

Tarragindi, Proposed Development

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (12.13 am): I rise to bring to the attention of the House a matter of great concern to my local constituents in the suburb of Tarragindi. The matter of concern is the seven-storey development proposal before the Brisbane City Council regarding the privately owned Tarragindi Bowls Club site, which is located at 30 Andrew Avenue, Tarragindi. I have been contacted by many alarmed Tarragindi residents who have expressed their well-founded concerns that a seven-storey development in this location would create a dangerous development precedent for the character, liveability and future development of Tarragindi.

For as long as I have represented this area, both in my capacity as a state member of parliament and a former Brisbane City councillor of nine years, my record has shown that I have always strongly supported maintaining the low-density residential character of Tarragindi and I will continue to stand up for local residents. I would also like to draw the attention of the House to the fact that this development proposal was originally raised in late 2015 but was withdrawn before the council election and has since re-emerged with an increase in density subsequent to the 19 March Brisbane City Council election. That means that a total number of 95 units are proposed on this site.

I join with my local constituents to say that this is totally unacceptable. I support Tarragindi residents who object to it being out of character and far too intense for the surrounding low-density residential zoning under the city plan for four reasons: the development is inconsistent with current low-density zoning for Tarragindi and the height of seven storeys is too extreme; the project will result in a loss of local green space; the sheer bulk and size of the proposed development is excessive and goes against the council's own neighbourhood plan; and there will be significant and unacceptable traffic impacts for the surrounding area from 95 units.

Unfortunately, given statements made to date I am not confident that the Brisbane City Council, via local councillor and senior civic cabinet member Krista Adams, will do the right thing by Tarragindi residents. As a senior councillor with influence, it is the councillor's role to ensure a development outcome consistent with the city plan provisions for Tarragindi. While Lord Mayor Graham Quirk has not commented on the development proposal to date, I am hopeful that the Lord Mayor will play a positive role and back Tarragindi residents on this matter when it comes before him given that he is a former alderman for Tarragindi.

The decision on this proposal will be made by the Brisbane City Council under its own Brisbane City Council City Plan, passed in 2014. Just like other local development proposals across Brisbane, this application is a local government responsibility. Public suggestions made by Councillor Adams otherwise are misleading and disingenuous.

I stand wholeheartedly with my local constituents in calling for the Lord Mayor and Councillor Adams to listen to the Tarragindi community by ensuring that a high-density precedent, whether it be seven storeys, six storeys, five storeys or four storeys, is not set for Tarragindi on this site via a council approval.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 12.16 am (Wednesday).

ATTENDANCE

Bailey, Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Crawford, Cripps, D'Ath, Davis, de Brenni, Dick, Dickson, Donaldson, Elmes, Emerson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gilbert, Gordon, Grace, Harper, Hart, Hinchliffe, Howard, Janetzki, Jones, Katter, Kelly, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Lauga, Leahy, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, Miles, Millar, Miller, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Power, Pyne, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Seeneey, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Trad, Walker, Watts, Weir, Wellington, Whiting, Williams