



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT

Wednesday, 20 May 2015

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WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2015

The Legislative Assembly met at 2.00 pm.

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

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tour



Mr SPEAKER: I welcome to the public gallery students and teachers from the Mudgeeraba Creek State School in the electorate of Mudgeeraba.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Federal Budget, Northern Australia



Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): In my private member's statement yesterday, I said that Queensland's forecast GST revenue will grow by \$6.7 billion to 2018-19 when I should have said that Queensland's forecast revenue including GST will grow by \$6.7 billion to 2018-19.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Anticipation Rule



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I draw attention to standing order 231, which prohibits anticipation of a subject which appears on the *Notice Paper*. I also draw attention to the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill introduced on 1 May 2015, currently before the Finance and Administration Committee, with a report date of 1 June 2015. It has been brought to my attention that provisions of that bill seek to remove legal impediments to the operation of union encouragement clauses in existing awards. Members need to be mindful to not anticipate this subject in the bill in lesser proceedings such as motions, questions and answers to questions.

Former Members of Parliament, Use of Title



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, the issue of former members of this House continuing to use the title member of parliament, MP or the member for the electorate they formerly represented on websites and other publications has been brought to the attention of the Clerk by a number of sources. I understand this issue has arisen following each election since websites, Facebook pages and the like have become popular.

Falsely holding oneself out to be a current member of parliament is a serious issue which may constitute a contempt of parliament. The Clerk has informed me that Parliamentary Service officers have taken action in relation to this matter, initially by contacting the relevant former members by telephone. Subsequently, the Clerk has written to relevant former members to request that they take immediate action to remove any references to their being a member of parliament in general, or specifically the member for their former electorate, from those websites and publications for which they are responsible.

I understand that some former members have reported difficulties in getting third-party providers to action their requests. Parliamentary Service officers will continue to monitor and follow up on this matter. However, I have requested the Clerk to inform me before the end of the next sitting week of any electronic or other publications that continue to falsely hold out that persons are members when they are not members. I will consider at that time whether to send this matter to the Ethics Committee for its consideration.

PETITION

The following honourable member has lodged a paper petition for presentation—

Stuart Drive, Upgrade

Mr Last, from 1,537 petitioners, requesting the House to upgrade Stuart Drive between the Bruce Highway intersection at Cluden and the Bowen Road Bridge to include four lanes and traffic lights at the Mervyn Crossman roundabout with a pedestrian crossing and a second bridge over the Ross River [\[429\]](#).

Petition received.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Jobs

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.05 pm): As I said to the people of Queensland during the election campaign and ever since, Labor is focused on jobs. We know that we inherited a tough task from those opposite. Unemployment now stands at 6.6 per cent, up from 5.5 per cent in March 2012, but we have a plan to address unemployment and create jobs. Already our signature Skilling Queenslanders for Work program is underway. \$240 million will be allocated over four years to help fund projects across the state that will hire youth workers, mature age workers and long-term unemployed workers.

We have also shown that we are determined to work with the private sector to unlock the capital they want to invest in Queensland. We have already provided approvals for major projects like the Pacific View Estate on the Gold Coast, Yeerongpilly Green in Brisbane and the Mount Emerald Wind Farm. We are also in the final stages of the Queens Wharf bidding process, and we have worked with proponents to find a solution for the disposal of capital dredge spoil at the Abbot Point coal terminal, which will help unlock the Galilee Basin.

I also had the pleasure last week of joining executives from Woolworths to help open the Everton Park home improvement centre. This is a \$50 million facility that created 1,000 construction jobs and is expected to create 600 ongoing retail jobs. As I said on the day, that facility will be not only a shopping hub for that local community but also a jobs generator for years to come. We were also able to discuss Woolworths' pledge to invest a further \$100 million on Queensland projects over the next 12 to 18 months. This investment alone will create an extra 2,000 jobs for Queenslanders.

Creating jobs is about having a positive, constructive relationship with the business community so private investment can flow. That is why I was pleased to see Queensland record a 10.7 per cent increase in the Westpac-Melbourne Institute's consumer sentiment index in May—the second highest of any Australian state and higher than the national average of 6.4 per cent. I have made a direct commitment to the business sector to work with them on this front, and I will continue to do that.

Medical Cannabis

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.07 pm): As members of both sides of the House will be aware, the ongoing debate on the benefits or otherwise of medical cannabis is one that is both confronting and controversial, but this is a debate that must be had. It needs to be had because we need to get to the core of the issue: whether medical cannabis can be beneficial to thousands of Queenslanders who suffer from a range of debilitating diseases.

I have recently spoken with the families of children who suffer from conditions such as epilepsy and who are convinced the most effective treatment is medical cannabis oil. I have heard their stories and my government has listened. I defy anyone in this place to look these families in the eye and tell them that we are not at least willing to investigate. I defy anyone in this place to deny these families the opportunity to have their government thoroughly investigate this important issue. That is what these families want—a government that is willing to step up and at the very least investigate. That is why my government has committed to a partnership with the New South Wales government in the establishment of a trial of medical cannabis for treating children with severe drug resistant epilepsy.

At the meeting prior to COAG, I congratulated the Premier of New South Wales on his national leadership on this issue. I have received a significant amount of correspondence from Queensland families urging our government to take part in a clinical trial being run by the New South Wales government. I do not want Queensland to be standing on the sidelines on this issue. I want us to be

an active participant, and I want to add that this is a prime example of how governments from both sides of the political divide can work together on such important issues. We have started discussions with our New South Wales colleagues who have already undertaken initial work in this area.

We do need to be clear that the trial will not involve crude cannabis in plant form but cannabis oil. Public health and safety concerns require appropriate standards of manufacture and research, and clinical trials are needed to prove the safety of any pharmaceutical product. The type and design of the clinical trial will be established by the relevant research bodies, who will also set the inclusion criteria for participants.

In the event of a successful clinical trial, pharmaceutical cannabis preparations will still need to be approved for use under the current regulatory framework by the Commonwealth government's Therapeutic Goods Administration. I am hopeful the trial will give us a better picture of the potential applications of pharmaceutical cannabis preparations, including benefits or risks. Queensland and Victoria will join with New South Wales, and I am hopeful that we will be able to give Queensland children suffering from epilepsy some fresh facts that will emerge from that trial and at the same time some fresh hope.

Registration Fees, Payment

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade) (2.10 pm): In our early efforts to improve front-line services for customers, I am pleased to advise the House that Queensland motorists will soon be able to pay their registration fees for motor vehicles, trailers and motorbikes via direct debit. Queenslanders will have the option to set up automatic payment via direct debit every three, six or 12 months from the end of July 2015 for light vehicles. The aim of this initiative is to make it easier for Queensland families to manage their budgets.

The Palaszczuk government acknowledges that vehicle registration is a household expense, but it makes sense for Queenslanders to be able to roll registration into family budget planning without waiting for six- or 12-month notices. The new three-month payment option is via direct debit only. In addition, as part of this new option, we will reduce the surcharge for six-monthly registration fees. The present surcharge for six-monthly registration is \$34.70 over 12 months but this will decrease to \$25.20, a saving of \$9.50. This reduced surcharge will also apply to the new three-month payment option, meaning Queensland motorists will pay no more in surcharges each year. Queensland boaties can also use direct debit to pay their 12-month vessel registration. While the direct debit facility will roll out in late July, the surcharge reduction begins on 1 July.

We would also encourage motorists to shop around for the best compulsory third-party insurance to further reduce their running costs. The RACQ is supportive of this new facility, saying that quarterly payments were a win for customers—and it is a win. It will put more money in families' pockets and reduce pressure on budgets.

Banana Industry, Biosecurity

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing) (2.12 pm): I would like to further update the House on the results of recent Panama disease testing. As members would be aware, I have previously advised that two properties in North Queensland had been placed under quarantine following the detection of the disease. Following further testing, Biosecurity Queensland on Tuesday announced that officers revoked the quarantine on the Mareeba property after final testing of samples from that farm produced a negative result for Panama disease tropical race 4. Initial results received from this property last month, using a test called PCR, have proven to be a false positive.

Biosecurity Queensland applied a precautionary principle to the initial results when placing the property under quarantine. Since these initial results in early April, DAF has been conducting further surveillance and testing of samples from the property. This has been a complex scientific process, but the final definitive vegetative compatibility group, VCG, test has proven a negative result for the disease. To the department's knowledge, this is the first time there has been evidence of a problem with this particular initial PCR diagnostic test anywhere in the world. This finding has come after extensive investigative work and due diligence by DAF scientists.

In relation to the Mareeba property, while the quarantine has been revoked, we recognise that there are impacts on owners when quarantines are put in place. However, when dealing with exotic diseases we must take a precautionary approach. If Biosecurity Queensland believe that a serious

risk exists, as they did in this case based on the initial positive test results, they must quarantine properties to control the risk of spread. History tells us that it is better to have to revoke a quarantine than to hesitate at the outset and potentially place an entire industry at risk. As a result of these findings, an independent procedural review of all Panama disease diagnostic systems and processes used by Biosecurity Queensland and the University of Queensland will be conducted by Deloitte. This has now commenced and is expected to be completed next month.

In relation to the Tully property, there is absolutely no doubt that the Tully farm diagnosis is positive and confirmed. To date, 12 diagnostic tests—including visual, molecular and biological testing—conducted on a range of samples from the Tully property have all been positive. As such, this property will remain under quarantine, operating with strict harvesting protocols in place.

In relation to both impacted properties, the Queensland government has made a commitment to reimburse the net revenue forgone for the period in which they were unable to trade. These payments represent a sign of good faith by the state government. In line with an offer made in correspondence from Minister Barnaby Joyce, we expect that the Commonwealth will reimburse the state for part of these payments in coming weeks.

My thanks go to the Biosecurity staff who are continuing to work diligently on this response to help protect our state's banana industry. My thanks also go to the industry, particularly to the Australian Banana Growers Council, on this matter. I spoke to the ABGC here in parliament yesterday and briefed them personally on this issue. We will continue to work closely together.

Ambulance Service, Measles

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (2.15 pm): Yesterday I received advice about a Queensland paramedic who was unknowingly infectious with measles while on duty. Measles can be a very serious disease. In fact, the paramedic has been hospitalised and is now in a serious but stable condition, so our thoughts are with him. Obviously, this is also a concern for staff and patients who came into contact with the paramedic, so I would like to update the House on the situation and the actions we are taking.

Public health experts from Queensland Health are now contact tracing people who might be affected. They are also trying to identify where the paramedic became infected. So far, the department has identified four hospitals that the paramedic attended while on duty. They have also identified a number of public locations that the man attended, including Moreton Island. Officers from Queensland Health are working with the hospitals involved and have already made contact with dozens of patients. The business operators on Moreton Island have also been contacted and are working closely with us. We are also working closely with the Queensland Ambulance Service to identify any impact on staff. People who have concerns should call 13HEALTH or speak to their GP.

While this is a potentially serious situation, it is important to put this illness in context. This is only the eighth case of measles reported in Queensland so far this year. I have been advised that so far today there have not been any further cases reported. We encourage all of our health staff to be vaccinated, but it is not currently an employment condition to be fully immunised against preventable diseases like measles. This is something that I am investigating. I have this morning asked my department to examine the feasibility of having all paramedics in the Queensland Ambulance Service vaccinated against measles. At the moment a great number of officers have been vaccinated, but I would like to look at the possibility of having all officers vaccinated. I have also asked the department to examine the prospect of a wider vaccination program among health workers.

There has been an average of 33 cases per year of measles over the last five years. Just four people were reported with measles in 2012, but that was followed by one of the biggest outbreaks in recent times in 2013, when 37 cases were traced back to an international traveller. This latest case should serve as a reminder to all Queenslanders, young and old, to speak with their doctor about their vaccination program to ensure they are vaccinated.

Schoolteachers, Graduates

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (2.18 pm): Today I announce new standards to lift the quality of teaching graduates in Queensland. For the first time, independent, Catholic and state schooling sectors will adopt common standards to assess and evaluate teaching graduates. It ensures a consistent approach to performance assessment and evaluation for preservice teachers during their professional experience wherever they work in the education sector.

The Queensland Professional Experience Reporting Framework was developed with higher education institutions and the Queensland College of Teachers. The framework sets common reporting standards and provides a consistent understanding of the skills and knowledge that graduate teachers must demonstrate during their final preservice placement.

This is an historic agreement that will lift teaching standards in Queensland and help deliver better education outcomes for all of our students. We want to ensure our teaching graduates receive the best possible preparation for the classroom. Independent Schools Queensland, Queensland Catholic Education Commission, the department of education and higher education institutes have signed up to the framework, to begin from 2 September this year.

The drive to ensure we have the best teachers in Queensland classrooms began under the previous Labor government with the Review of Teacher Education and School Induction undertaken by Professor Brian Caldwell and Mr David Sutton in 2010. That led to the formation of the Teacher Education Implementation Taskforce under the leadership of great Queensland educator Lesley Englert. The Palaszczuk government is proud to deliver on this new framework, which will lift education standards in all of our schools well into the future.

Cairns, House Demolition

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Science and Innovation) (2.20 pm): I can advise members that the property in Murray Street, Cairns where eight children tragically lost their lives late last year will be demolished in the first week of June. This announcement follows ongoing close consultation between government agencies, Cairns Regional Council and the Community Healing Project, which has been working on behalf of local residents and, of course, the families involved.

It has been important to ensure that all the stakeholders have been consulted at each stage of this very sensitive process. That has included making sure that there were no legal impediments, and I have been advised that those issues have now been resolved. The Community Healing Project has played an important role throughout what has been a difficult time for the local community. They will continue that consultation with families and the community as well as other stakeholders to help determine the future of the site.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Achievements

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Science and Innovation) (2.21 pm): The Palaszczuk Labor team presented the people of Queensland with a positive policy agenda at the recent election and since forming government we have been out on the ground delivering that agenda. One positive change concerns Queensland government contracts around the provision of social services for non-government organisations, or NGOs. A section known as the 'no-advocacy clause' had been placed into hundreds of NGO contracts by the previous government. In one of the first actions of this government, this clause has been removed.

In opposition and during the election campaign, many members of the non-government sector raised their concerns about this with me and with my colleagues. We have acted to bring in this important change and to give the sector back its voice. That will be the mark of this government: a willingness to engage Queenslanders, listen to their concerns and communicate the way forward.

This change impacts groups right across the state, and that is another feature of this government. We are governing for all of Queensland, not just the south-east corner, which is why I recently was at James Cook University in Cairns for the signing of a 10-year agreement to continue support for the Australian Tropical Herbarium. The Palaszczuk government has committed more than \$5.5 million over 10 years as part of the agreement with JCU, CSIRO and the Australian government's Department of the Environment. This sort of investment is important because we need to harness the opportunities available in science and innovation to ensure Queensland workers have access to new jobs.

To continue to build that capacity, the government has also supported another joint partnership, the new Chair in Digital Economy at the Queensland University of Technology. The chair is the first of its kind in Australia and one of the few positions of this kind in the world. Creating this position is a step towards growing the jobs of the future and shows the state's commitment to embracing digital innovation.

From opening the \$15 million Caggara House social housing development at Mount Gravatt to meeting with the Torres Strait Island Regional Council to discuss housing affordability, from talking to the chippies at Mossman joinery about business opportunities to opening the State Library's *Distant Lines* exhibition commemorating Queenslanders who served in World War I, the first three months have been consistently busy in delivering for Queensland, and the next three years will be more of the same.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Achievements

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (2.23 pm): I rise to speak about the important developments which have taken place since I took on my portfolios. We have had a busy few months. The immediate difference of our government is that we value the important work being done by the community sector. Members opposite removed their right to advocate for the vulnerable when they received government funding. We are keen to hear their good ideas.

We are an open government. We are working hard on policies to tackle the scourge of domestic and family violence and will soon be releasing our government's response to the 140 recommendations in the *Not now, not ever: putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland* report. We have also announced that we will be building two new shelters in Brisbane and Townsville—the first in Queensland for 25 years.

We have also given \$1.5 million in extra funding to DVConnect, which supports women and children experiencing domestic and family violence, on top of the more than \$3 million in annual funding. Our Trust Your Instinct campaign urges people to speak out and call DVConnect if they suspect a friend, a colleague or a loved one is suffering abuse.

It is vital that when people do speak out we have the services to help them. That is why we are delivering on the \$49 million over five years to organisations which help families suffering from domestic and family violence. We are also contributing to the \$30 million national awareness campaign. I might say that it was disappointing to see that that was the only mention of domestic and family violence in the federal budget.

We are a government that believes in helping women, which is why we are developing a strategy for women in Queensland—something that those opposite did not get around to doing. In fact, they did not even have a minister for women. We have also given over \$960,000 over three years to The Pyjama Foundation for its fantastic support program which provides services to children in care. We have launched the Next Step After Care services to support young people leaving care. For the first time we have also provided funds for Community Action for a Multicultural Society workers for Rockhampton and Mount Isa. This also includes a worker to support Muslim women across the state.

In the first six months, the LNP abolished civil unions, cut \$1.9 million from the PCYC and made cuts to Sisters Inside, the Working Women's Service and Family Planning Queensland. In contrast, this Palaszczuk government is getting on with delivering front-line services to our Queensland community.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Achievements

 **Hon. CJ O'ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland) (2.26 pm): It has been just three months since we were elected, but I am pleased to say that we are a government true to our word and we are honouring our election commitments. This is especially true in my portfolios of Disability Services and Seniors and as Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland. The Palaszczuk government is on track to roll out the National Disability Insurance Scheme by July next year. I am excited to say that we will be announcing a launch site as soon as possible, an election commitment that we made.

Ms Davis interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, Minister. Member for Aspley, there is no need for interjections during ministerial statements. It is different during question time. I call the minister.

Mrs O'ROURKE: It is hard to believe that Queensland is the only state in Australia not to have a trial site, because of the previous LNP government, but we are determined to make up for lost time. People with a disability were so low on the LNP's list of priorities that they cut \$108 million out of the disabilities—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members. Minister, you do not need to provoke the opposition. I would ask you to continue.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, I know you are excited. It is early. I call the minister.

Mrs O'ROURKE: By contrast, I am pleased to honour our election commitment to ensure Accommodation Support and Respite Services can continue to provide high-quality services to people with high and complex needs. We have stopped the forced transition of these clients to the private sector and have provided job security for Accommodation Support and Respite Services staff. In three short months, the Palaszczuk government has given more attention to people with disability than the previous government did in three whole years.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members. Minister, I would ask you not to provoke the opposition. I ask you to continue.

Mrs O'ROURKE: This government also values our seniors and we will be delivering on our commitments to them. A very important commitment was that older Queenslanders would have a voice at the cabinet table. As Minister for Seniors, I am making sure that seniors are front and centre when ministers discuss policy that may impact on their lives.

A number of election commitments across North Queensland are also on track to be delivered. Among them, we promised to open in Townsville the government's North Queensland office, which was previously closed by the LNP government, giving the people of the north direct access to—

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, Minister. Member for Hinchinbrook, I do not need your assistance. Allow the minister to continue. I call the minister.

Mrs O'ROURKE: We are delivering on that promise and the office will be up and running shortly. After just first three months, the Palaszczuk government is on track to stimulate economic growth and jobs in North Queensland, we are on track to make seniors a priority and we are on track to help change the lives of people with disability, their families and carers.

Dam Warning Systems, Independent Review

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (2.29 pm): Today I can advise the House that the Inspector-General of Emergency Management has been commissioned to undertake an independent review into the warning systems provided by Seqwater and SunWater to communities downstream of their dams. This follows my request to the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services for the Inspector-General to review current communication systems and ways to improve them.

It is crucial for communities, including irrigators, living and working downstream of dams to receive timely and clear notifications of any controlled dam gate openings. Queenslanders have shown great resilience in dealing with extreme weather, but it is important for communities to be informed and prepared. A record 183 millimetres of rain fell across South-East Queensland during the 1 May flood, which is the highest since records began in 1840. When concerns were—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Nanango, the minister does not need your support. I call the minister.

Mr BAILEY: When concerns were raised by Mid Brisbane River Irrigators about Seqwater's notifications for controlled water releases on 1 May, I called in the CEO and stressed the importance of providing concise, clear and accurate communications to the community and all stakeholders.

Considerable changes have been made to dam operations in recent years, including those that arose from the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry. The Inspector-General's review will focus on Seqwater and SunWater's gated dams, including Wivenhoe and Callide. It will be an open and inclusive process, and I encourage members of parliament and the communities they represent to take part. I table the terms of reference.

Tabled paper: Terms of reference—Review of Seqwater and SunWater warning communications during flood events [\[430\]](#).

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Nanango, I give you notice that if you persist you will be warned under standing order 253A.

Law Week

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (2.32 pm): I rise to thank all those community members, departmental staff and legal professionals who helped recognise Law Week 2015 last week. I also want to say what a pleasure it was to participate in the QPILCH legal walk—and I acknowledge that the shadow minister also participated in that walk last week—recognising the great work of our legal profession in providing pro bono services.

In relation to Law Week 2015, a lot of work went into the variety of public awareness campaigns, educational sessions and community outreach events that occurred. I would like to give a special mention to Whiskey, the trainee drug detection dog, who entertained the whole crowd in the mall and was probably the most popular one there last Friday.

All jokes aside, Law Week is a chance to recognise the contribution that the legal profession makes to the community and the importance services that the Department of Justice and Attorney-General provides to the Queensland public throughout all stages of their lives. I would also like to thank the member for Morayfield for his work in coordinating and driving events to celebrate the local legal profession.

Along with the member for Pumicestone, I was delighted to speak to legal studies students from grades 11 and 12 from Caboolture, Tullawong and Morayfield state high schools—which was hosted by Morayfield State High School—and to hear their questions about how they can pursue a legal career and contribute in their own way. We visited the Youth Justice Service Centre at Morayfield and spoke to the wonderful volunteer staff. We thanked them for the important work they do in helping to turn the lives of kids around. We met with representatives of the local legal profession to recognise the important contribution they make to the local community and to thank long-serving JPs, who do such a great job. Thanks again to the member for Morayfield. I very much enjoyed talking to local stakeholders about restoring integrity in our justice system and delivering our election commitments in the Justice and Attorney-General portfolio. I reiterate my commitment to being an Attorney who is accessible and who consults widely.

Container Deposit Scheme

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (2.34 pm): Like everyone else here I get a lot of letters, but the most memorable item I have received in the mail was a gift bag of rubbish items collected by a community minded couple from Ipswich who routinely collect litter around their neighbourhood during their daily walk: plastic drink bottles, Coke cans and coffee cups. They asked, 'Will Queensland introduce a container deposit scheme to help reduce the number of drink containers like this in our litter system?' Across the community there is significant support for such a scheme. Apart from being unsightly and cluttering up our public spaces and waterways, this rubbish poses devastating risks to marine life and wildlife.

There has never been a public discussion on container deposits in Queensland, and it is high time that there was. I am pleased to report that an advisory group of key stakeholders will be established to assist my department in preparing—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the minister.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, he does not need your assistance. I call the minister.

Dr MILES: Mr Speaker, this is what listening looks like. Research and experience from other jurisdictions is that container deposit schemes have a high impact when it comes to reducing litter. The government will carefully examine what a container deposit scheme in Queensland could look

like and we will gather input from all interested sectors. In addition to the existing schemes in South Australia and the Northern Territory, the New South Wales Liberal coalition government has committed to the introduction of a container deposit scheme by July 2017. This provides us with a valuable opportunity to learn from the research and experience of our southern neighbours. I met recently with Minister Speakman, the new environment minister for New South Wales, and accepted his invitation for Queensland to be part of the work on developing and implementing the New South Wales scheme.

Queensland has the highest rate of litter incidents in Australia—40 per cent higher than the national average—and the most littered items by volume are drink cans and bottles. We can, and must, do better. I look forward to updating the House on this work later next year.

Road Safety, School Artwork Competition

 **Hon. JR MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (2.37 pm): I am delighted to advise the House that, as a result of the road safety forum that the Minister for Road Safety and I conducted earlier this year, today I am announcing a competition for all school students across Queensland. This competition will be in two categories: a poster category for students from prep to grade 3, and another category for students from grades 4 to 6. In the poster category we are going to ask all students to submit their artwork about road safety issues, which will be very interesting.

We are asking all principals in Queensland to come on board with this particular project because we know that (1) there are many students across Queensland who are very good artists and (2) we want schoolchildren across Queensland to learn about road safety at a very young age. We want children across Queensland to learn about issues such as speeding and we want them to know the road rules from a very early age. We also want to encourage children so that if they are driving in a car with their parents or another adult who they think is speeding, they are able to say, 'Have a look at your speedo.' We particularly are concerned that, if parents are using mobiles phones or other gadgets, children can say to mum or dad, 'Please put that mobile phone away. Please stop using that mobile phone.'

The police say to me all the time that they are concerned about the numbers of people using mobile phones while driving. We want to make sure children are saying to their parents in cars, 'Please put your mobile phone away.' We know that there are some people who just cannot help but get on Facebook if they are stuck at a red light. We are saying to the people of Queensland: when you are driving, do not go on Facebook or use your mobile phones. Do not check messages; do not do any of this. All the time we are asking Queenslanders to stay off their mobile phones while driving.

We are particularly asking the young children of Queensland to draw up these posters. We want them to be very serious about it. They can put them on the myPolice blog website. It is a social media campaign. There will be winners announced and prizes given for the best poster in various categories. We believe that this is an artistic and educational way of making sure our children—from prep through to year 6 and older—get the road safety message early.

COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Report

 **Mr HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (2.41 pm): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 13 of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly titled *Review of 2011 committee system reforms*.

Tabled paper: Committee of the Legislative Assembly: Report No. 13—Review of 2011 committee system reforms [\[431\]](#).

The Legislative Assembly introduced the portfolio committee system in 2011 to establish a more vigorous legislative process to scrutinise legislation and achieve better legislative outcomes; create a better informed parliament and individual members and develop best practice policy; improve engagement with the community and stakeholders in a formal process; and enhance parliamentary oversight of the expenditure and activities of the government. The committee's report outlines how those objectives have been met by portfolio committees in the 53rd and 54th parliaments. I commend the report to the House.

MOTION

Use of Electronic Devices in Chamber



Mr HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (2.42 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That this House adopt the following resolution:

- (1) The House permits members' use of electronic devices in the chamber and parliamentary committees, provided that:
 - (a) the use of any device avoids interference with or distraction to other members, either visually or audibly, and does not interfere with proceedings—in particular, phone calls are not permitted and devices should be operated in silent mode;
 - (b) devices are not used to record the proceedings (by either audio or visual means);
 - (c) communication on social media regarding private meetings of parliamentary committees or in camera hearings will be considered a potential breach of privilege; and
 - (d) the use of devices is as unobtrusive as possible and is directly related to members' parliamentary duties; and
- (2) The House notes that:
 - (a) communication via electronic devices, whether in the chamber or not, is unlikely to be covered by parliamentary privilege; and
 - (b) reflections on the chair made by members on social media may be treated as a contempt, the same as any such reflections made inside or outside the chamber.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Report



Mr PEARCE (Mirani—ALP) (2.44 pm): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 2 of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee titled *Subordinate legislation tabled between 15 October 2014 and 5 May 2015*. The subordinate legislation examined has disallowance dates of 20 May, 3 June, 17 July and 16 September 2015. I commend the report to the House.

Tabled paper: Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee: Report No. 2—Subordinate legislation tabled between 15 October 2014 and 5 May 2015 [432].

NOTICE OF MOTION

Public Servants, Privacy



Mr WALKER (Mansfield—LNP) (2.45 pm): I give notice that I will move—

That this House:

Recognises public servants' right to privacy and directs the Premier and all ministers to ensure no details of any public servant, including their name, position and contact, are ever provided to a union without the express written consent of the employee.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order in relation to the private member's motion given notice of by the member for Mansfield. I have concerns that it offends your earlier statement to the House in relation to standing order 231, which relates to anticipation of debate. The motion that has been foreshadowed relates directly to questions of how this information might be provided in different circumstances, and that relates specifically to clause 32 of the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Lockyer, I do not need your assistance. I am listening to the point of order.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Mr Speaker, while standing order 231 does have a cognisance of the ability for matters to be discussed and not offend the issue of anticipation where those matters are not going to be debated in a reasonable time frame, I draw to your attention the fact that the timetable for that bill is that the committee will report back to the parliament in time such that there is potential for the bill to be debated at our next sitting. So I would suggest to you, Mr Speaker, that this is something you may wish to consider and make a ruling upon in terms of whether this motion is in order.

Mr STEVENS: Under standing order 249(2), I rise to speak to the point of order raised by the Leader of the House in relation to the motion given notice of in the House. The proposed motion is quite clearly totally about privacy issues. I think it is incumbent upon this House to hear legitimate argument and debate about the privacy of Queensland public servants.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, I do not need your assistance.

Mr STEVENS: Mr Speaker, we understand very clearly that there will be restrictions under the rule of anticipation in relation to those matters, but the debate that we on this side of the House will be carrying on will be clearly about privacy issues.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: In relation to the point raised by the Leader of Opposition Business, the notice of motion specifically refers to the issue of whether such information is provided without the express written consent of the employee. Clause 32 of the bill before the House is specifically in relation to written consent.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Leader of the House. I do not need to take any more advice. I will consider these matters and return to the chamber later this afternoon with a ruling.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Elective Surgery Wait-Time Guarantee

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.48 pm): Last evening this parliament took a very significant step to ensure and protect the rights of patients in Queensland to have their surgery done on time once they have been clinically recommended to do so by doctors in this state.

The most significant issue is that this was Australia's first ever patient wait-time surgery guarantee based on a very successful model implemented in Denmark and Sweden which had bipartisan support which now not only applies to the guarantee for surgery for patients but also specialist outpatient appointments and diagnostics. We have a government which was not elected with a mandate to throw out Australia's first surgery wait-time guarantee. This government did not have a mandate and I do not believe the people of Queensland voted at the 31 January state election to throw out the surgery guarantee for patients in Queensland.

Last night we saw this parliament stand up for patients in this state to ensure that the very fine work which has been done by our clinicians in reducing surgical waiting lists from 6,485 down to 73 over a two-year-and-10-month period was going to be protected and enshrined by way of guarantee in the future. The real question here is this: is this government now prepared to adopt the will of this parliament? Is this government now prepared to listen to the will of this parliament as enunciated by representatives here last night on behalf of the people of Queensland?

We have a Premier who came to government promising a whole new style of delivery of government in Queensland. This Premier promised to be more consultative. This Premier promised to listen to the people of Queensland. This Premier promised to reflect upon the fact that this parliament was a hung parliament and her government was a minority government. What did we see last night? We saw a very clear intention from this Premier and from this minister towards a creeping arrogance and absolute repudiation of the will of the people of Queensland as enunciated by resolution of this parliament. You cannot have it both ways. You cannot on the one hand promise, as the Premier has done, to bring a new style of consultation and reflection upon the way this parliament operates, to be cognisant of its vote, to be cognisant of its voice and then completely and absolutely thumb your nose at what the parliament resolves. The Premier is not able to have it both ways.

Last night this parliament expressed a very clear view. The Premier has an obligation to ensure that that view is carried through by the actions of her minister and by the actions of this government. It is about the patients. This is about ensuring that patients get their surgery on time. This is about ensuring that the system of health care continues to be improved in Queensland. Indeed, this government has no plans for health care in Queensland. Indeed, in the minister's charter letter, which was only signed off by the Premier yesterday three months after coming into government—no plan for government, no plan for her ministers, three months after coming into government—there was no mention whatsoever of waiting lists and reducing waiting lists. It was not even a priority in that letter. Again, the targets that those opposite are setting themselves are less than what was being achieved by clinicians in Queensland prior to the implementation of the wait-time guarantee.

Elective Surgery Wait-Time Guarantee

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (2.52 pm): Waiting lists are about more than just surgery. They are about more than just surgery, and the vote last night was the vote of what happens in a hung parliament, where no party has a majority.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DICK: Let us be clear about its impact. The member for Southern Downs, the opposition leader, is a 26-year veteran of this House and he knows that that vote last night is not binding. It is an opinion of this House—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DICK: It is an opinion of this House.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, the Leader of the Opposition was listened to in silence. I would ask you to listen to the minister in silence.

Mr DICK: But what we will do is we will talk to the crossbenchers about their concerns because what we know about the so-called wait-time guarantee—the wait-time gimmick—is that it ignored the 100,000 people who were waiting for an outpatient appointment. It was a system that skewed resources to surgery and ignored the 100,000 people waiting—left in the waiting room by the Leader of the Opposition. I will develop and deliver a health system for the many, not the few. Those members opposite want to worry about 290 people; I want to worry about the 200,000 waiting for outpatient appointments and ensure—

Mr McArdle interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, one moment. Member for Caloundra, the minister has the call.

Mr DICK: I want to ensure that we capture the entire patient journey. In the Cairns health and hospital service, as at 1 April 9,000 people were waiting beyond the clinically recommended time for treatment. At Caloundra Hospital, 248.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, Minister. Member for Lockyer, the minister has the call.

Mr DICK: Thank you, Mr Speaker. At Lady Cilento 4,248 children have been waiting beyond the clinically recommended time. At Mount Isa Base Hospital the number is 297 and at Logan Hospital 10,873 patients have been waiting beyond the clinically recommended time. The members opposite may wish to abandon those people—I will not. I will not abandon those people who need to be treated within the clinically recommended time.

So we are cognisant of the resolution of the House yesterday and we will work with hospital and health services, we will work with leaders and we will work with clinicians like I did at our round table on 29 April where we sat down with 30 leaders to work out appropriate targets for everyone needing treatment in public hospitals. That work will go on, and that is the assurance I give this House. We will develop appropriate targets for everyone going into public health, but what we will not do, when the Leader of the Opposition talks about plans, is we will not cut staff from Health. We will not cut the 4,820 people the opposition leader cut when he was the health minister. We will not cut the 1,800 midwives and nurses. We will deliver 400 new nurses and 4,000 new nursing graduate places. We will rebuild health and make it a better place for Queenslanders.

Elective Surgery Wait-Time Guarantee

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (2.56 pm): I have been in this chamber now for 11 years and I have never heard such rubbish in my life as I heard from the Minister for Health just then—the arrogance of this man to stand in this House and thumb his nose at the people who sit in this House, to thumb his nose at the people of Queensland. We had a full debate last night—

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Caloundra, I ask you to refer to the member under the proper protocols.

Mr McARDLE: We had a full debate in this House last night and both sides had the opportunity to put their argument succinctly and garner support. At the end of the day, 88 members cast their vote. Forty-five members said, 'Yes, put in place the elective surgery guarantee on time.' The health

minister is simply making a mockery of this House by his ridiculous statement that he has made in the chamber today. He knows quite clearly that of course we cannot bind the government legally, but we bind it morally. We bind it morally to do the right thing. We bind it morally to do the right thing, and he talks about forgetting about people! When we came to power we had—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the member.

Mr McARDLE: When we came to power, there were 232,000 people on the outpatient waiting list—232,000 people, a legacy of the Labor government—and there were 6,500-odd people waiting for elective surgery.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. Deputy Premier, please do not provoke the member for Caloundra. I call the member for Caloundra.

Mr McARDLE: I can assure you she was not, Mr Speaker. But I make the point that the health minister tries to stand in this House and take the high moral ground. The Labor Party has no moral ground when it comes to health. It has no moral ground in relation to waiting lists and took no action to rectify the problem. I say to the Premier: will she go back to Inala—

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Caloundra, through the chair.

Mr McARDLE: Will the Premier go back to Inala and when her constituents ask, 'Can I be guaranteed my surgery on time?', will she say, 'No' to the people of Inala? I say to the health minister: when he goes back to Woodridge, will he say, 'No' to the people of Woodridge?

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Caloundra, please, through the chair.

Mr McARDLE: Will the minister say, 'No' to the people of Woodridge when they ask him if he can guarantee surgery on time? Will the health minister say no? To the 41 members who voted no last night, will you go back to your electorates and will you say to your constituents, 'No, I will not guarantee elective surgery on time'?

The Labor Party has no plan. It did not have a plan year in, year out and it still has no plan today. I ask the Premier to stand in this chamber today and commit to the moral authority of this parliament to put in place an elective surgery guarantee. I ask her to stand now and say—

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Caloundra—Premier, Deputy Premier, please—if the comments are through the chair, it would be better.

Mr McARDLE: Mr Speaker, I ask the Premier to stand in the House now and abide by the moral authority of the vote taken last night and say to the people of Queensland, 'I will put in place an elective surgery guarantee now.'

King, Mr G

 **Mr PYNE** (Cairns—ALP) (3.00 pm): As I said in my first speech, people with a disability want equality of opportunity. I thank the Clerk of the Parliament for providing me with appropriate accommodation nearby. I also thank my family, friends, members of the Cairns community, my parliamentary colleagues and all Queenslanders who have offered their support and well wishes.

However, there are those detractors out there who still feel the need to throw in their two cents worth as they attempt to remedy their own relevance deprivation syndrome. I am, of course, talking about the former member for Cairns, Gavin King. Gavin King was wrong when he wrote about my political future and wrong when he wrote about where the Treasurer parked his car. Gavin King has apologised for none of those public statements that have proved to be false. Yet those opposite continue to support him.

Yesterday, Gavin King repeated the trend. The former member for Cairns posted insensitive comments on Facebook yesterday. He wrote—

Not really sure the current Member for Cairns knows much about preventative health or is an advocate for the many benefits of running and walking.

I believe that politicians should be able to withstand appropriate and constructive criticism. I would welcome any constructive criticism from the former member for Cairns if he is ever able to offer it. But cheap one-liners seem to be all that Gavin King is capable of. I call on the former member for Cairns who is, as far as I know, still a member of the LNP to apologise and for those opposite to call out his insensitive statements for what they are.

I also call on the Leader of the Opposition, who tried to use Mr King's false report about my political future to whip up a media storm, to publicly reprimand Gavin King for his outrageous statements. During the election campaign the Leader of the Opposition stood side by side with Gavin King. During the election campaign the Deputy Leader of the Opposition stood side by side with Gavin King. During the election campaign the shadow minister for infrastructure, planning, small business, employment and trade stood side by side with Gavin King. Right now, Gavin King remains the LNP's dirt digger in chief in Cairns.

I call on Gavin King to apologise. I call on those opposite to reprimand Gavin King and, on behalf of the LNP, apologise for his insensitive statements.

Sunshine Coast Public University Hospital

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (3.02 pm): I rise to respond to the outrageous claims made yesterday by the Minister for Health in respect of the Sunshine Coast university hospital. A few weeks ago this minister came to the Sunshine Coast, stood at the Sunshine Coast hospital site and said, 'This is a Labor hospital. We are proud to have built this hospital.' The last time a Labor member was on that hospital site was when it was a kangaroo pasture. It was a vacant allotment, because the former Labor government had made no investment and it delayed the hospital by two years.

The LNP members who represent the Sunshine Coast know all too well that Andrew Fraser stood in this place and said, 'We can't afford it. We have no plans. We have no stability in government. We can't build the Sunshine Coast university hospital. So the people on the coast will suffer because of it.' It is very reminiscent now: no money, no plan, no budget. Yesterday, we had a trickster Treasurer jump in here and, rather than talk about his big plans for Queensland—the first budget to be handed down—he carried on with the tricks of the trade. But more concerning are the comments of the health minister yesterday, which appeared in today's *Courier-Mail* this morning. He said that the Sunshine Coast university hospital was—

... proudly built by Labor, proudly built by trade unionists and it will be staffed by trade unionists.

That should send shivers down everyone's spine. The Sunshine Coast community will not be fooled by the misinformation and the fear that the health minister is instilling in the people of the coast in that, in some way next year when the hospital opens, there was going to be no staff, there were going to be no beds. Of course there would be.

We are proud of our commitment to the people of the Sunshine Coast, we are proud of our commitment to the Sunshine Coast university hospital and we are proud that we got the thing built. We are proud that when we came into government the first thing that we did was sign the contracts to build the Sunshine Coast university hospital. For the health minister's benefit, I table a copy of a story that appeared in the *Sunshine Coast Daily* back in 2009 titled, 'Sunshine Coast Hospital project delayed.' It was not going to be delayed by the LNP, but by the Labor Party.

Tabled paper: Article from *Sydney Morning Herald* online, dated 14 June 2009, titled 'Sunshine Coast Hospital project delayed' [\[433\]](#).

I can see 'Mr Glass Jaw', the health minister. He is under a bit of pressure. Last week he got slapped down by the Premier for saying that there are going to be health cuts. Last night he got slapped down by the parliament. When he was the attorney-general he got slapped down by SPER in the justice department because it leaked against him. Now we know that he has put the deadlock on his door. He has put the padlock on his door. Departmental staff are not welcome in the health minister's office. You need a key code to enter the health minister's office.

I see resemblances of Stephen Robertson. I see resemblances of Paul Lucas. Under the Labor Party, Health is back in the doldrums. We are committed to the Sunshine Coast community. We were the government that built the Sunshine Coast university hospital, not the Labor Party.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before proceeding to question time, I remind the member for Kawana of the contents of standing order 244 in relation to the proper way to refer to a member of parliament. Question time will finish at six minutes past four.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Elective Surgery Wait-Time Guarantee



Mr SPRINGBORG (3.06 pm): My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. I refer to the minister's announcement that Labor intends to defy the will of the parliament and pursue its agenda to scrap the surgery wait-time guarantee for patients, and I ask: has the Premier given her consent to defying the will of the parliament?

Mr DICK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. As I said earlier in the day, the resolution stands. The resolution is an expression of the parliament, as the Leader of the Opposition knows. He is a 26-year veteran. He is the father of the House. He knows better than anyone what the nature of a motion passed in this House is. So it is a little bit rich for the Leader of the Opposition to lecture others about the will of the parliament when the nature of the resolution is clear.

As I said—the opposition did not want to hear what I said—in my address earlier today, we will talk to the crossbenchers about any concerns they have about our program to look at the entire patient journey, to look at everybody who needs to be treated in Queensland hospitals. The advice to me from the department of health has been consistent and clear. There were significant policy flaws with the Leader of the Opposition's wait-time gimmick which, conveniently, was to start on 1 February, the day after the state election. It never operated under them. It was never delivered under them. It was never delivered while the member was the health minister for three years, although he did travel to Scandinavia at taxpayers' expense to look at the program—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DICK: That is a fact. I did not travel.

Mr Bleijie: And you're not going to travel?

Mr DICK: I take the interjection. Unlike most of the frontbench of the previous government, I did not travel overseas once when I served in the 53rd Parliament as a minister, because I believed my focus should be on Queensland.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members! Minister, I draw you back to the question and standing order 118 in relation to the importance of relevance. Could you come back to answering the question, please?

Mr DICK: We will look at all aspects of the patient journey, including how we deliver elective surgery and appropriate targets that should be met to ensure that patients receive their surgery on time. We will do that. We have started that process. I have spoken in the House about that, but we are not going to abandon the 114,000 people waiting beyond the clinically recommended time for treatment.

I have talked about that. In Toowoomba there are 1,187 patients waiting beyond the clinically recommended time. That is around the corner from the member for Southern Downs's own electorate. We are going to look at the entire patient journey. We are not going to exclude people, which happened under the wait-time gimmick. There were people excluded. You could not get surgery if there were not enough doctors with that specialty. That is not a guarantee to people. It is a false promise.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition, you will have a chance to put a second question to the minister in a moment.

Mr DICK: We will deliver a good health service, a proper service and the right health service for all Queenslanders.

Ministerial Charter Letters

Mr SPRINGBORG: My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the miraculous overnight appearance of ministerial charter letters, and I ask: can the Premier explain why her government was able to prioritise, finalise, publish and enact a union encouragement policy before the Premier was able to finalise and publish her expectations and goals for ministers?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition and the future potential member for Maranoa for his question.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Premier, you do not need to provoke the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr NICHOLLS: I rise to a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Premier?

Ms PALASZCZUK: This issue was canvassed at length yesterday. It is a standard policy directive that was in place under the former government, but I am glad the Leader of the Opposition raised the issue of charter letters because my ministers are stepping up to the plate and they will deliver for Queenslanders, unlike the former LNP government. My deputy and I sat down with each minister individually to discuss their charter letters at length. The focus of those charter letters is very clear: to create jobs, to grow services in this state, to protect our environment and also integrity and accountability in government. I think these are high standards. Unfortunately the former LNP government failed Queensland.

The Leader of the Opposition talked about charter letters and I found his old charter letter that I thought I might share with the House. I am quite sure this went to all of the ministers. They were going to 'work towards our goal of achieving four per cent unemployment in six years'. Did they go anywhere near the four per cent?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear the Premier.

Mr Watts interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Toowoomba North, those comments are not necessary. I call the Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Then it says 'focus on planning future health services according to population growth'. Where was the former health minister standing up to the federal government demanding the extra funding that Tony Abbott cut in future years? Fail, Mr Speaker. Then 'ensure there are rigorous checks and balances on all department spending'. How much was that advertising campaign, Minister for Health?

Mr Dick: \$15 million.

Ms PALASZCZUK: \$15 million but including the bureaucracy?

Mr Dick: \$77 million.

Ms PALASZCZUK: \$77 million. That is your legacy. My favourite is yet to come: 'to redirect expenditure to front-line services'. Fail, fail, fail! How many health professionals did this former health minister sack? You sacked over 4,800 health professionals from the Public Service. That is your legacy.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: You talk about charter letters. Have a look at your own.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier and Leader of the Opposition, we do not need the argy-bargy. Premier, you have six seconds.

Ms PALASZCZUK: He is obviously more focused on going to Canberra and being the future member for Maranoa than he is on doing his job here in the Queensland parliament.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the member for Logan, I remind members of the contents of standing order 244(7) which says, 'A member shall only refer to another member by their parliamentary title or electoral district.' I call the member for Logan.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Savings

Mr POWER: My question is for the Premier and Minister for the Arts. Will the Premier please outline to the House any savings identified across government and any alternative approaches that the Premier is aware of?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Logan for his question. The member for Logan represents an electorate very similar to my electorate of Inala. The families that we represent are doing it tough. They expect this government to save money where we possibly can, so one can imagine my surprise when I started to ask some questions about the Peter Costello audit. Do we remember that three years ago, members? The former treasurer, who is now sitting over there with

no plans—the Strong Choices is out the window—decided that they would commission an audit to review the state's finances. They went around, they thought about who they could employ and what name did they come up with? Peter Costello! An old mate. Bring in Peter Costello. Let us talk about what I found out.

Mr Nicholls: And the other two, Sandra Harding and Doug McTaggart. Put the other two in there. Are you only telling one-third of the truth or are you going to tell the whole truth?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, the member for Clayfield is awake now. Let us get the full facts on the table. The Commission of Audit ordered by the then treasurer and led by former Howard government treasurer Peter Costello came at a total cost to taxpayers of \$2.5 million.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That included \$785,000 for employee costs, consultancy costs of \$1.6 million, including travel for four consultancies, the cost of the commissioners, CEO and deputy CEO and it also included the cost for Peter Costello of \$197,000 to almost \$200,000. This is shameful. It is absolutely shameful that they could spend this amount of money whilst at the same time plodding the path—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They do not want to hear it because the truth hurts.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, the Premier has the call.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Speaker, the truth hurts. I am sure there is going to be a lot more. We have already axed the directors-general bonuses, saving taxpayers money. I am determined to save taxpayers money where I can and redirect it to front-line services in health and education.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I warn the member for Lockyer. Please cease interjecting. You are warned under standing order 253A.

Ms PALASZCZUK: In conclusion, this government will stand for integrity and accountability and saving taxpayers money where we possibly can. \$2.5 million on a Commission of Audit is absolutely disgraceful. Where did that Commission of Audit lead?

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Of course, it led to the Strong Choices campaign. And what was the result of that at the election? Queenslanders rejected it.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Clayfield, you have had a fair go at interjecting. I would ask you to desist.

Elective Surgery Wait-Time Guarantee

Mr LANGBROEK: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. I table the briefing material prepared for the minister by his department that says the wait-time guarantee has been 'successfully implemented'. It goes on to recommend it 'operate as business as usual'. I ask: will the minister explain why he is choosing to hide these recommendations dated 4 March 2015?

Tabled paper: Extract from Queensland Health Status Report 4 March 2015—Wait Time Program [\[434\]](#).

Mr DICK: I think the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is a bit mistaken because those documents were referred to in the *Courier-Mail* so it is hardly a fact that they have been hidden. I also indicate that they were not prepared for me; they were prepared by a consultant that was engaged by the former LNP government—not by a clinician, not by an expert in health, but by a consultant. Can I say that the department was awash with consultants when I became the Minister for Health.

Therefore, that is the reality about that document; it was in the newspaper. However, the consistent advice that I have received in relation to the wait-time gimmick—and I have said it before and I will say it again—is that it was flawed. It distorted the system to focus on elective surgery alone and ignored outpatients. Of course, if hospitals, clinicians in hospitals, hospital leaders, chief executives and other executives in a hospital and health service, as they properly would, focussed on delivering on that, they would deliver on elective surgery but other lists would blow out. It is a flawed system. In addition, it was a program that invested \$77 million into consultancy, administration and advertising over three years.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr DICK: Over three years, \$15 million was allocated for advertising alone without one cent going to hospital and health services to deliver that surgery.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr DICK: We came to government to find that 114,000 people were waiting longer than the clinically recommended time. It was not the best pathway for the future delivery of health services in Queensland.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, Minister. Leader of the Opposition, your interjections are not being taken. You have had a fair go. I call the minister.

Mr DICK: Ultimately, we made the decision to look at the entire health journey and to look at setting targets across-the-board. We have set interim targets without exemptions and without exceptions. Everyone in a hospital and health service is expected to reach those targets—98 per cent for category 1, 95 per cent for category 2 and category 3—without exemptions, because sometimes in Queensland things such as cyclones hit the central part of our state and hospitals cannot operate. We accept that that means operations cannot be performed. You have to allow tolerances for that in places such as Rockhampton and Yeppoon at the Capricorn Coast Hospital. As I said, we will work through this and we will work with members who have concerns about how it will work to get the best possible outcome for the future.

Regional Queensland, Jobs

Mr BUTCHER: My question is to the Premier and Minister for the Arts. Will the Premier outline the importance of providing opportunities for apprentices and other local job opportunities in regional centres such as my electorate of Gladstone?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Gladstone for his question. On Friday, I was very pleased to be able to join the member for Gladstone, as well as our Minister for State Development, Anthony Lynham, at the Gladstone Area Group Apprentices Ltd breakfast to celebrate 30 years. Congratulations to everyone involved there. Over the years, this fantastic Gladstone organisation has been encouraging a number of apprentices, leading them into jobs and training, and giving them the hope and opportunity that we want to see for our young people. It was a great opportunity to meet with former mayor Peter Coronos and the current mayor to discuss their vision for the future.

Whilst I was there, it became very apparent to me that some locals have been expressing concerns about some of the appointees that the former government made to the board of the Gladstone Ports Corporation. As I said previously, my government is committed to integrity and accountability. In our portfolio priority statements, it says very clearly that—

All ministers and their staff demonstrate transparent, accountable and ethical behaviour and make all decisions and take all actions in the public interest without regard to personal, party political or other material considerations.

Therefore, this weekend my government will be advertising for the position of board appointments for our government owned corporations. I want to see a transparent, open and accountable process. I want to see local people again being involved in the local boards. That is what the community demands. The former government had no respect for local involvement and I want to see that returned front and centre. This weekend is a great opportunity for Queenslanders to put forward their nomination forms to be on government owned corporation boards right across the state.

This is a new era in integrity and accountability in this state. It is a new era; one that we have not seen in three years. For the past three years, integrity and accountability went completely out the door. There are a lot of people, for example in the Gladstone community, who are respected, have experience and, in some cases, may have been board appointees before and they can apply now. We want to see more women on boards. This is a great opportunity for women with economic, legal, financial and human resources experience to put forward their nominations and get involved with this government. That is my commitment and I will always stand up for integrity and accountability in this state.

Disability Services, Funding

Ms DAVIS: My question is to the Minister for Disability Services. I refer the minister to the department's ongoing work to unpick block funding to disability service providers in preparation for the NDIS. Can the minister explain how block funding will be cashed out so that service providers can smoothly transition people with a disability as they move to individualised funding?

Mrs O'ROURKE: I thank the member for the question. With regard to block funding, currently the department is working on how that will happen. I will give that information to the member when it is available. Currently, it is being worked on. We will have people move over to individualised funding over the course of time. I will provide the member with more information. I will gather that for her and have it to her by the end of the day.

Cross River Rail

Mr RUSSO: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier please update the House on the importance of a second river rail crossing for South-East Queensland rail services?

Ms TRAD: I thank the honourable member for the question. This is an issue that he has raised with me. The issue around the rail capacity crisis confronting the south-east corner weighs heavily on this government's mind. In fact, as we have been talking about charter letters this morning, I will advise the House that part of my responsibility, as articulated by the Premier, is that as Minister for Transport I will revitalise and reform rail services, including lobbying the federal government for funding to help deliver an inner-city rail solution for Brisbane. That inner-city rail solution is a second river crossing in Brisbane.

This project was first started by the former Beattie Labor government. It was started because the south-east corner confronts a population growth of some 1.5 million people in the next 15 years. Many of those people will live outside the Brisbane local government area, but many of them will actually work inside the Brisbane CBD. To get those people in and out of the city, we need to have an additional river crossing for heavy rail in Brisbane.

The project came to fruition, was forwarded to Infrastructure Australia and was prioritised as the No. 1 shovel-ready infrastructure project in Australia. What happened when the Newman government came to power? First of all, it set up an independent review panel to have a look at cross river rail and its own hand-picked independent review panel said that there is no other option except cross river rail. So they were dragged kicking and screaming to support it. Then, after walking away from a deal with the federal Labor government to fund the project—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members! Pause the clock. I call the Deputy Premier

Ms TRAD: After walking away from a deal with the federal government to fund cross river rail, they came up with the BaT tunnel, which has been resoundingly rejected by public transport experts because it is all style, no substance. I was interested to hear that the former transport minister was on the radio last week—

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Ms TRAD: He does not want me to say it—saying that they had a deal for the BaT tunnel.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. Deputy Premier!

Ms TRAD: They had a funding deal for the BaT tunnel.

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Premier! Member for Chatsworth, your interjections are not being taken. I call the Deputy Premier.

Ms TRAD: In fact, the former transport minister, the member for Indooroopilly said, 'Well, Steve'—this is Steve Austin—we had a deal before the last election to build our BaT tunnel.' This was news to my department which said, 'I don't think we did because we had no final alignment, we had not acquired any of the properties, there were no final approvals in place, no funding allocated to this project, no contracts to let for the construction work.' No deal!

Disability Services, Workforce

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the Minister for Disability Services. I refer to the minister's statement that AS&RS staff will have security of employment, and I ask: in the transition to the NDIS what criteria is to be utilised to determine which front-line disability staff have security and which do not?

Mrs O'ROURKE: I thank the member for the question. I welcome the opportunity to talk about our commitment to Accommodation Support and Respite Services staff as I know they offer an incredibly important service. They provide what is needed for people with disabilities so that their families know that they are safe and secure. Our election commitment was to provide

Accommodation Support and Respite Services staff continued employment under existing conditions and to provide high and complex needs clients the high-quality support they require. That was our election commitment.

Federal Budget, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services and Programs

Mr CRAWFORD: My question is to the Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. Will the minister advise the House of the impacts of Commonwealth budget cuts to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and programs in Queensland?

Mr PITT: I thank the honourable member for the question. He certainly is a strong advocate for plenty of communities in his electorate of Barron River, including, of course, Kuranda. We know he is a very proud representative of that area.

I had high hopes that in the 2015 federal budget Mr Hockey would deliver on Mr Abbott's vision of being a Prime Minister for Indigenous affairs. But sadly we did not see the reversal of \$530 million in cuts which are necessary to support programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I was bitterly disappointed with the government's lack of commitment in this very important policy and service delivery area. Not only were the cuts not reversed; they were actually made deeper. It was confirmed that \$26 million was cut from the Indigenous housing budget for property and tenancy management.

As I say, the self-anointed Prime Minister for Indigenous affairs sadly has not come anywhere near delivering on his commitment to that portfolio. A visit to the community once a year does not actually contribute enough to the debate. I will say in giving some positive feedback to the federal government that the minister responsible, Minister Scullion, is someone I have developed a good working relationship with. I intend continuing that good working relationship.

This government is getting on with the job, despite what we are seeing from the Commonwealth. We are delivering to the people of Wujal Wujal a \$1.1 million investment in social housing. This funding is obviously going to contribute to increasing accommodation in that community as well as, of course, contribute to employment opportunities for local people. There are always conflicting demands when it comes to delivering new housing in Indigenous communities. When delivering new housing we have to get the balance right between dealing with issues that need to be addressed such as overcrowding, homelessness, poor housing conditions and a general housing shortage and getting the right people to deliver the projects and ensure we have people on the job gaining skills and training in the certain roles. Getting that balance right has very much competing tensions.

With this particular example, three construction trainees have been engaged by the Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council to advance the project. They are going to be working on all aspects of the development—civil works and housing construction. It is all about gaining the necessary skills to potentially work on other projects. I think that is a great outcome.

It is expected that the works will be completed by July. Of course, the Palaszczuk government is going to continue to invest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, particularly in the area of housing. We know one of our most important tasks is to deal with the very high unemployment levels in discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. That is something that we committed to as part of our overall approach to delivering on more jobs in this state.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

Mrs STUCKEY: My question without notice is to the Minister for Disability Services. After listening to the minister's statement this morning, I ask: can the minister assure people with a disability that under the NDIS they will continue to receive supports at their current assessed level? If not, will the state government make up the package shortfall as will be the case for state government managed AS&RS clients?

Mrs O'ROURKE: I thank the member for the question. Can I say that I have actually never seen this much interest in the disabilities portfolio in the three sittings that I have been minister. I thank you very much for taking a true interest in disabilities. With regard to the rollout of the NDIS and providing support to people with disabilities, I point out that under the NDIS people will receive the reasonable and necessary support they require in accordance with the choices they have made. They will choose the support they would like to have.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock! Member for Kawana, the minister does not need your assistance. The minister has the call.

Mrs O'ROURKE: They will have the opportunity to choose the support that they want to receive and from whom they want to receive it. That will be put into a plan that they actually have control over. If we had the opportunity to have an NDIS trial site we would have that information available to us, but unfortunately that was taken from us.

Mrs STUCKEY: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. I asked a very specific question of the minister about whether people will still receive their current amount.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. The honourable member's question made reference to the minister's statement earlier which I think gives some latitude for the minister to raise broader issues associated with the NDIS.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister has the call.

Mrs O'ROURKE: As I said earlier, people with disabilities and their families will have the option to choose the kind of support they will receive. They will be able to choose that support in accordance with what they want to receive out of life. It will cover reasonable and necessary supports. How that looks will depend on what they choose to receive.

Road Safety

Mr PYNE: My question is to the Minister for Main Roads and Road Safety. Yesterday the front page of my local paper, the *Cairns Post*, showed the human face of road trauma when it reported on the death of a young Babinda father who was tragically killed in a road accident on the weekend—the 18th person to die on far northern roads this year. Will the minister advise the House what steps the government is taking to turn these statistics around?

Mr BAILEY: I would like to thank the member for Cairns for his question and his ongoing advocacy and support for road safety in North Queensland and Far North Queensland. I was saddened to hear about the tragic accident north of Innisfail on the weekend. My thoughts are with family, friends and loved ones at such a sad time.

The Palaszczuk government took swift action after the alarming spike in the Easter road toll this year. My ministerial colleague the member for Bundamba and I convened talks with specialist stakeholders in a road safety forum called the Safer Roads, Safer Queensland forum here at Parliament House soon after. We called together road safety experts and key stakeholders like the RACQ, CARRS-Q, Bicycle Queensland, the Queensland Trucking Association, the Queensland Police Service, the Motorcycle Riders Association of Queensland, as well as my own Department of Transport and Main Roads which does a wonderful job, and I would like to acknowledge its role in this as well.

We shared a collective determination that day to investigate ways to turn these terrible statistics around. Road safety is everybody's business, but if it is left to governments alone we will never achieve what we need to achieve. It is the responsibility of all of us. Past experience has shown that, when governments are able to tap into collective policy firepower, resources and ideas of business, industry, the community and road safety specialists, we see improvements in road safety. That remains our priority. Today I can announce some of the outcomes of that forum.

Motorists repeatedly caught texting or using their mobile phones while driving will face stiffer penalties. Immediate measures will be taken to target distracted drivers and people who take drugs and get behind the wheel of a car. Drivers caught committing repeat mobile phone offences within a year can expect double demerit points similar to those imposed on repeat offenders who do not wear a seatbelt or a motorcycle helmet or who exceed the speed limit by more than 20 kilometres an hour. We will form a citizens task force that will report directly to the government on important road safety issues and the steps that need to be taken to make our roads safer. The Queensland Police Service will investigate expanding automatic nameplate recognition technology in police vehicles. For too long, dangerous and unregistered and unlicensed drivers have been over-represented in crash statistics. Greater use of this technology will give police the resources they need to target reckless and irresponsible drivers.

The total economic, social and emotional costs of serious road trauma are enormous and enduring. The Palaszczuk government is committed to working with the community and stakeholders to maintain safety on our state's road networks, and we will implement these reforms as part of our road safety strategy.

(Time expired)

Vegetation Management

Ms LEAHY: My question without notice is to the Minister for Natural Resources. In March the minister advised that it was business as usual for the vegetation management framework and no changes were planned to the Vegetation Management Act 1999. Can the minister confirm that this is still the case?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Warrego for her question. The Vegetation Management Act is a very important act. It is very important for this state. It is very important for climate change. I can confirm that we made two very strong election commitments: one was about high-value agriculture and exemptions for the clearing of high-value agriculture, and the other commitment we made was for regrowth prior to 1989. These two initiatives, these two wind-backs to our previous position on vegetation management, were election commitments and these election commitments will be seen through.

We have negotiated extensively with regard to vegetation management. We have negotiated extensively with landholders and with representative groups in the rural community. We have also negotiated with environmental groups. We are a government of consensus. We are a government that listens, and we intend to have a consultative period before we enact any legislation in terms of vegetation management.

We take a balanced approach. We realise that we have to protect the Great Barrier Reef, but people in our agricultural community also recognise that they have to protect the Great Barrier Reef. Cane farmers know they want to protect the Great Barrier Reef and we want to work with them to protect the Great Barrier Reef and also to protect the world against climate change. This is an important initiative that we are not taking lightly. On a weekly basis, if not on a biweekly basis, I am considering this initiative at length in my department. I am working closely with the Minister for Agriculture on this important initiative. We have had ministerial forums regarding this initiative. We are out there consulting. We are out there listening. We will have sound—

Mr Hart interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Burleigh, your interjections are not being taken. The minister has the call. I call the minister.

Dr LYNHAM: Unlike the previous government, we will not act rashly on this issue. They introduced their vegetation management plan without consulting widely. There were many groups disenfranchised when they introduced their vegetation management plan. We understand, to give them credit, that there are some elements of their vegetation management plan that are loved by the rural sector. We have no plan to change those specific provisions such as the self-assessment criteria in some aspects of the vegetation management plan; that is accepted. But we will be watching very closely. We are taking the rural sector on good faith. But also the rural sector must realise that if one steps over these boundaries that are presently in place we will act very strongly against those people.

Palliative Care

Ms LINARD: My question is to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Will the minister update the House on palliative care in Queensland and services that are available to support end-of-life treatment?

Mr DICK: The Palaszczuk government is committed to delivering the best possible health care for Queenslanders, and that high standard of care should continue throughout life and include services that should be provided at the end of life. Some people find it difficult to talk about end-of-life issues. Some people find it difficult to talk about palliative care. But next week is National Palliative Care Week, and that is a good time for us to reflect on palliative care. I encourage all members to engage with their respective communities about that and to engage in a conversation with their constituents in the broader community about end-of-life matters including palliative care.

We are delivering a range of palliative care services through this government, through hospital and health services but also through some very important non-government organisations. I am pleased to announce that our government is extending the purchase of palliative care services

through a range of non-government organisations. I announce to the House that the government and the department of health will be allocating \$20 million over three years to fund eight non-government organisations that provide essential palliative care services. That includes organisations like Karuna in the electorate of Brisbane Central. I know the member for Brisbane Central has been a strong advocate for Karuna over many years during her service in this parliament and outside her service in this parliament. That funding will allow that organisation to continue—\$4.3 million over three years. Ipswich Hospice Care, supported I know by the members for Ipswich and Ipswich West and other members from the broader West Moreton region, will continue to receive funding over three years. I thank the member for Ipswich for her strong representations and the member for Ipswich West as well. I also indicate that Cittamani Hospice Service in your electorate, Mr Speaker, will receive funding of \$1.7 million over the next three years. That is an organisation that does very good work on the Sunshine Coast and in the Sunshine Coast hinterland.

What I have discovered on becoming the Minister for Health is that some organisations, particularly in the non-government sector, were not given certainty. They were fighting from year to year to secure funding or they had their funding cut. I met yesterday with the Deputy Premier and the Advanced Breast Cancer Group—a very important group that helps women with terminal breast cancer—to talk to them about being defunded and what we can do to support them. What we have done is put in place three-year funding agreements for these eight important organisations throughout Queensland so they can help Queenslanders at the end of life. I think that is an important way to provide them with certainty. I want to again commend and thank organisations like Karuna, Cittamani Hospice Service and also Ipswich Hospice Care and other organisations for the work they do supporting Queenslanders at the end of life.

Drought

Mr KATTER: My question without notice is to the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing. Approximately 113 drought concessional loans have been allocated despite 80 per cent of the rural areas of the state having the worst conditions ever recorded in Queensland. This reflects abject policy failure, as endorsed by the cattle producers I interact with. On this basis, will the minister move immediately towards providing a reconstruction board or like mechanism given the recent failing of the federal government to deliver the ARDB?

Mr BYRNE: I thank the honourable member for his question. I can tell him that there is no intention of this government to move in that direction at short order. What I can speak about is what we have been doing within the existing framework to support drought affected communities. The member would be well aware of recent announcements we have made to provide further assistance to drought affected communities, as recently as last weekend in Longreach. It was interesting to be present there again and meet with 300-odd people in the town hall in Longreach to have a genuine community discussion and an open forum. It was interesting to sit with the president of AgForce, a well-known LNP federal senator, and talk with the community about where they were and where we are heading.

The additional support we have announced at a state level to the DRAS has been very warmly received, and I am sure the member appreciates that. I am well aware of what has transpired in the federal arena, particularly in the Senate, recently. It is really a matter for federal members of the government to respond to why they did not take any action to that effect. What is revealing, though, with regard to the federal arena and the DRAS projects that support particularly the emergency water rebate, is that I wrote to the federal agriculture minister seeking their 25 per cent top-up, which meant a 75 per cent rebate associated with emergency water infrastructure investments. I have recently received a letter from the federal minister saying they will not continue that support which has now dried up. Primary producers in drought affected areas are not receiving what has been very well received—25 per cent additional support for emergency water rebate infrastructure. Add to that that it has been some time since we have seen the federal government's response to drought in terms of its budget. I, like the rest of my department and half of the federal agriculture department, cannot work out exactly what it means on the ground for those investments that were widely announced by the federal government during the budget debate. If there is one thing we should be finding out, it is what are the intended effects from the federal government's drought relief. There was a lot of money out there for discretionary loans, none of which anyone, apart from perhaps the federal ag minister, has the slightest appreciation of. These are federal issues that the member raises, and I am happy for him to represent those as aggressively as he likes.

Mr SPEAKER: I call the member for Murrumba.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Nanango, you are warned under standing order 253A. Please desist from your interjections. I call the member for Murrumba.

Project Booyah

Mr WHITING: My question is to the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services. Will the minister outline the Palaszczuk government's plans to expand the highly successful Project Booyah initiative to give at-risk youth a chance for a better start in life?

Mrs MILLER: I thank the member for his question, for his continuing commitment to working closely with the local police in his area and for supporting young people at risk. As the member rightly points out, Project Booyah is a program that is giving youth at risk a chance to improve themselves and have a better start in life. Whilst the program began on the Gold Coast to help curb youth crime through early intervention and education, its success has seen Project Booyah rolled out across many other areas in Queensland.

A few weeks ago I, along with my friend the Attorney-General, had the pleasure of visiting the Gold Coast TAFE campus's Trades Training Centre at Ashmore. We met with representatives of the Queensland Police Service and TAFE Queensland, and they signed a memorandum of understanding to ensure continued delivery of the project across the state. I am pleased to say that Project Booyah will now be expanded to include 80 more training places for at-risk young people. Over the next two years Project Booyah will give around 300 young people who are aged between 14 and 16 the chance to develop some really important skills to ensure that they do not fall through the cracks.

So far this year 50 young people from the Gold Coast, Townsville, Cairns, Logan and Capalaba are already taking part in this program. From July, 80 new places will be filled by young people from Mount Isa, Toowoomba and Redcliffe. It is an intense 20-week program. Participants will experience wilderness adventure therapy, decision-making and problem-solving exercises and targeted community integration. They will enrol in TAFE programs in their region to complete a Certificate II in Hospitality.

Our Palaszczuk Labor government is committed to ensuring education is accessible to all young Queensland students so they can have the foundation skills they need to progress to further study to have an opportunity to more actively participate in their community. We know that early intervention is important. Unlike those opposite, unlike the member for Kawana, we will not demonise our kids on this side of the House. We will not do that. We will give them every opportunity to turn their lives around. We will do that because we believe in our young people.

Mr Bleijie: Jumping castles, Xboxes, bucking bulls—that is what you gave them.

Mrs MILLER: Let me say, member for Kawana, you had the opportunity to apologise to the member for Cairns and you won't do it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister, thank you.

Ergon Energy

Mr PERRETT: My question without notice is to the Minister for Energy. Can the minister advise whether in the past 72 hours he or his department have directed Ergon to change its definition of a front-line worker?

Mr BAILEY: I thank the member for Gympie for his question. I am unaware that any change has been implemented in the last 72 hours.

North Queensland

Mrs GILBERT: My question is to the Minister for State Development. Will the minister advise the House about the latest positive industry developments for North Queensland?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Mackay. What a wonderful place Mackay, in North Queensland, is. This year Mackay is celebrating 100 years of continuous Labor representation—a proud tradition which the new member for Mackay will continue. All levels of Australian government recognise the opportunities—

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Lockyer, you have been warned under standing order 253A. I ask you to withdraw from the chamber for 15 minutes.

Whereupon the honourable member for Lockyer withdrew from the chamber at 3.58 pm.

Dr LYNHAM: All levels of Australian government recognise the opportunities that lie ahead for northern Australia, positioned as it is at the intersection of the growing Asian and tropical axes. The future of Queensland's economy and our growth opportunities are interconnected with the future of North Queensland. That is why I am pleased to inform the House about the latest positive developments for the north. White Horse Australia Lindeman Pty Ltd has gained coordinated project status for its proposal to revive Lindeman Island as an integrated resort with five precincts. This is the first coordinated project in Queensland in 18 months. This is, of course, only the beginning of a process including comprehensive environmental impact assessment towards a development that could create more than 800 construction jobs a year over a four-year construction period. When the resort is in full swing, it could maintain 300 ongoing operational jobs.

The proponent seeks to build several five- and six-star facilities including a 50-berth marina. Lindeman Island is within the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage area, and the EIS will be subject to detailed scrutiny and a full public consultation. The Coordinator-General will now coordinate the input of state and federal government agencies into the environmental assessment process—a very important part of this process.

The next stage will be the release of draft terms of reference for the EIS for public consultation in the next few weeks. We are also conducting a comprehensive EIS for the expansion of Abbot Point near Bowen. A revised plan worked out with the Galilee Basin mine proponents will see dredge material dumped on unused industrial land rather than in the wetlands. The revised EIS will focus on the new location and, considering the significant environmental analysis already undertaken at Abbot Point and the lower impacts, I expect the EIS will be completed well within the second half of this year, which includes 20 business days of full public consultation. It is all about balance. This is a job focused government, but projects will always need to balance the economic, environmental and community interests.

Health Services

Dr ROWAN: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. Given the Premier's commitment to the member for Nicklin around restoring Labor's 'no contracting out' provisions in Health, can the minister advise how much of the \$30 million to address ear, nose and throat complaints will be contracted out to private providers?

Mr DICK: The Premier and I were very pleased to attend Logan Hospital to make that announcement. There are very significant waiting lists in Logan for ENT, but after speaking to Dr Bernard Whitfield and working through specialists like him, I can say that the focus for the delivery of that money primarily is in public health. Our priority as we expend that money—and we will work through hospital and health services to do that—will be on public health expenditure in public hospitals. We will not allocate all of the money initially. We will work through the hospital and health services but I can assure the honourable member that, unlike what happened with previous clearances—

Dr ROWAN: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I asked a specific question into how much of the \$30 million to address ear, nose and throat complaints will be contracted out to private providers.

Mr SPEAKER: I call the minister.

Mr DICK: Member for Moggill, I am sorry, I perhaps did not make myself clear. We are delivering that money by working through hospital and health services. I said earlier that we are not allocating all of that money to begin with. We are going to work with specialists in the public health system with our hospital and health services to deliver that money. I have not allocated all of that money to every individual, every appointment and every treatment at the start. It would be foolish to do that because we should talk to the clinicians and the experts at a HHS level.

I anticipate the significant majority of that money will be in the public health system where the lists have languished for years—including, as I said in the debate last night, one individual who has waited 800 days to get an outpatient appointment. We have had that discussion about surgery wait lists. I cannot let people wait endlessly for appointments if they are going to be waiting 800 days. It is a significant challenge to manage wait lists. I do not pretend that it is not going to be a challenge for me over the next three years, but I am not going to ignore and abandon those people by solely focusing on surgery.

We are going to work with specialists like Bernie Whitfield to deliver ENT, but because public health patients have been left languishing we are not going to give it out straightaway; we are going to work through those hospital and health services. I want the money to go into public hospitals—that is where I want people treated, where the lists for ENT are very large. If there is work to be done elsewhere, we will consider that as part of the project. We have always had a mixed health system in Queensland and the member for Moggill knows that. We partnered with organisations like Mater Health and other non-government organisations for very long periods of time, so let us not get too worried about outsourcing because that is what Labor does—we work with organisations like non-government organisations to deliver services and we will continue to do that to get the best outcome for Queenslanders.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Kawana, the minister is not taking your interjections. I call the minister. Has the minister finished?

Mr DICK: Yes.

Federal Budget, Legal Assistance Services

Ms HOWARD: My question is to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills. Will the minister update the House on any implications from the federal budget on service delivery to vulnerable Queenslanders through the portfolios of Justice and Attorney-General?

Mr SPEAKER: I call the minister for two minutes.

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Speaker, I will seek to make this quick. Unfortunately, what we have seen in the federal budget is not just hits to health and education but hits to those who are most vulnerable by actually cutting the funds going to Legal Aid Queensland, community legal centres and our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service. In fact Legal Aid Queensland is taking a \$1.5 million hit based on what was in the forward estimates for the 2015-16 year. We are also seeing \$330,000 being lost for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service. These are services to the most vulnerable in our community. At a time when we are talking about domestic violence and closing the gap, the federal government is cutting funds in this area.

I thank the attorneys-general across this nation. We all stood together, from all sides of politics, to call on the Commonwealth government to stop the cuts to CLCs. The Commonwealth Attorney-General said that he will not proceed with the cuts for this year, but in two years time the funding just falls off the cliff—\$2 million for CLCs. I have joined with attorneys-general from all political persuasions across this country—New South Wales, Tasmania, Victoria, South Australia and the ACT—to once again call on the federal government to not proceed with these cuts. I call on the shadow Attorney-General to join us in this outcry. I table the letter to the Commonwealth in relation to these important issues.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 19 May 2015, from the Attorney-General of Queensland, Hon. Yvette D'Ath, and the Attorneys-General of South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria, New South Wales, and Tasmania, to the Commonwealth Attorney-General and Minister for the Arts, Senator The Hon. George Brandis QC, regarding the revised National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services [\[435\]](#).

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Resumed from 19 May (see p. 680).

 **Mr EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (4.06 pm): Firstly, I congratulate all of those members who have been elected, particularly those for the first time and even some who have returned after being previously defeated. It is a remarkable honour always to serve in this House, and I want to start off particularly by thanking the people of Indooroopilly for doing me the great honour of re-electing me for the third time. I also want to thank my colleagues on this side of the House for their remarkable support during our time in government. It was always great to work in a team that delivered so much for this state in those three years.

I particularly want to thank my campaign team—Lisa Myers, my campaign director, and people like James Mackay, Matt Myers, Kelvin Crofton, Andrew Park, Philip Lawler and others who worked tirelessly on that campaign, especially given that my ministerial duties meant I was not there as much as I may have been in previous campaigns. I also mention Paul Scarr in terms of that campaign.

Let me mention my electorate officers as well during those three years—Honor Lawler, Melissa Hood and Penny Attlee. It is a great pleasure for me to see that Brendan Morris has now joined my campaign team. During those three years in my large portfolio I worked many hours, and I could not

have achieved that without the wonderful support of my ministerial staffers—people like Mark Gorter, Peter Walsh, Andrew Berkman, Ian Andrew, Tony Meredith and Stephanie Shield. They were among many who worked many, many hours and put up with the hard yards in a very busy portfolio. As many would know, they also put up with me occasionally when we were under pressure. I do thank them for their patience, their good humour—

Mr Walker interjected.

Mr EMERSON: I will take that interjection from the member for Mansfield. That was not always the case, I have to admit.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr EMERSON: Yes. In those three years we did achieve a lot in the electorate of Indooroopilly, particularly such things as the upgrade to the Western Freeway, which is now being completed. More than 70,000 cars a day use that road and the expansion of that freeway was badly needed. The Moggill Road cycle bridge is underway. It is something that will also save lives. It is a very dangerous spot on our roads. On the subject of road safety, there was the introduction of flashing school lights. I know many members here who sat in the last parliament appreciated that policy that we put in place. Schools in my own area received those flashing school lights, making it safer around those schools. There were also new classrooms constructed at schools in my electorate. I thank the former education minister, John-Paul Langbroek, for his efforts in that. Graceville State School, Ironside State School, Indooroopilly State High School, Milpera State High School, Ambrose Treacy College and also St Peters all benefited from new classrooms and facilities while we were in office.

In terms of public transport, the Graceville train station upgrade is underway. That upgrade will see disability access to that train station improved, something that needs to be done. I do urge the current government to follow on with that program of improving disability access at train stations across the electorate. Other achievements during those last three years include the Myla Terrace noise barrier in Tennyson and also, in conjunction with the former natural resources minister, Andrew Cripps, delivering the restoration of riverbanks at Fig Tree Pocket that had been devastated by the 2011 floods.

I am proud of what we achieved during the last three years in office, particularly in my portfolio. As I said, any achievements are a team effort. I hope to see the new ministers continue on with our good achievements over their period of time in office. Road safety was mentioned today in the parliament. We achieved the lowest road toll on record. On the back of a \$350 million, two-year Road Safety Action Plan, the first comprehensive Road Safety Action Plan that this state has ever seen, we achieved the lowest road toll on record. Of course, we have to commend the motorists in Queensland. Road safety is something about which we have to be constantly vigilant. Sadly, the figures at the moment are not that good. However, I hope they will improve over the next year. As at the beginning of this week, sadly, we have lost 91 lives on our road this year compared to 77 for the same period last year. I do hope those figures improve over the remainder of this year.

In terms of public transport, it was a remarkable achievement to see, for the first time in Queensland history, public transport fares cut statewide. Last year there was a five per cent cut. As I said, it was the first time in Queensland history that public transport fares across the state have been cut, and this year they have been frozen. The comparison is very clear. Before we came in, under the Palaszczuk plan, public transport fares were going up by 15 per cent every year—year after year after year—and it was the plan to continue that. The fact that we did cut those fares just added to the good work we did in terms of public transport affordability with that incredibly successful policy of free trips after nine journeys which provided a massive benefit to many people. I note that if the previous Labor government's policies had been in place people travelling from places such as the Gold Coast or Sunshine Coast would have been paying \$2,000 more a year for their public transport bills. Last year, under the LNP government, we saw public transport fares cut across the state. Across those three years under the LNP government, Monday to Friday commuters would have seen their overall public transport bill fall.

In terms of road funding, again, there was record funding on the Bruce Highway. The Bruce Highway is a corridor of commerce for this state. With the road safety plan and the Bruce Highway Action Plan, we saw improvements in areas of flood mitigation, capacity and also safety. By the end of this financial year we will have seen record spending on the Bruce Highway of \$770 million, the highest amount ever spent on the Bruce Highway in a year. More than 200 projects are underway, improving that incredibly important road for this state. When we came into office the RACQ told us that if we did not get on with improving the Bruce Highway after it had been neglected for many years, many, many people would be killed on the Bruce Highway over the next decade. We got on with that

task and, despite some of the comments I have heard from the current Labor Treasurer that state money being spent on the Bruce Highway was misspending of state money, I urge the current government to maintain the funding for the Bruce Highway that we put in place. It is much needed. As I said, the Bruce Highway is a lifeline for this state—not just for commuters and travellers, but also for business. It is important that we get that work underway and continue it.

One of the things I did note when we came into office was that the cost of delivering roads in Queensland far outstripped that of every other state. The ABS figures showed that over the last decade the cost of delivering roads in Queensland had increased dramatically compared to other states in Australia. We have worked to bring down those costs. There was not gold plating; there were sensible projects, meaning we could do more across our road system. There was our QTRIP program that we put in place, an \$18 billion program containing projects for not only the next 12 months, but going forward in that four-year program. It is incredibly important to deliver the projects in that program.

Other areas in terms of public transport include the \$4.4 billion New Generation Rollingstock program. When we came to office we had that legacy of a Labor government that bought trains that could not fit into tunnels and ordered trains without seats. We came up with a contract that will deliver 75 new six-car train sets for Queensland at a good price—in fact, an incredibly discounted price compared to what Labor was paying when it was ordering trains that could not fit into tunnels and did not have seats. I can assure honourable members that our trains will have seats for half the price of what Labor was paying previously for its failed schemes. That is a remarkable achievement of a government that looked for sensible decisions, respected that it was taxpayers' dollars we were spending and understood the value of making sure we could deliver for Queensland.

Since the Labor Party came into office we have seen its members taking credit for many LNP projects. I have seen this repeatedly in relation to the main roads minister. We must now be up to more than a dozen government press releases claiming credit for projects across the state. We have seen the transport minister come in here and claim credit for our new generation rolling stock. We have seen government members claiming credit, even in their brochure today, for exit 54, a project that we developed. We will continue to see Labor claiming credit for projects it would never have funded, would never have delivered and would never be able to deliver. We will be watching very carefully to see what they will now do going forward, because we know they came into office with no plan, no capacity and no ability to deliver infrastructure that this state needs.

So far we have heard Labor talking about the Gold Coast Light Rail project. I concede that that started under the previous Labor government. However, we saw a flawed business case. As was pointed out, under Labor's flawed business case for the Gold Coast Light Rail, it would have cost taxpayers an extra \$300 million over 15 years because their forecasts were flawed. They could not deliver. That was their business case, a flawed business case. It will cost \$300 million more over 15 years because of their bungled business case for the Gold Coast Light Rail.

Today we also heard about the Cross River Rail project that Labor mentioned when it was last in office. It is interesting to note that today the Premier would not talk about how much it was going to cost, because we remember that in the lead-up to the 2012 election she first talked about a \$8.3 billion project; then on Steve Austin's program she talked about a \$7 billion project; and then a couple of weeks after that she talked about a \$6.4 billion project—but what is \$2 billion amongst Labor's mates? Let us not forget her now-infamous budget reply speech last year when she claimed that Labor's Cross River Rail project was not only costed—which it was not, judging by those figures—but it was also funded. When it was pointed out that she was misleading the House, she was forced to come in after midnight, like a thief in the night, and apologise to the parliament for misleading it. We remember that she wrote to Michael Deegan, the head of Infrastructure Australia, the Labor government's planning body, asking the federal government to pay 75 per cent of that project. Did they ever pay 75 per cent? No. Did they ever offer, in real terms, 50 per cent? No. The most that they ever offered was 25 per cent, but let us not forget that federal Labor's policy was to offer that money whilst ripping money out of federal road funding for Queensland.

Labor talks about projects, but they do not like to mention that car rego went up 30 per cent in just four years under Labor, which was part of the Palaszczuk plan when she was the transport minister. Under a proud initiative of the former LNP government, family car rego was frozen for the three years that we were in office. Compare that to the 30 per cent increase in four years under the Labor government's Palaszczuk plan when she was transport minister. There were so many areas where Labor failed and the rhetoric of government was never delivered on.

Let me finish on one particular matter that relates to my electorate and other electorates across Queensland, and that is flashing lights at school zones. This was a project which Labor spoke about year after year and that they said they would deliver, but they never did. We saw flashing lights delivered to Queensland schools. Our most precious resource is our children, and making our roads safer around schools is a commendable task. I urge the state government to continue with that program and the LNP policy that we put in place, and continue to roll out more flashing school lights at our schools. It is incredibly important that we keep the roads around our schools as safe as possible.

I would like to thank the people of Indooroopilly for doing me the wonderful service of being their MP for a third term. As Queenslanders, the greatest honour we can have is to represent this wonderful state.

In conclusion, as the member for Clayfield has kindly reminded me, none of us could do this job without our families. I thank my wonderful wife, Robyn, my daughter, Katie, and son, Jack, who put up with 80-hour weeks. I know that not only the ministers in our government but I am sure the ministers in the current government also struggle with commitments and challenges in terms of our family and work balance. Our families are wonderful assets, and I would not have been able to do this job for the past three years without the support of my family. I do want to thank them greatly for standing beside me in the good days, the bad days and the tiring days. When I turn up a little bit cranky after lengthy sessions in parliament and long times away, they understand and keep me incredibly grounded.

Debate, on motion of Mr Emerson, adjourned.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Notice of Motion, Out of Order

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I draw members' attention to standing order 231, which prohibits anticipation of a subject which appears on the *Notice Paper*, and my statement earlier this afternoon regarding the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill introduced on 1 May 2015 which is currently before the Finance and Administration Committee with a reporting date of 1 June 2015.

I understand that bill is likely to be considered at the next sitting of the House in less than two weeks. Clause 32 of that bill seeks to remove section 691E of the act. That provision currently prohibits the provision of personal information without the written consent of the employee. The subject of the motion and the provision sought to be removed by the bill are the same subject matter. I rule that the notice of motion seeks to anticipate debate of the bill and is therefore out of order.

I have also considered standing order 70, which allows me to make minor variations to notices of motion to allow them to proceed; however, no variation that I make will avoid the substance of the issue. As it is now less than two hours before the scheduled debate, I am not going to allow the substituted notice of motion. As there are no other notices of motion on the *Notice Paper*, government business will continue at the time normally allotted for private members' motions.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Resumed.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Thuringowa, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and it should be listened to in silence and with the courtesies reserved for such occasions. I call the member for Thuringowa.

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (4.27 pm): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. It is fantastic to be here on my birthday for my maiden speech. I would firstly like to congratulate the Speaker of the House on the elevation to his new position. I am sure that, under his leadership, the Speaker will assist in restoring the community's respect for this place, which sits at the heart of our democracy.

I would also like to recognise and congratulate the Premier on her appointment. Queenslanders spoke loudly at the last election in favour of a more inclusive and responsive government, which I know has core values to respect and restore integrity to all those who live, work and play in our vast state. I know that the Premier intends to govern for all Queenslanders.

It is certainly humbling to stand in this place as the representative of the people of Thuringowa. It is with respect and great honour that I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which Thuringowa sits: the Bindal and Wulgurukaba people and their elders past and present. I feel and recognise the great responsibility to be the voice of the 56,000 people who live in my electorate; to stand up, to make a difference and to advocate strongly on their behalf whilst in this place.

The many suburbs that make up Thuringowa—from Deeragun to Kelso, Alice River to Thuringowa Central and all surrounding suburbs—are home to local families, mine included. We work hard, we play hard and we proudly back the mighty North Queensland Cowboys. Not only do we celebrate the things that make us similar; we also enjoy our multicultural links in our festivals held at our Riverway precinct—everything from Greek Fest to the African Festival, India Fest and NAIDOC celebrations. Only recently the now-famous Weet-Bix challenge was once again held at our Riverway precinct, where we had nearly 1,000 children aged between seven and 15 take part in this excellent event promoting healthy lifestyle choices. Well done to all mums and dads who encouraged their children to be part of this growing event.

Sadly, our community of Thuringowa has done it tough in recent times. Unemployment has climbed, local businesses have gone to the wall and confidence has slipped out of the local community. The unacceptably high youth unemployment rate of over 18 per cent and the high cost of living over the past three years have placed pressure on local families—families like mine. Thuringowa has also experienced a significant downturn in business confidence over the past three years. More broadly, the entire Townsville area is suffering a high business bankruptcy rate. These are not easy things to fix, but it is our job to be part of the solution rather than the cause of the problem. I now have the opportunity to enable change in these important areas in my community as the elected member for Thuringowa.

I believe that the thing that defines us as Queenslanders is our willingness to help a neighbour in need. I would like to recognise the important work performed in Thuringowa by our many volunteers and community organisations. We know the importance of working together. We see it every day and particularly see it when we face natural disasters, but it does not need to involve a natural disaster. In Townsville over the weekend just gone, two young boys, aged five and six, went missing in Mount Stuart scrub land. Over 170 volunteers, emergency services and army personnel came together to help find both Nicholas and Tim alive, safe and well after 24 hours lost. We should rightfully acknowledge the enormous effort in locating these boys. Well done to all involved, particularly the QPS for its coordination of this fantastic outcome.

Twenty-five years ago I joined the Queensland Ambulance Service. I am a proud ambo and have served in many roles across the northern region including acting officer in charge of various locations and stations including Hughenden, Charters Towers, Ayr, Ingham, Northern Beaches, South Townsville and Kirwan, and for the last 15 years I performed duties as a critical care flight paramedic. I feel now that I can still look after people; however, I can now assist many more in my electorate on a far broader range of issues.

I must confess that the transition from paramedic to parliamentarian was one that involved nerves and anticipation. During the campaign itself I was told to expect a number of things maybe not so pleasant whilst out doorknocking. This was going to be a tough road to travel. However, at my very first doorknock at Alice River a lady opened the door. As I introduced myself, she simply said my name and gave me a hug. She called on her husband to get up off the couch and come and meet the man who had saved his life some years ago—although he would not remember as he was unconscious at the time. He proudly showed me the scar on his chest from his bypass, and I believe that I walked from that house feeling like I could do this enormous task as I had been going to people's homes for 25 years as an ambo. I could still do this, now on an altogether different level.

It is not the years of service that is important but, as I am sure my fellow QAS colleague and now fellow MP Craig Crawford for Barron River would attest, it is what you do with those years of service that makes the difference. Those years of service were not only a job but also a privilege. To quote the words of a colleague my mine, Kyla Golds—

You might be lucky enough to watch a life come into this world, and you most probably will see a life leave us too. You will get to hold grandmas hand and tell her that its ok while you yourself have tears in your eyes as she has just lost her lifelong partner, or plead with the mentally ill not to end their life. You will reassure the first time mum panicking because her little one may have a fever, but you could also be faced with the distraught mum who has woken to find her baby no longer breathing ... what you will also see and never tire of, is the look of relief on a patients or family members face when they open the door and realise help has arrived.

Kyla said those words in a Facebook post she made to Campbell Newman after she decided she could not stand the cuts and attacks on ambos and the Ambulance Service anymore. She was desperate to be heard, but the former premier's staff just deleted her post. Fortunately, Facebook does not make it quite that easy for these things to go away, and more than 90,000 people have so far read Kyla's plea for simple recognition. I make a promise to Kyla, her colleagues and my QAS colleagues: I will not for a moment forget how important you are to our community; nor will I let anyone else forget.

These are the things that Queensland and Queenslanders are all about: being ready, willing and able to respond when a neighbour is in need. Of course, those moments are all too often coloured with tragedy and crisis. It is not just the ambos on the front line; it is also police, fire, coastguard, RFDS, SES, rural fire, aeromedical retrieval services and our mighty ADF. Of course, Townsville is home to thousands of troops. As a flight paramedic I have seen firsthand these front-line services work together, hand in hand, to assist the people of North Queensland when the chips are down.

It would be remiss of me not to include the often unsung heroes in any natural disaster: the Ergon and Energex workers who, the minute it is safe, are out restoring power and helping our communities get going again. Having been part of the immediate response to Innisfail in 2006 after the severe destruction of Cyclone Larry, I can say that the image of the seemingly endless convoy of Energex trucks arriving in town is burned into my memory. I am proud that as part of this government I will play a role in keeping those workers and companies in public hands.

Sometimes the help that is required is more local and more individual. I would like to share the story of Jamie Jackway—a mate, a former colleague and now a neighbour of mine. Jamie's story should remind all in this place of courage, resilience and mateship that demonstrates our true community spirit—a story that not only Thuringowa and Townsville should be proud of but all of Queensland should be proud of. As a former partner of Jamie's on the road I can say that we shared plenty of ups and downs, as paramedics do each day. When I went over to the then EMQ helicopter rescue base in Townsville, Jamie soon followed suit and moved to Thursday Island to continue his work in QAS which involved helicopter retrievals.

In November 2009 Jamie's life changed when a winching accident resulted in a fall of over 50 feet onto a ship's deck, rendering Jamie a quadriplegic. What occurred over the following days, months and years was a testament to the power of our community. Remarkably surviving the initial trauma, Jamie spent nearly eight months in the spinal and rehab centre of the Princess Alexandra Hospital. On his release from hospital Jamie, being a tall bloke, had to have specially built and designed equipment and a vehicle to enable him to do the things he used to take for granted.

After initial visits to Jamie from many staff, it was decided that we needed to act. We all knew that the items required would be a significant cost, so an appeal was started and the 'ambo army' went to work. With the support of QAS and the United Voice union, anything that could be done to raise funds was organised including golf days, Brisbane-Townsville and Cairns-Townsville bike rides and a Kokoda Challenge.

All of this would lead to building and completing Jamie's dream home in Kelso, Thuringowa. Our community came together. Major works were completed and the Queensland community raised over \$400,000 to ensure Jamie has a house he can raise his family in, be proud of and enjoy for many, many years into the future. If we could learn anything from Jamie's story it is simply that you can make a difference in someone's life just by showing up and being there. Be there for the long haul and help where you can. Never leave behind a mate who is doing it tough. These are not just my values; they are also the values of ordinary working people across our great state. These are the values of this government.

I believe in the rights of workers to be represented by their union. I am a proud member of my union, United Voice. It is unions that have worked hard over so many years to not just ensure that working people have a decent living but also have dignity at work. Unions have fought for so many of the protections that ensure workers can do their job safely and come home from work. United Voice is not just an ambulance union. It represents workers from our community, from the cradle to the grave—in our schools, our hospitals, childcare centres, stadiums, bars and clubs. I want to acknowledge the many members of United Voice who showed up to help my campaign—to make calls, to lift my spirits and to push me harder. I say this: with a united voice we won. The rights of workers to organise collectively to achieve better outcomes is a fundamental right and one I look

forward to seeing this government restore in our state. Of course it was not just the members of my union who showed up to help; this last campaign was a key moment in the history of our state. It showed the power of ordinary people to make change. It was a referendum not only on the sale of our ports and power companies but also about the style of government they wanted.

Good government makes a difference to the lives of every Queenslanders. Good government builds communities, it invests in our young people through training and education, it ensures our front-line services are staffed and equipped to do the jobs that need doing and it looks after the most vulnerable when they need help. Good government listens to the community, but it is also prepared to lead. I look forward to being part of a more inclusive, more caring government—more caring than the one just departed—and also look forward to being part of a government that takes the lead to build a better Queensland. I know that not every day will be easy, but I am committed to ensuring the people of Thuringowa have a voice in this place—a voice that is heard—and that the people of North Queensland get their fair share such as ensuring the upgrading of roads such as Riverway Drive to meet the everyday needs of our residents. This single infrastructure project in the Upper Ross corridor where 26,000 constituents live would allow the opportunity for local jobs, considerable residential and retail development and investment but has been held back by local politics. For far too long on this and other projects, the people of Thuringowa have had lip-service when what they clearly needed was action.

Thuringowa is home to our state's second largest state high school, Kirwan State High School. Its 2,000 students have no current covered hall for them to assemble in and the school pays an extraordinary amount of money to bus children some kilometres away to a private school for some assemblies and events. In the subtropics with the intense heat and humidity, rain and storms, this untenable situation is entirely deserving of our attention. Only a few weeks ago I attended a fantastic school event marking the school's respects for our Anzacs by holding its own ceremony. For the first time I witnessed the 2,000 students seated on the grass in the heat, and no amount of sunscreen, hats and goodwill of the teachers will reduce the many complaints from parents. This school has produced some amazing individuals, both sporting and academic, and our students deserve better. As a mark of respect, it should be noted that the bulk of these students, many of whom have gone on to have various roles in our communities, were at the school under the watchful eye and leadership of the recently and sadly deceased Kirwan State High School principal, Mr John Livingston. May he rest peacefully in the knowledge his school is in very capable hands with the acting executive team.

Of course the path to this career is not one that you travel on your own. The support of local people has been nothing short of amazing, but there are always those people who have made a mark and should be acknowledged. These are the people in my life who have supported, mentored, encouraged, picked me up and shown me a better way of serving our community. United Voice was not the only union to support me as word got out that a worker was standing at the last election. I am deeply grateful to the assistance of the ETU, the CFMEU and local organiser Mick Robinson, who is best described as a true-blue Aussie champion who is always there to lend a hand. Thanks must also go to the MUA, AMIEU, QNU, RTBU, NACU, Together, the ASU and, more broadly, the Queensland Council of Unions. These unions represent the workers in our community—a community that was sick of the arrogant and out-of-touch government approach to running Queensland. Special thanks to the UFU, Mr John Oliver, Jamie Ryder and Bill Hitchcock and to local UFU delegates for organising 15 firefighters who provided much needed boots on the ground on polling day.

To Mr Ken McElligott, I stand by this fact: one must remember where one comes from in order to know where one is going, or what to do when you get there. Ken is a man well remembered for his successive terms in this place and I am thankful for his guidance and advice over recent times. Thank you, Ken. To Mr Eddie and Heather Blain: Eddie was my mentor after joining the QATB in 1990. Eddie's guidance, mentorship and friendship certainly contributed to making me the person I am today. Thank you, Eddie and Heather. To Mr Jamie Jackway: Jamie's own situations and battles were never a discussion point for him. Jamie inspired me and supported me to go further to help others in need, and for that support I am very grateful. To my many peers in the ambulance, health, EMQ, Fire and Emergency Services: your constant belief and encouragement to succeed was second to none. Thank you to those who stood beside me, walked with me and provided me with well wishes of support and to those who were able to assist me directly during my campaign. Those long, hot days were worth it.

To Mr Gary Bullock and Matthew Lawrence from United Voice: both believed I could make change to represent others from the worker and community perspective and both were instrumental in assisting me to make this decision to run a reality. Thanks also to the United Voice executive,

ambulance union organisers Geoff Sharp and Kroy Day and past organisers John Webb and Jeanette Temperley. Thanks to the state council for ambulance in United Voice and Mr David O'Byrne for your calm words of wisdom when needed most. To my fellow state councillor Mark Denham who ran for Noosa: we shall keep a seat warm for you, mate. Thanks must also go to my campaign team. With a volunteer list of over 50, there are simply too many to name. However, special thanks must go to my core campaign team: Alec McConnell, Billy Colless, Eva Foster, Vera Dirou, Kurt Rebeihn, Ewan Hughes, Les Moffit and Peter Hindle. Thanks also to Mark Sterrit, Paul Jacob and to Lee Sallaway who pushed me to ensure that I could have a seat in this place. Thank you to Thelma Richards and Roslyn Mellon, both of whom are now working in my electorate office and are no doubt listening to me now. I put on the record that you are both doing an outstanding job. I also want to acknowledge Victoria Close, an 84-year-old lady who, as part of my team, assisted with the energy of someone half her age.

Special thanks to my fellow MPs Scott Stewart and Minister Coralee O'Rourke who joined me under the guidance of our campaign organiser, Patricia Schuller. We make a great and strong team in Townsville and I feel safe in the knowledge that I have made lifelong friends on this journey. Thanks to my friends who turned up to be there—some unexpectedly: David Beil and his entire family, Matt Brooks, Jeff Barton, Terry O'Sullivan, Ryan Hadland, Trevor Southern, Terry Caswell, Tony Scarsi, Angus and Ann Marie McDonnell, Michael Paulsen, Brad Garvey, Jon Mawdsley, Adam Harders, Sam and Vincena Sorbello and Richard Hayes. On election eve two good lifelong friends flew up to Townsville without my knowledge—Jason Dutton and Mark Hancock. They are here today. Thank you to each of you for your support. I simply could not have done this without you.

To my father, Allan, and his wife, Di, brother, Dale, and his wife, Mandy, for their support and love from afar: all was needed and appreciated. Finally to my immediate family: tough times were felt over the last year during a long, hard grassroots campaign. To my wife, Amanda, who would like to be here with me today but is in Perth with her extended family due to the death of her grandmother: I know you are listening and I love you very much. You have always supported me in my desires to go off and help people for any cause, mostly at some expense to us and our family. A simple thank you does not seem great enough a word to acknowledge what you have done for me by sticking by me at the most difficult times. Thanks to our children, Michael, Mitchell and daughter, Ashleigh. To Michael, you have grown up to be a fine young man and we are proud of you, particularly for stepping up in our absence this past week. To Mitchell: at one point my son Mitchell wanted to come doorknocking and make calls with me. He is 12—a future politician perhaps! Thank you, Mitch. To Michael, Mitch and our darling daughter Ashleigh, who thinks I am a great MoP—member of parliament: all three of you were forever patient, supportive and loving every step of the way. I am proud to have achieved the position of representing you and our community and will forever be grateful for the love and support shown to me throughout this election campaign. Let's get to work!

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Congratulations, member for Thuringowa.

 **Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (4.48 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise today, some 90 days after the election, to deliver my address-in-reply to the House. It is a great honour to serve the people of the Mount Ommaney electorate and the people of Queensland in this chamber. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the people of the electorate of Mount Ommaney for again putting their faith in me to represent them in the parliament of Queensland. As I have said before, I am proud of what I was able to achieve in my first term as the member for Mount Ommaney.

Locally, for my electorate of Mount Ommaney during the term of the LNP government, we saw the reopening of the public palliative care beds at Canossa, which the previous Labor government closed, putting the welfare and service delivery of those in a vulnerable state at risk. With the hard work of the former health minister, Lawrence Springborg, we righted a wrong for this community and secured recurring funding for this vital public service. We delivered two new ambulances to the local station, giving the community peace of mind. Front-line services were being revitalised and upgraded.

A record amount of money was spent in our schools to fix the maintenance backlog and to focus on improving literacy and numeracy for our students. The electorate of Mount Ommaney has eight public schools and with the introduction of the independent public schools program by the LNP government five of those schools successfully achieved IPS status.

The LNP government also delivered 12 extra front-line police officers, again adhering to our commitment to restore and improve front-line services. As I stated previously, a noticeable reduction in crime followed—a fact that was recognised and welcomed by the residents of the electorate.

Under the LNP government, the residents of the Mount Ommaney electorate enjoyed public transport reforms that improved reliability and a historic fare reduction, making transport costs more affordable. I must also mention the rollout of the flashing school lights program for our local schools. I think the former minister had expanded on how important was the installation of these lights. These lights have improved the safety of our children around schools. The lights also provide a great reminder for motorists to slow down.

Under the LNP government we also saw the newly opened palliative care community centre in Corinda. One of the most popular policies that was welcomed by the residents in my electorate, as I am sure in many electorates, was the Get in the Game program, which made it more affordable for kids to play sport. Back in 2011, Queensland Health reported that 30 per cent of children in Queensland were either overweight or obese. That is an alarming figure. The importance of encouraging kids to play sport cannot be underestimated.

I could not have managed the election campaign without my resilient team of members and volunteers who kept me grounded and focused. During the election campaign, my campaign team never wavered and their dedication to me and to the electorate was humbling. I would particularly like to thank my SEC chair and good friend, Dave McDonnell, who is going through a very tough period at the moment. Late in January 2015 Dave was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. I take this opportunity to say to Dave that he is one of the kindest, most decent people I will ever meet. Dave is a loyal LNP supporter and very much a dedicated campaigner. Like many others, I give Dave all the support that he needs during this difficult time.

To Damion, Tamara, Roger, Betty, Len, Robyn, Graham, Marie, Annmarie, David, the Hamiltons and their families, nothing was too great a burden. To Tony, Pam, Diana, John and Gloria, rain or shine they were always smiling and always giving 100 per cent. I thank them and all the other many volunteers for the tremendous effort that they put in. I also thank my fantastic electorate staff, who do such a wonderful job and who are so dedicated to customer service for our community groups and constituents. Like so many members, I do not think that you can ever underestimate how crucial the support of family and close friends is in our role as an MP. My three children, Natalie, Jonathon and Cooper, make me so proud. It is their generation that will be impacted by the decisions that we make here in this House. I thank them and I also thank my husband for their understanding, commitment, support, advice and love and the role that they play behind the scenes.

What is important to the people of the Mount Ommaney electorate? Sumners Road is a key piece of infrastructure that needs to be upgraded desperately. That upgrade has been talked about for over 10 years. In my first term I committed to fighting for the funding for that upgrade and had secured it if we were re-elected. I am hoping that an allocation will be made for this project so that it can still go ahead. I know that, as the Premier lives in my electorate, she would understand the frustration that the congestion that currently happens on a daily basis creates and how crucial this duplication is, especially when we see the industrial estates at Darra and Seventeen Mile Rocks as well as the Sumner business estate so reliant on access to the motorways.

I know that the Oxley United Football Club and the St Catherine's United Football Club were pleased when I was able to commit to much needed upgrades to their clubhouse during the election. St Cat's told me that this upgrade had been on the drawing board for over nine years. All of those projects were fully costed and funded by Treasury. I hope that the Palaszczuk government will not cut these projects that are so important to local families.

Western Districts Baseball Club at Darra had \$100,000 fully costed and funded and committed by the former LNP government to upgrade its night lights for playing, with the potential to increase the number of state games and training being held. Again, I hope that the Palaszczuk government looks at that program closely. Full funding was set aside to do much needed renovations to the heritage listed senior hall at Oxley—a quaint little building, reminiscent of yesteryear. I know that the Oxley community was very much looking forward to that project still going ahead.

Other projects that I will be fighting for over this term that had been raised with me during the election campaign include air conditioning at Corinda State School and the relocation of the Oxley police beat to a more visible location. With the transformation that Oxley has undergone—it has become such a vibrant, invigorated community—the relocation of that police beat is very much needed. Also, there was the call for more parking at the Darra, Oxley and Corinda stations. Lights at Middle Park State School and Centenary State High still need to be installed. Funding was allocated for that to occur. I ask the Labor government to follow through on that commitment. Again, our children's safety is paramount. Those lights provide a timely reminder for motorists to slow down in our school areas.

Cost-of-living issues are vitally important to the residents and businesses of the Mount Ommaney electorate. Under the LNP government, we had worked very hard to keep down those cost-of-living pressures. It was interesting to note that there was absolutely no reference to easing cost-of-living pressures for Queenslanders in the Governor's address. Why was that? Was it an oversight, or simply not a priority, or not on the to-do list?

My colleagues have highlighted the lack of confidence that the business community has expressed since this Labor government came to office, which the government has rejected. But when a government cannot articulate a vision or offer a plan for economic prosperity, when a government knocks approximately \$8 billion worth of projects on the head in a 10-day period on a whim, when a government sets up a record number of reviews, inquiries, task forces or any other creative name that you can come up with, it is through those actions that this Labor government has created that uncertainty. The business community's concerns are well founded.

As the 55th Parliament progresses, I would like to take the time to acknowledge those colleagues who, unfortunately, owing to the nature of politics, were not successful in returning for another term and also those who chose to retire, such as Rosemary Menkens, Vaughan Johnson and Howard Hobbs. When they were in parliament they did their electorate and the Queensland people great service.

I make special mention of my good friends and former members: Big Trev from Kallangur, Seath Holswich from Pine Rivers, Ian Kaye from Greenslopes, John Hathaway from Townsville, Darren Grimwade, Kerry Millard, Rob Cavallucci, Sam Cox, Aaron Dillaway and Anne Maddern, just to name a few. I wish them very well. They were part of this journey and should be remembered for their unwavering commitment to and contribution towards shaping Queensland into a great place to live.

To all of the new Labor members who acknowledged the legacy of the previous member I say thank you. Credit should be given where credit is due. I appreciated the comments of the member for Kallangur and the member for Logan.

Mr Ryan: And me!

Mrs SMITH: And the member for Morayfield too. Thank you very much for making those acknowledgements because being an MP is a unique role no matter what side of politics you are on. For those of you who thought it was necessary to rubbish the previous member, you have a lot to learn.

As the shadow minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and multicultural affairs, I have highlighted the work that the previous LNP government had done and had been working on. I am very proud of those achievements. The policy platform that we focused on under the LNP government included increased economic participation, building in-demand skills, more jobs, growing emerging businesses such as tourism and agricropping, increased home and land ownership—which I spoke about at length during the motion of confidence—as well as setting up the Yarrabah Community Health Centre with community participation. There was a lot of good work done by the previous government in that area and again I acknowledge the former minister, Glen Elmes, for that.

There is a lot of concern that jobs are in jeopardy in the north with the IFED project being suspended. Only two weeks ago the 100 per cent Aboriginal-owned corporation raised with me their concerns. This is a business. They have invested their money. They are putting their reputation on the line. They said the current government's suspension and dithering is placing up to 400 jobs in jeopardy. We cannot afford not to give people the opportunity to, at the end of the day, have input into their destination. A big part of that, as we all know, is job creation and employment.

I will quickly touch on some of the work that was done when I was the former assistant minister for child safety. The Carmody review was undertaken and I am extremely proud of the work that we had commenced. Part of my role was in the adoption area. A lot of red-tape reduction was identified and there was much better working relationships with the stakeholders involved. Our foster-carers are highly valuable members of the community. I do not think we value them enough, actually. There was a lot of rigorous documentation and process and assessments. These people should be highly valued. We certainly did do a lot of work there. It was wonderful to see the government make the announcement that it would continue with the commitment of funding to the Pyjama Foundation which we worked very hard to put in place. Those organisations that make a difference to children's lives have to receive money. While child safety is a very challenging portfolio it is also very rewarding when

one sees the difference that can be made in children's lives. Let us face it, a lot of these kids are behind the eight ball. To be quite honest, when there is a successful story in that portfolio it should be celebrated. I do hope that the Labor government continues on the work that we were doing in the spirit of the Carmody review. To put it quite simply, when we walked into the department's office three years ago what we found was an unsustainable child protection system that was at risk of collapsing.

In closing, we do not know what the future will bring, but I do know that the constituents of the electorate of Mount Ommaney and the people of Queensland can have faith that in my role in this parliament, as the member for Mount Ommaney and as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and multicultural affairs shadow minister, I will dedicate myself to holding the Palaszczuk government absolutely accountable. Thank you.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Maryborough, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and it should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions.

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (5.05 pm): It is a great honour to be here. I congratulate you, Madam Deputy Speaker, on your election to the position of Deputy Speaker. I would like to acknowledge the Turrbal people, the traditional owners of the land we meet on today, and pay my respects to elders both past and present. It is a great honour to be elected the 26th member for Maryborough, which includes eight dual members. Maryborough is one of the older electorates in the state. It is an honour to be part of the 55th Parliament and in the Palaszczuk government. I would also like to thank Mrs Maddern, the former member, for her efforts on behalf of the Maryborough electorate during the previous parliament.

I have said it is an honour to serve the people of Maryborough and it is. Maryborough is my home. I was not born there, I was born in the dusty town of Longreach when shearing was still the main income for the working person in the west. My wife, Jenny, and I moved to Maryborough in the eighties and started our family. I was a young radio announcer with a driving ambition to forge my own path and to one day be my own boss and own my own business. We relocated to Mount Isa, Longreach and Yeppoon and then back to Maryborough—I can't get away from the great city of Maryborough! The legacy of living in the west and the country has given me a passion to make sure regional Queensland survives—more than that: it thrives.

My father, Gordon, fondly known to all who knew him throughout the central west and north-west as 'Popeye', taught me the importance of Labor and the labour movement. It was only we, the people, who could create the change we needed; it was only us who could make the difference. I will tell honourable members about Popeye. There was only one thing he loved more fiercely than my late mother, Lola, and his family and that was the Labor Party and the labour movement—that and, of course, a day at the racetrack. My father was one of the longest serving bookmakers in Queensland. We come from a racing family. He was a card-carrying unionist until the day he died and a member of the Labor Party until his passing in 2004. Popeye was an influential force in Longreach. My daughter Ashleigh is still referred to as Popeye's daughter when she visits the central west as part of her work with the Together union.

My father helped make me the man I am today. It was his and my mother's guidance and tuition that shaped my beliefs and character. Popeye was a hard man when it came to social justice but soft as butter when helping those in need. I watched my father debate many decisions in party rooms, conference halls and town hall meetings. He was tenacious in his views on fairness and equality for all. When I was a young man my father explained to me the true value and meaning of what it is to be Labor. One of the things I remember him saying is, 'Bruce, Labor is for the people. It is a party that fights to protect the rights of workers and believes in a fair go. It is our responsibility as individuals to ensure everyone is treated with respect and dignity regardless of their colour, age, race or gender.' He said to me, 'Bruce, we must always help and protect our fellow people so no-one gets left behind.' As soon as age permitted I signed up to be a member of the Australian Labor Party. My father's beliefs did not just impact on my character through words but through actions. As I said, I witnessed him fight to stop Longreach from becoming a dying town. I watched him work hard to bring tourism and opportunity to an area everyone else had started to give up on. I see this now in my home city of Maryborough.

As I walked into my small business in the heart of the city counting the empty shops, as I listened to the heartache being poured out across the counter of the gelato store, as I heard stories of parents living in their cars just to ensure their children can be fed and had some sort of roof over their

head, as I watched health services being torn from our hospital, friends being knocked off waiting lists with life-threatening illnesses and their lives being destroyed because they could not afford alternative health care, as I watched public sector workers, many of whom were my friends, sacked and their houses go up for sale and people being forced to move away from a city and town they had devoted their lives to, I knew, like the people around me knew, change had to happen.

Just as my father taught me, it was up to us to bring Maryborough back to life. Only we, the people, could put Maryborough first. During the election campaign, you could feel the energy in the air. We opened the campaign office as a point of contact for people. It was somewhere they could go and share their concerns and ideas, have a cup of tea and talk about moving forward the great electorate of Maryborough. Harry Goodwin is a life member of the Labor Party. Next month, he will turn 90. He is a really good bloke. He is a man who, for all of his life, has put Maryborough first. Harry volunteered to look after the office. Poor old Harry got really swamped. Within a fortnight, we had over 170 people sign up to help the campaign. It was quite humbling to see the support and confidence those volunteers had in my vision for the future of the Maryborough electorate.

Twice in the 26 days of the campaign we letterbox dropped thousands of homes. That was all done by hand and on foot by our many dedicated volunteers. I ask members this question, and it is a sixty-four dollar question that has been in my head for the past five months: who calls an election campaign in the middle of a Queensland summer? If we were not battling 35 degree heat, we were trudging through the soggy land during torrential rain, doorknocking to spread the message. The only reprieve we had was the early morning sign waving before the harsh sun came out and burnt the noses of those who worked tirelessly and endlessly, but for a purpose. We were putting Maryborough first.

Without the constituents casting their votes, I would not be here today; but without the help of our volunteers, I would never have had the opportunity to represent the Maryborough electorate in this House. Election day was a blur of faces and people, booths and media, people everywhere, sunburnt faces. On that day, no-one worked harder than my volunteers. They were called the Saunders Soldiers. On election night I was touched when all the red, sunburnt faces greeted me with broad smiles. They were exhausted but excited. It was a constant fight to see over the hundred heads all crowding around the TV to watch the booth results. However, it was never ever perfect. There were times when I thought, 'What am I doing this for?' Then I would be greeted by an enthusiastic bunch of volunteers who would drag me out to the local markets and show me exactly why I was doing it. I was standing up for Maryborough.

No words can describe the gratitude and appreciation I have for the tenacious and dedicated team of volunteers I had during the campaign. Without their belief and support, I would not have made it through and I thank them from the bottom of my heart. The different people who enter our lives can show belief and support in many different ways. I would like to make a note, a thank you of sorts, although 'thank you' does not cover it all. My father, who raised me to be bold and strong and to fight for what I believe in, was right. Although he is not here today, I appreciate the life he and my mother shaped for me. I know he would be proud, although he would be turning in his grave this time, because I forgot to back my brother's horse which won the Magic Millions in the middle of the campaign. I say to my father, I am sorry I forgot to back the horse.

Another significant person in my life is not my brother by blood, although he is by loyalty. Jim Nilon believed in me and he believed in my vision for the future and all I stood for. He saw me through dark days and days of victory. I cannot express how much his friendship, mentoring and guidance have meant to me. The impact—and I do mean impact—Jim's influence has had on my life is not something I can put into words. When we speak about shaping a life it is hard to single out people, but Jim has been with me since I started campaigning in 1995 in the seat of Keppel and again in 1998 in Keppel. Jim has been with me all the way. It has been a great effort and I cannot thank him enough.

Thank you to Ron 'the General', who is working in my office at the moment. I would not have been able to get up at 4.30 in the morning without Ron texting me and ringing me to wake me up. As everyone in my campaign office knows, I am not an early morning riser. To Ron, better known as 'the General': thank you. To Paul 'the Cob', Adrian, Terry, Kath, Cas, Karen—and there are so many Saunders Soldiers that I could name—thank you. I will keep thanking you from the bottom of my heart, because you put Maryborough first. Paul gave up his job to work for about six or seven months on the campaign without pay so that we could win the seat of Maryborough.

Support comes from those closest to you. When I look back now, I suppose my wife, Jenny, and I were pretty young when we got married. I have spoken of the people who have shaped my life, helped me, driven me and guided me. My wife, Jenny, was always the glue that held the threads of knowledge together. She was a quiet whisper to keep me calm when I was doing my nana. She was a loving smile when I needed a friendly face. Without her, I would not be in this place today. I love her from the bottom of my heart and with all my heart. I have three great children and in those three children I see reflected the skills and values that I love so dearly in my wife. Her unwavering support during the campaign was a significant component in my success. I will not even try to say thank you to her, simply because words will never be enough. I thank my three children. Robert works overseas at the moment and could not be here. With the amount of texts and emails I received, I do not think Telstra or anyone else will go broke. My daughter Melina and her partner Sean came up and worked tirelessly on my campaign for weeks. To my youngest daughter Ashleigh, who is a union organiser for Together: thank you very much, Ash. You were the glue that held the campaign together and moved us in the right direction. As a father, I am extremely proud of my three children and very proud of my youngest daughter.

There were a number of things that stood out to me during the campaign. One of them, in particular, was a day that was not going well. I was tired and agitated, which seemed like the whole 26 days. I was hot from pounding the streets, talking to constituents. I had a sore throat because, as everyone in Maryborough knows, I talk a lot. I was trying to catch a moment in a local coffee shop to have a cup of tea. I saw a teacher from the TAFE college, who walked over to me. I smiled and introduced myself to him and we spoke of many issues and concerns from around the Maryborough electorate. He said to me, 'Bruce, Maryborough has a proud history. We can build anything here in Maryborough.' His words resonated with me because it is true. We can build anything in Maryborough. We have built warships and trains. We were an engineering hub at one time. I looked at that man, who is highly skilled and extremely undervalued. He is facing losing his job with the closure of TAFE, which will mean years of knowledge and experience stripped away from our electorate. He made me straighten up and I felt wash over me a new wave of motivation about the electorate. That is why I am doing this. We can build anything in Maryborough; we have and will again. We will build a future. It may not be warships—it may be something new—but it will be done with a government that cares and knows that regional Queensland needs and should have jobs, skilled jobs and jobs for young people. That is what my team and I were working towards.

Throughout the last couple of weeks of the campaign, time and time again I reflected on those words of a teacher better known as Franco. Thank you, Franco. Franco managed to put into words exactly the motivation of and pride I feel for the Maryborough electorate. It was motivating to see that he felt it, too. Maryborough does have a proud history. Curra in the south, Sherwell River in the north and all the towns in between make up chapters in the history book that is the Maryborough electorate. The history of Maryborough city is a history of Queensland that includes immigration and wealth from the goldfields of Gympie, from the cane fields, from the timbers of Fraser Island and from the manufacturing of warships and trains. We have a vast skill set for a vast electorate, rich with knowledge and experience. It was once the second biggest port in Australia behind Sydney, with over 20,000 immigrants passing through the port. Today, people in Maryborough still fondly talk of how at one stage it was rumoured to be the new state's capital. Thank you, Harry.

Maryborough has a diverse economy with tourism, one of the state's best engineering works run by Downer, the MSF Sugar factory, timber, grazing and other primary production industries. Before European arrival, for thousands of years the Butchulla people lived in Maryborough and they lived in harmony with the land. Today, I pay my respects to the Butchulla people. Maryborough has been called home to the dreamers such as PL Travers who dreamt up the life of Mary Poppins. It is home to brave men such as Duncan Chapman, the first digger to set foot on the soil at Gallipoli. On 24 April, we witnessed the unveiling of the Duncan Chapman statue. It is home to revolutionaries such as William Halliwell Demaine, fondly called 'Billy' in Maryborough. The life and work Billy injected into Maryborough continues today. He was a radical for his time, a trade unionist, a Labor member and a community campaigner. Billy Demaine formulated change that would be his legacy. He challenged conscription and fought for a better way of life for his colleagues. His was one of the first workplaces in Queensland to be granted an eight-hour working day. Billy was instrumental in providing a modern health facility and was the mayor who led the council in sewerage Maryborough city. He was also the oldest person to ever be elected to the Queensland parliament, winning a by-election.

The people of Maryborough have always been fighters—survivors. They know when to move with the tide and resist when their way of life is under attack. The Together union ran a town hall meeting last November where 500 people came to hear the state election candidates' vision to make Maryborough thrive again. I knew the gig was up then for the austerity politics of Mr Newman and his government.

There is a theme here; a theme of the people. My father knew it, Billy Demaine knew it, I knew it and so did the people of the Maryborough electorate. That is why a Labor government must look after the people. We must provide solid community services, health care, child safety, housing and health. We must ensure that workers have fair and equitable employment conditions and public sector workers have job security. Do members realise that every public service wage in a regional town supports private sector employment? It ensures that money still circulates throughout the electorate during hard times.

We have talked about the history of Maryborough, the great achievers and movers who shaped my life and the lives of the people of Maryborough. But let us talk about the future. We learn from the mistakes of the past, as I am sure the electorate of Maryborough has. We must always reflect on what has been, to help us build a better future. I have said we knew it was time for change. But what does that change look like?

I stand here with my colleagues. We may have different electorates with different priorities, but there is one thing we all have in common. That is our beliefs. Labor is for the people. No-one gets left behind. Madam Deputy Speaker Grace, I know that, like mine, the faces you see in this chamber will reflect this belief across our great state.

I will work tirelessly for the people of Maryborough, and at times that may make me unpopular in this place, but so be it. There is only one way to move Maryborough forward. That is to put it first—restoring our essential services like pathology at the local hospital, growing opportunities with development, training our young people in TAFE, ensuring no child goes without, improved social housing services.

During the election campaign the main concern that resonated throughout the crowds in the city and throughout the electorate was jobs. In the past few years that is something we saw stripped away from our electorate—employment and opportunities. Businesses which had been in town for years were forced to close their doors—shutting their doors on employment for people and closing up family legacies. This was all done due to a struggling and dying economy. The electorate was ignored and public services were ripped away.

For those workers who managed to keep their jobs, we saw their employment conditions stripped away—those long fought for and won conditions that people like Billy Demaine, my father and many strong activists fought to achieve and retain—and threats to their basic right to employment, security, consultation, workplace health and safety and threats to their unions. For businesses that managed to keep their doors open there was slow trade, a shortfall in takings and no other option but to close their doors or walk away without pay.

I will always stand up for public sector workers—the people who care for us when we are sick, teach our children, maintain our water supply quality and protect us in emergencies. We have the best people to assist with disaster relief, as Maryborough has experienced firsthand. We have hardworking public servants who roll up their sleeves and help—people like our SES workers and fireies, transport workers, child safety workers, disability support workers, nurses and ward clerks who care for the elderly, cleaners who make sure our hospitals and schools are clean and school officers who maintain our school buildings, grounds and facilities. I include also the very people who work here in the Parliamentary Service. I could spend my whole speech talking about the vital roles our public servants play in our communities.

As a proud member of my union—and I am a proud Together union member—I will always stand with them. In fact, I will always stand up for any worker from any industry. It is the workers who make up our electorates, who grow our crops, who drive our buses, who maintain our roads, who ensure our communities function. A worker comes in many forms. Whether they are a small business owner, a sole trader, a volunteer, they are a worker who contributes to their electorate and their community.

On 31 January the people of Maryborough voted for this change. They cast their votes, not just for the Labor Party but for their great electorate and for change. It was time to put Maryborough first. They voted for change with compassion and they rejected austerity and the privatisation of

government assets, the closing of TAFE colleges, the ignoring of young people and the ignoring of the need for jobs. I am proud to be part of that change and belong to a party that will restore the legislative rights that were taken away from the workers of Queensland.

It is time to move Maryborough out of the shadows and show the people of Queensland what we have to offer. On 31 January I stood in front of the Maryborough people and asked them to stand with me and put Maryborough first, and they have. I promise that I will put them first. I will help my community rebuild with compassion, fairness and equality and to thrive and be the dynamic electorate it is meant to be.

President Obama once said that one voice can change a room. If a voice can change a room, it can change a city. If it can change a city, it can change a state. If it can change a state, it can change a nation. The people's voice in Maryborough has succeeded in doing this—it has changed the state.

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (5.24 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise once again as the member for Mudgeeraba in this House and to reflect on all that has been achieved in Mudgeeraba over the past six years and all that is to come over the next three. When I gave my first speech in this House just over six years ago, I told the residents of my electorate that my role would be to champion their local issues, and that that would be how I would spend my time as their member. I said that I would continue to fight on their behalf to ensure that their needs were loudly and effectively represented in this parliament.

As I stand here, having been re-elected for a third term as Mudgeeraba's representative, I can say proudly that I have been the strong local champion I set out to be. When I was elected in 2009, Mudgeeraba had been neglected and ignored for eight long years. Our roads and infrastructure were crumbling. Our schools were underfunded and had huge maintenance backlogs. Our police were under-resourced. Our community groups and sporting clubs were not receiving the funding they deserved.

With the support of local residents, I have worked to ensure our local area in 2015 is almost unrecognisable when compared to the state it was in six years ago. Our roads, once feared as dangerously unsafe by locals throughout the hinterland, have been improved exponentially with \$519 million in road upgrades since I was elected. The M1 has been widened and its interchanges upgraded all the way from exit 73 in Carrara to exit 82 at Robina. Residents of Mudgeeraba and the Gold Coast travelling through Mudgeeraba will no longer encounter what was dubbed by locals as the infamous 'Mudgeeraba car park'.

It would be remiss of me if I did not raise the ongoing upgrade of the motorway. To the new Minister for Main Roads, who might not have the corporate history that I do of the M1, I ask: will you work with the members from the Gold Coast to ensure that both the state and federal governments commit to the continuation of the motorway upgrade from exit 82 to exit 85? There is a reason, Minister, why I have been dubbed the member for the M1 by local media. My electorate effectively spans exits 73, 75, 79, 81, 82, 84, 85 and the tail end of exit 87. I campaigned vigorously on every section of this motorway and every interchange on this motorway well before I was elected. In fact, my very first political story in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* was holding up a sign with the slogan 'We need the M1 upgraded now' in 2005.

During the course of the previous government we utilised savings from the upgrade of exit 73 to exit 79 to continue a third southbound lane over the flood plain in Mudgeeraba. Preload work and purchase of land on the flood plain for the northern section to be widened has already been completed and funding of some \$9 million identified by TMR to continue this much needed upgrade.

In addition, I would like to see the further \$125 million required to continue the six laning of the motorway from Robina to Reedy Creek. Both sides of the House are well aware that the M1 is the artery of the Gold Coast and needs future funding from both Commonwealth and state coffers.

Beechmont Road has been widened and cliff faces have been scaled back in mammoth projects to the value of approximately \$11.4 million. However, there is more work to be done. The strong and effective hardworking community group, SOS Beechmont—otherwise known as the Better Roads for Beechmont group—had already identified dangerous sections of what was then dubbed RACQ's worst state controlled main road. With strong advocacy from me, we saw massive upgrades of Beechmont Road, which made travel safer for not only residents of my electorate in Lower Beechmont but also residents of my neighbouring colleague Jon Krause MP, the member for Beaudesert.

The Better Roads for Beechmont group has identified a further one-kilometre stretch of road between Elimbah Court and Jardine Street which remains the only narrow stretch of road that is so narrow it cannot be lined with centre line markings. This stretch has been the scene of many accidents, and seeing cars over the banks at the side of the road is a common occurrence. The member for Beaudesert and I are committed to the completion of this final section of Beechmont Road. We ask the minister to request costing models for this final section of the road such that Beechmont Road will never again be called the state's worst road. The minister should take a drive up to the Beechmont Plateau and view for himself what has been done and what is still to be done. He would then be able to see that line markings cannot be done on this section of the road as it is too narrow and the road needs widening, not painting.

Springbrook Road has seen \$3.5 million in upgrades which have seen many stretches upgraded and resurfaced and safety barriers installed at various sections to improve the safety of motorists. Current roadworks of over \$1.1 million are currently underway under the Black Spot Program—and I thank my federal colleague Scott Buchholz MP, the federal member for Wright, for taking the time to work with locals and me to identify this much needed safety upgrade. Sadly, just prior to the roadworks being announced we had a fatality on this very stretch of road, and I look forward to this section being completed shortly. I am informed by Main Roads that it should be completed by the end of this month.

This road is a heritage listed state road, and I would also hope that the new Minister for Main Roads continues with the blanket approval for road maintenance and general road repairs provided to TMR from the former minister for environment and heritage protection, my good friend Andrew Powell MP. This was put in place so that we never see roadworks stopped for months on this road with one call from a radical green in Springbrook which put lives in danger whilst Springbrook Road looked like the Kokoda Track.

Worongary Road has seen large-scale upgrades, totalling \$6.7 million, with a \$2.16 million upgrade to the Worongary Road floodway having been completed only a few weeks ago after an earlier \$2 million upgrade from Brixton Court to Uplands Court. Worongary, Tallai and Gilston residents will no longer be cut off in the event of flooding as they were in the past. Worongary Road has had the most dangerous sections of this road identified and constructed. This road is no longer a road of state significance on our state network. Advice from TMR concludes that this road should be demoted and handed over to the Gold Coast City Council, and I urge the new Minister for Main Roads to look into this matter and resolve this issue once and for all.

Nerang-Murwillumbah Road has been upgraded to the tune of \$3.4 million and includes many areas of resurfacing and the installation of guardrails and numerous repairs caused by rockslides and landslides to ensure that this vital area remains open for hinterland motorists. In areas like Reedy Creek, we have worked to reduce traffic congestion by investing \$2 million in overpass upgrades, upgrades to the Bridgman Drive intersection and \$400,000 to ease congestion on the Old Coach Road roundabout.

Reedy Creek congestion remains a concern and, whilst I have worked closely with my local councillor Daphne McDonald to open up council roads to alleviate congestion from the school traffic from our three Christian schools, more needs to be done. The Old Coach Road Connector study, which was completed in 2012, needs urgent funding to open up exit 87 and Old Coach Road and Tallebudgera Connection Road so that the 2,000 cars from the Observatory who wish to travel southbound can do so without traversing an overpass and five sets of traffic lights. Referred to as the Old Coach Road Connector, this link would help manage traffic growth on the western side of the motorway and enable some local traffic to avoid the motorway altogether.

The first phase of the Old Coach Road Connector includes the preservation of a suitable road corridor between Burleigh Interchange, exit 87, and Old Coach Road. A connection in this area would provide greater connectivity between the Pacific Motorway, Reedy Creek, West Burleigh, Old Burleigh Town and the surrounding areas. The connection would also provide a more direct route from Tallebudgera Valley along Old Coach Road which ultimately would require upgrading.

Given that the Deputy Premier has all but confirmed that the Boral quarry will go ahead under a Palaszczuk-Gordon government, I urge the Minister for Main Roads to reject Boral's—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ryan): Order! Member for Mudgeeraba, the Speaker has had made a few rulings in respect of the proper title for members and the government. I ask you to correct that reference in your speech.

Ms BATES: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The Boral quarry will go ahead under a Palaszczuk government. I urge the Minister for Main Roads to reject Boral's pitiful \$1 million upgrade—where they want to bring a truck a minute through my already congested roundabout—and ensure that Boral goes back to its original design promised at a community meeting in 2011 and pays for the upgrade of exit 87 so the trucks go that way. If Boral want the rock then the taxpayers of Queensland should not be paying for the road for their trucks to go on.

I stood at a local meeting with Jann Stuckey back in 2011. We were all shown these wonderful plans by Boral about how they were going to connect the Tallebudgera Connection Road to Old Burleigh Town and take all of their trucks that way—that way not one truck would go through Reedy Creek. In their submission to the Coordinator-General and subsequently the appeal that is happening in the Planning and Environment Court, they have short-changed Queensland taxpayers and the Queensland government, regardless of what colour you are. All they want to do is put in an 800-metre stretch of road that costs \$1 million that is going to further congest that roundabout. I urge the minister to not be duped by Boral's planning for these trucks.

Our children are now getting the schools and education they deserve, after I secured \$8.5 million in funding and better facilities for our local schools, as well as an additional \$2.8 million to help them get ready for the transition of year 7 into high school. The Great Results Guarantee, implemented by my colleague and friend the member for Surfers Paradise, John-Paul Langbroek MP, has seen autonomy given to local principals so that they can run their schools the way they need to and are not being directed from Brisbane on how best to utilise funds in their own local schools. Many of my local schools were poised to become independent public schools under an LNP government, and I implore the Minister for Education to continue allowing local principals to run their own local schools. This initiative is a win for any member of parliament, regardless of political persuasion, and was well received by principals, teachers and the P&Cs of all my local schools.

Mudgeeraba is now a safer place to raise a family, with more police on the beat and a new police helicopter for the Gold Coast. Working with police, we have taken a more proactive approach and have seen graffiti decrease by 75 per cent in Mudgeeraba, hooning being addressed, and break and enters down by 27 per cent, and we have seen the scourge of criminal motorcycle gangs shown the door on the Gold Coast. I put on record my thanks to one of the nicest men I know, the Hon. Jack Dempsey, former minister for police, and for all that he did for me personally and my electorate, and I wish him all the best in his recovery from cancer, which he kept to himself throughout the campaign. You are sorely missed, Jack.

Community and sporting groups in my electorate are now receiving more funding than ever before and have been able to rapidly expand since I have been the local member. I am the proud patron of 15 local sporting clubs in my electorate, and since 2009 these clubs have received over \$500,000 to improve their facilities and boost their membership numbers.

Mudgeeraba is a fantastic family orientated electorate and we have huge junior sporting clubs in the area, and many of these clubs have well over 500 members like the mighty Mudgeeraba Redbacks Junior Rugby League Club, the Carrara Saints Junior AFL Club, the Mudgeeraba-Nerang & Districts Cricket Club—the oldest cricket club on the Gold Coast—the mighty Bushmen and the Mudgeeraba Soccer Club. Funds from the Get in the Game programs have enabled them to expand their clubs with new funds for new facilities which would have been unavailable to them in the past. There are clubs which have gone from strength to strength with new management like the Magic United Football Club and the Mudgeeraba Tennis Club who can now boast an incredible increase in membership and who are community orientated and work with businesses to help their local clubs prosper.

Other clubs are fledgling and enthusiastic, such as the Robina Raptors Junior Rugby League Club and the Spartans Junior AFL Club, where funding continuation of Get in the Game programs gives them a great hand up to take their clubs forward and are well received. I have already spoken with the new Minister for Sport and appreciate his comments, and I again ask that this new government continues this program as it is such a winner for local families, sporting clubs and members of parliament alike.

I congratulate my colleague the former minister for sport and recreation, Steve Dickson, for championing this program. The Get in the Game vouchers for young families to enable their children to participate in sports are a winner. I also thank the former minister for recognising our tourism potential, with hinterland areas like Springbrook National Park receiving great new tourism boosts like the Purling Brook Falls suspension bridge, fought for, funded and built by an LNP government. This

bridge will serve as a significant drawcard for the local community to get more visitors to our fantastic region and have them explore our world famous walking tracks. It took an LNP government to deliver this important initiative which would never have occurred under a Labor government beholden to extreme greens in Springbrook.

I would also like to see the revocation of the oval from The Settlement at Springbrook so that locals can play a game of cricket on their oval without burdensome regulations. This was planned prior to the last election and I would ask the Minister for National Parks to revisit this proposal for residents in my very small town of Springbrook.

In the lead-up to the election I announced \$155,000 for tourism signage at the gateway to Springbrook at Wunburra Lookout to get visitors up the mountain so they could explore all that this magnificent region has to offer. This was an issue supported by the Chamber of Commerce and Tourism operators on the mountain. A review of all signage was done in conjunction with the Gold Coast City Council, and I ask the Minister for Tourism to revisit this proposal so that tourists do not just get to Wunburra Lookout, think that that is all Springbrook has to offer and then turn around and go back down to the Numinbah Valley.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ryan): Order! Member for Lockyer, it is highly disorderly to be talking in the aisles. The member for Mudgeeraba has the call.

Ms BATES: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Springbrook needs a statement entrance, and locals manning the volunteer information booth would welcome signage and information facilities in conjunction with the Gold Coast City Council. These are tangible, concrete ways that, with the support of local residents, I have been able to achieve great results for the Mudgeeraba electorate.

As we turn to the next three years, there is still much more to be done and many more ways we can make our local community even better. As we speak, a \$155,000 footpath on Gooding Drive in Merrimac has been built after I lobbied the Department of Transport and Main Roads on behalf of local residents since mid-2014. This is a win for local families with young children in pushers and residents in wheelchairs or who use walking frames as they now have a safe footpath to go from Merrimac to Worongary to do their shopping or take their kids to local childcare centres.

The \$1 billion shovel-ready Pacific View Estate in Worongary, after nine long years in the wilderness, has finally been approved under the call-in process initiated by my good friend the Hon. Jeff Seeney, former deputy premier, who had the foresight to call in this significant project which is much needed in my electorate. Without his stewardship of this project, it would still be wallowing in the never-never.

Mr Cripps: Which one was that?

Ms BATES: Pacific View Estate in Worongary. I will continually remind the government that this was an LNP led project to generate jobs on the Gold Coast and not theirs. In fact, their own failed Labor candidate in Mudgeeraba rallied against the project. She obviously missed the memo.

Prior to the election, I made a number of important commitments which will serve to enhance our local area even further. Whilst these initiatives would have been fully funded by an LNP government, I will now fight to see these projects realised from the opposition benches. I will fight to further enhance the safety of our local schoolchildren by seeing flashing school zone lights installed at Mudgeeraba Special School, Numinbah Valley State School, Mudgeeraba Creek State School and Merrimac State School. I ask that the minister give these important safety initiatives priority and that my electorate is not neglected for having voted convincingly for an LNP candidate.

I will fight to secure \$100,000 to clean up Mudgeeraba Creek from the M1 to Somerset Drive at Glenwood Park. I know that my friend Andrew Powell assured that that would go ahead whilst he was the minister. I call on the new Minister for Environment to do what his former Labor predecessors would not do and give this project the recognition it deserves. I have an army of locals under the stewardship of one of my local Landcare groups who will take up the cudgel and repair this much neglected area of Mudgeeraba Creek.

I will fight to deliver \$300,000 to stamp out hooning in the Gold Coast hinterland by installing CCTV cameras, lights and signage in the Numinbah Valley at known hooning spots. I am very pleased that the new Minister for Police also sees the very real concerns this issue has for local residents and schoolchildren. I will fight to ensure that the \$5 million the former LNP government committed to an upgrade of the dangerous and confusing Gooding Drive roundabout as part of preparations for the Commonwealth Games will be delivered for residents of Merrimac, Robina and Carrara. It will be my role to continue to loudly represent the interests of the Mudgeeraba electorate from the opposition benches.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the countless friends and supporters who helped me win Mudgeeraba so convincingly. My campaign team are dedicated, hardworking individuals who gave countless hours of their time over the weeks, months and years that I have known them, and it is with their tireless support that I am standing in the chamber today. To the over 200 volunteers who were on the ground on the day of the election, I thank you—volunteers like Brad Smith, Carl Schuetze, Richard Lennon, John and Margot Rylah, Dorothy Davis, Ann Yates, Sally Marshall, Di Grayson, Sarina Patane, Cherry and Ron Pia, Bryan Durham, Pat, Matt, Rhys and Xavier, and all the members of the Clarey family who were there every step of the way with their own unique sets of talents not only during the election campaign but well before it. To Barb Malcolm, a very special woman who many think is my mum because we look alike, I thank you for your support, love and scones. My loyal staff, Jacquie and Alex, have worked incredibly hard for the past three years to support me in my role as the member for Mudgeeraba, and I could not be more grateful for their support and dedication.

Life in politics can be very difficult, particularly for our families, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Tracy Davis, Michael Hart, John-Paul Langbroek, Vaughan Johnson and Michael Crandon for the support they showed me and my family during very difficult times. To Tim Nicholls and Jeff Seene, thank you for all the times you stood by me, for all the wrongs that you made right and for being my voice when I could not speak. Most importantly, I would not be standing here today without the support of my family—my three beautiful, honest, strong, gutsy children, Ben, Greg and Jill, and my sisters, Jos and Cath, who have endured so much over the past three years and who have always been there to support me through thick and thin. The next three years will no doubt entail more highs and lows, challenges and rewards, setbacks and achievements, but through it all I know that I can always count on my wonderful children and my sisters to keep me grounded and on track. Six years on, it gives me great pleasure to reaffirm the important commitment I made to my residents in 2009. I look forward to loudly representing my constituents in the 55th Parliament of Queensland.

 **Ms GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (5.44 pm): It is nice to be back. Sometimes we wonder why we do this job, but I think all of us on both sides do it for all the right reasons. It is an honour once again to represent the people of Brisbane Central. Since the last time I was in the House our family has suffered a very sad loss. I dedicate this speech in loving memory of my beloved mum, Concetta Faraglia, whom we lost on 17 January 2014.

As I said, it is an honour to represent the people of Brisbane Central. This is a seat that I love. Those who know me know that I am an inner-city gal. I have lived in the inner city all my life. I grew up in Spring Hill. My Italian parents moved to the suburbs of New Farm from Spring Hill in the early seventies. I then married and live in the electorate. I can honestly say that I have never lived anywhere else and I love every minute of it. I have heard new members talk about the wonders of their seats. I was a little envious, and they did speak so beautifully of them, but nothing beats the city of Brisbane. It is the place where we have the best coffee shops. You just have to come down to my neck of the woods to enjoy a fantastic coffee and all the delights that we have to offer such as fantastic restaurants and eateries. It is becoming a world-class metropolitan city. Although it is in my electorate, I know that it is owned and loved by every Queenslanders in this place.

If there was a concern that came very early to me during the campaign it was that of overdevelopment. I will talk more about that later on. There was a lot of concern about the pressure that this is putting on inner-city living and the balance appears to be not right. It seems to be out of control. As I said, it is something that I will talk about a little later on.

I want to start by thanking all the hard workers who assisted me. I do not want to leave them until last because I do not want to forget to mention just how grateful I am for their assistance during my campaign to win back the seat of Brisbane Central. I want to start with my family: the love of my life and my best friend, my husband, Michael, and ditto my daughter, Aly. I do not think there is anyone in here who knows my husband, Michael, who does not love him. He really is a fantastic individual. He gives unconditional support. There was no job too big or too small for him to do. He made sure we were fed and watered—almost too well—and he was always there when I needed him. Similarly, my daughter, Aly, who turns 21 this year, I thank her so much for her patience in often not having her mum around. It is often a bit tough but now that she is a bit older it is easier than when she was younger and I was in here earlier. I love them both dearly. From the bottom of my heart I cannot thank them enough for their support and for everything they do for me.

A huge thankyou goes to my campaign team led by my fantastic—it is the only word to describe him—campaign manager, Pat O’Neil. We ran a great grassroots campaign and an excellent social media campaign which Pat was particularly skilled at. His expertise was only surpassed by his

good nature, hard work and commitment. I cannot thank him enough for all that he did. I wish him all the very best in his desire to enter politics at a federal level as the federal member for Brisbane. He is currently seeking preselection and I am hoping to assist him as much as I can for him to achieve that end.

Other campaign team members included Judi Jabour and Sam Jones, who now work for the people of Brisbane Central in my electorate office. I believe we make a great team. We have settled into the office. We have been so busy since we have started. It is quite unbelievable, but we are on top of it all, we are meeting constituents and we are out there in the community. I cannot say any more about the hard work that they have put in since we were successful in winning back Brisbane Central.

Coordinating volunteers, as all honourable members know, is one of the toughest jobs, but my volunteer coordinator, Kerry Kahlan, made the job look easy. She worked tirelessly to ensure the volunteers were out working every day—doorknocking, telephoning, having conversations, working at high-vis stalls, staffing booths, working at events, doing corner catch-ups and being fully informed about the campaign. This was her first attempt at working on a campaign and she did an excellent job. Thank you so much, Kerry.

There are so many people who worked on my campaign—literally hundreds—and it is not possible to mention them all, but thanks of course go to my family. My dad always had confidence that I would win back the seat of Brisbane Central, and it was great when we had the celebrations at the Brunswick Hotel. Dad had ordered the most enormous Italian cassata cake you have ever seen from the bakery in Kelvin Grove and Ashgrove called Gerbino's. This is a fantastic Sicilian family who make the best Sicilian sweets anyone in this House has ever tasted. It was huge and everybody enjoyed it, and dad was so proud and happy to have bought a victory cake and it was actually a victory celebration. My five sisters staffed the booths for me, and let me tell you, nobody mucks around with the five sisters of the Farfaglia clan. They had those booths under control and, boy, did they go for it. I also thank my nieces, nephews, friends and supporters.

Special thanks must go to my SEC committee—president Elizabeth Fraser, secretary Stella Donatini and treasurer Maree—who with the committee members made sure we were campaign ready when the election was called. I must also mention and thank other workers—Peter Fraser, Peter Casey, Lynn Kennedy, Adam Matthews, Pav Zielinski, Amber Hawkins, Anne Sleat, Lynne DeLange, Bruce Hunter, Nick Dalton, Richard Burke, Lloyd Casey, Talitha Burson, Kate, Kurt, Robert, Sarah, Susan, Stephen, Marie, Alana and Madonna. I give a particular thank you to Madonna. I met her in the street. She was incensed at what she had witnessed over the last three years. It was the first ALP campaign she had worked on and she did a fantastic job. I give a special appreciation to two visitors from WA who came to help in the election and I scored them—and, boy, did we score great. I want to thank Ryan Anderton and Vicki Burrows who did a fantastic job and fitted so well into the team.

I agree with the member for Maryborough who spoke about the heat. It was one of the hottest campaigns I think I have ever dealt with, and I do not think I have cooled down from the heat yet. It was great that my pop-up campaign office in Brunswick Street was air-conditioned, and we tried to make sure our volunteers were in the air conditioning as much as possible. I want to thank my good friend Gina Salanitri for the short-term renting of the little property in Brunswick Street. It suited us down to the ground, and I am so glad we were able to use it for the duration of the campaign. There was a great party atmosphere in there. There was a lot of hard work and it was great to have our functions across the road at the Brunswick Hotel. They looked after us and, boy, did we rock that place on the night that the victory was known.

I would like to thank all of the unions of course. I am a very proud unionist, having being the first female secretary of the Queensland Council of Unions in its history. I want to thank all of the unions who assisted in my campaign: the Plumbers Union, with secretary Brad O'Carroll, and Sharon and Tania were also an incredible support; the NUW, through Dani Shanahan and Greg Moran; the QCU, through John Battams, Ron Monaghan, the other staff who worked there, and some of them are now members of this House with me, and the incredible team from the not for sale campaign; and the QNU.

I want to thank the federal members who came up to assist, including Bill Shorten. On the very first day, Bill came straight to assist me with the campaign. He was welcome, unlike the Prime Minister at the time who I do not think we saw during the campaign. It was great to have Bill Shorten there. As I said, he is welcome at my campaign any time. I also thank Tanya Plibersek, Catherine King and Anthony Albanese who also visited and assisted, and I was very grateful for that assistance.

I want to acknowledge the support of my good friend the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer. They were by my side. We were raising issues and policies. We were attending events and they were supporting my campaign. The team that worked with me absolutely loved having Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk in the campaign office on the last day of the campaign. They loved every minute of it. I send a big thank you to the Premier for choosing my little campaign office to do that.

I want to also pay my deep gratitude to the Queensland Nurses' Union. Following the loss in 2012, I took a bit of stock of my life of where I was going and what I was going to do, and I could not have been happier than to have received employment at the QNU. I want to place on record my sincere thanks to the QNU—to the secretary, Beth Mohle, who would have to be one of the best union secretaries this state has ever seen; to assistant secretary, Des Elder; and to the QNU council for employing me to head up the member and specialist services team as their director. As we know, the QNU is the largest union in Queensland. They have over 53,000 members, with a 95 per cent density in the public sector. It was a pleasure to work with a dedicated industrial, professional service and legal team of workers and it was a privilege to have been able to work with all of the staff representing our great nurses and midwives in this state. The pity was that I saw firsthand the treatment of the nurses and midwives at the hands of the previous government. For all that they were saying—

Mr Minnikin: They got paid.

Ms GRACE: I will come to that—do not worry, I will come to that. For all that they were promised about front-line services, they could not believe that they had been betrayed like this by the previous government. I want to mention the vilification that happened to those who spoke out. I want to thank especially here the new Minister for Communities, Women and Youth. She assisted us with two members who were treated terribly in relation to speaking out about issues that they were concerned about. It was through the legal representation we gave those nurses that we cleared their names. They needed their union and they were there to represent them against the harassment that came from those opposite.

I want to clear up the issue of the payroll. They could see very clearly the difference between an unintended consequence and a direct intended consequence. There is a lot of talk around here about the cost of the payroll debacle and I want to draw people's attention to the Chesterman report and 7.1. It is a guesstimate that KPMG has made on the cost of the payroll debacle and they costed it out to 2017. The last time I looked, it was not 2017 yet, so those opposite should read 7.1 of the report and they will get the response. I cannot believe the misleading that goes on in this House in relation to that issue.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ryan): Order! Member for Hinchinbrook.

Ms GRACE: I guess it is breathtaking—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Brisbane Central will wait for the House to come to order.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Hinchinbrook and member for Chatsworth! The member for Brisbane Central has the call.

Ms GRACE: Thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. I guess it is breathtaking that we have those opposite asking questions about front-line services and who were front-line workers and who were not front-line workers, yet they did not know the definition of a nurse and a midwife as a front-line worker. It is really quite unbelievable that they could get up and ask questions like that.

I have got to admit that I am starting to become very concerned about the demonisation and the attacks on the union movement by those opposite and the message that this House is sending to workers across this state. Workers join their union for protection. They join their union for a number of reasons. They join their union because the union represents them. But there is this demonising. Workers know that in a workplace there is an imbalance of power between the workers and the

employers and the only way they can balance that power is by joining their union. This consistent attack from those opposite is concerning and in my view it must stop. If there is any example—and I have got thousands of them over my career—

Mr Minnikin: Thousands of them?

Ms GRACE: Actually, tens of thousands of workers that I have represented. There is no better case for a worker to join a union than the son of the member for Lockyer. I heard his story in this House about Cement Australia, about driving trucks that were unroadworthy, the treatment when there was an accident and the manner in which he was treated by a large employer. If there is any example of a worker's need for a union, thank you, member for Lockyer; you gave me a great example. I am positive that if his son were a member of the TWU, he would have been looked after.

Mr Rickuss: He was.

Ms GRACE: He should have gone to the union—

Mr Rickuss: I did. I rang them up and they didn't want to know about it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ryan): Order! Member for Lockyer.

Ms GRACE: There was no talk of this in the member's speech. Now, all of a sudden, things are changing when we are in the House.

In the history of the industrial relations system in Australia I have never known one employer to give any worker an advancement on their entitlements—not once. Everything that we have got for workers—maternity leave, superannuation, long service leave, annual leave, sick leave, casual loading, and I could go on—was hard won by the union movement. When it came to standing up against unfair federal laws, it was the movement that took up the challenge to the then Howard government.

There are a few things that I want to add about my electorate. I am passionate about education and looking after the schools in my electorate. I am proud to say that Fortitude Valley is not for sale. I also want to say that I recently received a briefing from the RNA. I heard the member for Everton, who at least stood up in his electorate and saved the Everton Park State High School. However, I would bet anything that that school does not have 2,000 apartments being built over the next 10 years, as is happening at the RNA site, and that is just across the road from the Fortitude Valley school. In 10 years time there are going to be 10,000 apartments there, and that is not taking into account all of the other cranes and the building that is occurring in my electorate. I do not think there is one crane that is not in the electorate of Brisbane Central. The amount of work that is going on is incredible. It was ridiculous for the former government to sell a school—and where would we get that land again—on a cash grab, and I am proud to say that we are not selling Fortitude Valley State School. I am looking forward to working on the master planning. It is great to be working with the P&Cs.

Let me tell honourable members that I have a very happy Brisbane Central State School because they now have their school, lock, stock and barrel. There is no mucking around about hiving off parts of the car park or secrecy about what was being built. There is no more, 'Oh no, you can't go down there, P&C. We're doing this the way that it was handled last time.' Under this government there is integrity, openness and transparency. That is what I am going to deliver and that is what this government is delivering.

There are issues around overdevelopment, traffic and parking and there are issues with which I am struggling regarding the vision of what this is going to bring about. I am looking forward to working with the Deputy Premier on addressing that vision together with the members for Bulimba, Greenslopes and other members who have issues with overdevelopment in their electorate. We can look at what is the vision and get into the Brisbane City Council, which appears to be addicted to development.

I am looking forward to working with the LGBTIQ community. We are looking at the law reviews and at refunding the AIDS Council. They are very eager to work with the government and I am eager to work with them in delivering those services. I have never seen a community sector more upset than during the campaign. The gag clause, the cuts in funding, the struggling that went on and then, to add insult to injury, there was the situation with the New Farm Neighbourhood Centre. We had already funded a \$600,000 improvement to their building. The former government then cut the funding and during the campaign we were told, 'We'll give you back the \$600,000, but only if I am elected.' What an insult to that community sector, which provides fantastic services in the New Farm electorate.

I also look forward to working with the entertainment precinct. The drink-safe precinct that we brought in was a fantastic experiment on working together with them. I have seen them. We are going to fix up the ID scanner debacle that members opposite left. We are looking forward to working hard on that.

I look forward to development in my area such as the Queens Wharf development and working with the Premier's office on that. I do want to acknowledge the previous member. It is a tough job to be an MP. I am happy to hear he is enjoying time with his family and I wish them all the best.

I have never come across an electorate that was so dismayed at the actions of the previous government—their arrogance, their attacks, their combative style and the fact that everything they saw they voted against. Let me tell honourable members that the people who voted against those opposite knew exactly what they were doing.

Debate, on motion of Ms Grace, adjourned.

MOTION

Order of Business



Mr HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (6.04 pm): I move—

That government business order of the day No. 1 be postponed.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

PARLIAMENT OF QUEENSLAND AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 27 March (see p. 233).

Second Reading



Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (6.05 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

At this time we usually have a debate on a private member's motion, but not tonight unfortunately. It was ruled out of order, so we will continue and get on with the job of governing this great state. We will go back to government business and pass this important legislation for the people of Queensland.

I thank the Finance and Administration Committee for its consideration of and report on the bill. I also thank those who made submissions to the committee about the bill and those who appeared as witnesses as part of the committee's inquiry. The government notes that, while the committee worked diligently and with goodwill on all sides, the committee was unable to reach agreement on all issues, including whether or not the bill should be passed. I do note, though, that the committee reached consensus agreement on the amendments to three of the four acts being amended by the bill, and I thank the committee for its support of these measures. These measures relate to the restoration of the autonomy of the position of Speaker within the parliament through the transfer of certain powers and responsibilities back to the Speaker under the Parliamentary Service Act 1988 and the retention of the position of Clerk of the Parliament as being the primary employing authority for the Parliamentary Service.

The committee also supports the increased role and voting rights of the position of Speaker on the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, the CLA, and the government's commitment that if the Legislative Assembly contains one or more crossbench members then the membership of the CLA is to include a crossbench member, reflecting in effect the parliament of the day. However, the committee's report has identified some concerns about the process outlined in the bill for how a crossbench member is included on the CLA. The committee has also sought to clarify the intention that including a crossbench member on the CLA would make it an eight-member committee. The committee has made two recommendations that cover these issues. I am pleased to inform the House that the government supports both of these recommendations, and I table the government's response accordingly.

Tabled paper: Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 2—Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015, government response [\[436\]](#).

I also take this opportunity to table an erratum to the explanatory notes to the bill which corrects a minor typographical error.

Tabled paper: Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015, erratum to explanatory notes [\[437\]](#).

In drafting the bill, it was certainly the government's intention that, when there are two or more crossbench members in the Legislative Assembly, it would be for those crossbench members to determine between themselves which of them should be nominated by the Leader of the House for appointment to the CLA. I note from the committee's report that it expects that the current Leader of the House would consult with, and consider the opinions of, crossbench members in selecting their representative for nomination to the CLA but that, in its view, the bill as it currently stands does not sufficiently express these expectations. The government certainly agrees that the current Leader of the House, the member for Sandgate, would have carried out the nomination process in consultation with the crossbench members with the highest level of integrity and decency. However, we agree with the committee's concerns regarding how this process could operate in the future. So I will move an amendment during consideration in detail that deals with this concern.

The amendment will provide that, if there are two or more members of the Assembly who are crossbench members, then the crossbench members are to advise the Leader of the House in writing whom they have selected by majority vote for nomination to the CLA. The amendment will also clarify that the Leader of the House does not have a vote in the selection process conducted by the crossbench members, and I think that is fair and reasonable. Furthermore, in anticipation that there may be circumstances in the future where crossbench members are unable to agree by majority on whom their nominee for CLA membership will be, the amendment provides that, if crossbench members have not advised the Leader of the House of their nominee within two sitting days of an appointment to the CLA being necessitated under the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001, the Leader of the House will select the crossbench member for nomination. Two sitting days is deemed to be a reasonable period of time within which crossbench members should be able to advise the Leader of the House of their nominee for CLA membership.

As outlined in the government's response to the committee's report, we also support their second recommendation. I will be moving amendments during consideration in detail to clarify that the crossbench member on the CLA would be an additional member, making it an eight-member committee. The amendments will also clarify that when the parliament has a Speaker who is not a member of a political party either in government or opposition, as it does now, the crossbench appointment to the CLA is in addition to the Speaker, who is already a member of the CLA.

The bill currently includes an amendment which provides that the quorum at a CLA meeting is five members. In recognition that in future parliaments the membership of the CLA may vary between seven and eight members, I will be moving a further amendment to the bill to provide that if the membership of the CLA is eight members then a quorum is five members, but if the membership is otherwise the quorum is four members. These quorum numbers for the CLA are the same as those that apply to the parliament's portfolio committees when they comprise a membership of either seven or eight members.

I now turn to the committee's comments about the amendments to the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal Act 2013. The committee did not reach agreement on the proposed amendments to the tribunal act, and this reflects what seems to be a fundamental difference between the government and the opposition on the issue of salary increases for its members. While both sides favour the retention of the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal to determine the salaries of members, we in the government believe that members' salaries should not be able to be increased by a percentage rate higher than that applying to public sector employees. From the committee's report it appears that opposition members do not agree that such a limitation should be placed on the tribunal.

In its submission to the committee the tribunal suggested that another way to enshrine the intent of the government's policy could be to embed within section 29 of the tribunal act that Public Service wage conditions are one of the principles that the tribunal may have regard to in making their determination. This seems to be something that the opposition members of the committee have taken up in the committee's report. While the government appreciates the good intentions of the tribunal in making this suggestion in its submission, the government will not be agreeing to any amendments of this nature.

As argued by the government members of the committee in the committee's report, any such amendment to section 29 of the act does not ensure that the intent of the government's election commitment would be adhered to. As the tribunal's chair himself noted at the committee's public

hearing, while an amendment to section 29 would provide explicit direction to the tribunal in that regard it would not necessarily guarantee the outcome that the bill is seeking. The only way to guarantee that the salary of members cannot be increased by a percentage rate that is higher than a rate of salary increase received by public sector employees is to legislate as outlined in the bill. As outlined in my introductory speech on the bill, placing a limit on the tribunal in this way is similar to the situation in New South Wales, where their parliamentary remuneration tribunal also operates under a limit in setting salary increases for members. My government stands by its election commitment to Queenslanders regarding members' salaries, and I ask all members to support the amendments to the tribunals act as drafted.

The government notes the committee's report has expressed that two potential fundamental legislative principles issues were not examined in the explanatory notes to the bill. In response, I can advise that my department has noted the committee's comments about these FLP issues and accepts the committee's view on the matter of completeness of explanatory notes. Regarding the fundamental legal principle issues themselves, the government does not accept that the bill prejudices the independence of the judiciary. While the tribunal may be viewed as a quasi-judicial body, the tribunal, as the committee itself has pointed out, is already subject to mandatory direction under the tribunal act. The parliament is the supreme lawmaking body in this state, and the government believes that parliament is free to amend legislation as it sees fit to mandate how the tribunal is to act and what types of things it should take into consideration when making decisions.

Regarding the issue of retrospectivity and the revocation of the 2.58 per cent salary increase the tribunal granted to members from 6 April 2015, the need for retrospectivity in the bill is twofold: firstly, retrospectivity is necessary to deliver on the government's election commitment that future salary increases for members would be linked to those of public servants. The government's election commitment relates to future salary increases for members—that is, any salary increases from the January 2015 election onwards. Public servants in the core Public Service have not received a salary increase since the election. Their last salary increase was granted on 1 December 2014, and their next salary increase is due on 1 December 2015. To allow the tribunal's determination granting the salary increases from 6 April 2015 to stand would mean that members will have received a salary increase when public servants have not. There would be no link between the two, and this would be a fundamental breach of our election commitment to Queenslanders.

Secondly, retrospectivity is needed because it was not possible for the parliament to consider this bill without suspending standing orders and declaring it urgent before the salary increase commenced on 6 April 2015. This government is committed to seeing that bills are given proper consideration through the parliament's committee system, and this is the process that the bill has taken.

Lastly, regarding the retrospective element of this bill, it is worth remembering that the salary increase which the bill proposes to revoke is a salary increase that only affects members of parliament—not other Queenslanders. All members of this House will have an opportunity to debate and vote on this bill, so all members will get to have their say on the fairness or otherwise of the retrospective nature of it. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (6.16 pm): In rising to contribute to this particular bill, I reflect upon circumstances that I have seen in this place over a significant period of time. Frankly, once members of parliament start to involve themselves in setting their own pay, it is a zero-sum game. I did not see any winners when we attempted it a couple of years ago, there will be no winners out of this and there have been no winners out of any other reforms that I have seen in this place with regard to the superannuation of members of parliament. I would urge members to reflect upon that because it does not matter what we do in here tonight: we will still be pilloried for any pay rise that we receive in the future.

I would invite members to reflect upon statements which have been made along those lines by the former member for Rockhampton, the former member for Logan and the former member for Chatsworth a couple of times removed, the Hon. Terry Mackenroth. I say this collectively through you, Madam Deputy Speaker: you may believe that this is going to be populist policy—and it will be populist—but it is not good policy. If you walk down the street and ask members of the community if they believe that politicians have a defined benefit superannuation scheme, almost 100 per cent of them would say that they do. That was taken away in this place following a dalliance by Mark Latham at the time in the federal parliament—who, quite coincidentally, managed to collect his own superannuation before he did—which basically forced John Howard to match him and raise him, and then we reflected that in this parliament in about 2004. Notwithstanding that, every single bit of

commentary that I have received in my electorate and the commentary in the media, including those who were here during the course of that particular debate, is that we still have a lucrative superannuation scheme. I would say that the majority of the members of parliament in this place do not have that; there are only a handful of us left who do. Even when the very few of us who are left depart this place, it will still be popular mythology in the community that we are in receipt of a defined superannuation benefit scheme that is better than anyone else's in the community. Nobody ever wins on these issues.

I am not going to stand here today and say that our government's handling of this was perfect: far from it. We attempted to correct an imbalance that occurred because our act of parliament linked us to the Commonwealth members of parliament back in the 1980s. Then federally over the years as a matter of convenience they choose not to pass it through, and then it would be corrected and there would be a disproportionate pay rise as a consequence of that. Then the premier of the day would choose not to accept it and there would be a catch-up situation. As I indicated, it was a zero-sum game in this place and this will be as well.

I think it is fair to say that if you go out there and ask people, 'Should it be linked to public servants' pay rises?' most people would say, 'Yeah, that's okay. That makes sense.' Going back 10 or 15 years, there have been times that Public Service pay rises, for some of the Health workforce, have been around 10 per cent or even more. Where does it actually go at that stage? I would ask honourable members to consider that this does not guarantee there will not be future pressure on politicians to intervene in this.

To me, the real problem with this approach is that you cannot, on the one hand, say that you are going to link your pay to public servants and, on the other hand, continue to maintain an independent remuneration tribunal that is responsible for setting politicians' pay. You either do it or you do not. I do not particularly have a problem with linking it to public servants, but let us not have the facade of having an independent tribunal. Let us just establish it as a matter of policy. Instead of saying to an independent remuneration tribunal, 'You can continue to exist for a particular reason but you cannot provide a pay rise above that; it can be between zero and that level,' let us just set it at the Public Service level—whatever is the determination of the government of the day—and leave it at that and not have what is, in effect, a neutered and pointless independent remuneration tribunal. I think that is something members need to consider. I have no problem with pay rises being linked; I have a problem with this farce of saying that we are then going to have an independent remuneration tribunal. Honourable members cannot discount what the tribunal itself has actually said.

Ms Palaszczuk: They are going to support it.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I take that interjection. Whilst you have an independent tribunal—the whole point was to have independence—we will not support something that undermines that principle. Unless the government is prepared to say, 'Our policy simply links pay rises to those of public servants,' and not have this particular facade—otherwise, why would you have it in place?—then I do not believe that we are in a position to support it. You either believe in it or you do not. Why would you have an independent tribunal?

Let us reflect upon what those opposite have said in this place. All the way through they have said that they have acted with the best possible knowledge and the best possible intent in terms of the legislation which established the tribunal. They also make a number of really interesting points. I think it is also important to reflect upon the fact that public servants in Queensland had a government determined pay rise in 2013 and 2014, and that will happen again in 2015. That has occurred on about 1 December each year. As I understand it, public servants did receive 2.2 per cent in December last year and that will occur again in December this year.

Ms Palaszczuk: The election was in January.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I am coming to that point. So there was 2.2 per cent in December 2013 and 2.2 per cent in December last year, and there will be another 2.2 per cent in 2015.

The point the tribunal makes, I think exceptionally well, is that it has not made an adjustment to the base of members' pay since June or July 2013. It did not make its determination in December of last year and it felt that there was no need to do that. It made a determination which applied from 6 April this year of 2.58 per cent. As the tribunal has said so well in its submission, there are 125 days—from December last year—for which there was no effective pay rise for members of parliament. Indeed, 2.58 per cent over what is effectively eight months is less than what 2.2 per cent would have amounted to if it were applied over the whole year. Members can stand in this place and say, 'Well, 2.58 per cent sounds greater than 2.2.' It would be if it applied over the whole year, but it is

not when you take 125 days out of the start of the year. Again, we are not really getting the true story from the government with regard to that. It will be popular out there in the community, but it does not advantage proper, informed discussion around pay rises for members of parliament. No-one wins with this whatsoever.

I mention one other thing that we heard last year during a not very decorous time when discussing the previous pay rise for members of parliament in Queensland. As I indicated, I do not think that covered any of us in glory. At the time I think there were nine Labor members of parliament—the members for Woodridge, Redcliffe, Bundamba, Mackay, Stafford, Inala, Rockhampton, Mulgrave and South Brisbane. Members of the opposition stood up and said that, as a matter of principle, they would not take their pay rise but would donate it to charity. I bet my bottom dollar that did not happen. I would love those members opposite to stand up tonight and say which charities or community organisations they donated that money to. I bet it did not happen. It is very easy to say that because you can never, ever be held to account for it. The electorate allowances, which members of parliament can donate with relative impunity and properly to those organisations, and the extra tens of thousands of dollars in some cases that may have actually come from that pay rise cannot be separated out. I am prepared to bet my bottom dollar it never happened. If members opposite wish to dispute that, then let them come forward with the facts. I bet that will not happen.

I have heard statements being made in this place for over a quarter of a century now. Members of parliament—mostly Independent members of parliament because, again, it has been a populist thing—have stood up and said, 'I am going to donate my salary increase to charity.' No-one can ever prove it. Guess what? Those members lose their seats just the same as any other member of parliament, because all it does is prove that you do not value what you do as a member of parliament and you are prepared to play politics. In all of my time in this place I have stepped away from doing that and have always provided the same cautionary warning that the former members for Rockhampton, Logan, Chatsworth and many others who were members for a long period time and have seen the same sorts of very ugly, counterproductive, go-nowhere debates—

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I would say to the honourable member for Bundamba that she is one of those members of parliament who stood up and said that she was going to donate her pay rise to charity. She should stand up and tell us that she donated it to a charity. That is the challenge. Unlike her, out of that money I have run a second electorate office not funded by the government. That has actually cost money, as it does with other members of parliament. Other members have actually done those things.

Ms Palaszczuk: Well, I have looked after your constituents. You didn't look after them. They came down to me.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I will actually touch on that point made by the Premier. That particular constituent came to see me the day before—

Ms Palaszczuk: That is right. Then they came to see me.

Mr SPRINGBORG:—with a request around Queensland Gas. They at no stage raised any issues with regard to public housing. I look forward to seeing how the Premier actually addressed and fixed the one issue they raised with me, which was around their dispute with Queensland Gas. Can the honourable the Premier inform the House that she has fixed that dispute with Queensland Gas, which was the one issue—

Ms Palaszczuk: I sorted their housing out. I fixed their housing up.

Mr SPRINGBORG: They never raised the housing issue with me. The Premier has led with her chin in that. That is not the issue that was actually raised. That is the cheapest of all cheap shots.

Ms Palaszczuk: They came down to my electorate office.

Mr SPRINGBORG: That was on an issue that they did not even raise with me. I look forward to seeing how the Premier has fixed that issue relating to Queensland Gas. Has the Premier fixed that? Has the Premier fixed Queensland Gas?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Through the chair, please.

Mr SPRINGBORG: No, she has not. This is the cheapest of cheap shots. The point is that there is nothing in this piece of legislation that indicates we will fix this issue once and for all.

As the tribunal has indicated, there has not been a base correction for members' salaries since about June 2013. The Premier said in this place in her dissertation that that correction happened at a higher level than what public servants have enjoyed through this year and previously, but that is not

true. In effect this means that there will not be a pay rise for members of parliament this year—and the tribunal says going back to 2013. If that is what the Premier so wishes, then that is the way that it is. But the impression that was given in this place tonight was that there had been and it had been at a higher rate than was achieved by public servants.

Sitting suspended from 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Before the dinner break I was talking more generally about the implications and concerns with regard to the government's policy about the determinations in the future for members' salary increases and the way that it impugns the independent decision-making process of the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal as it relates to politicians' salaries in this state. To recap on that before I turn to the issue of the effect of this bill with regard to the Speaker and his or her powers now and in the future, it is very important to look at page 2 of the submission from the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal dated 20 April 2015 to the relevant committee. The tribunal points out—

In relation to the general policy matter, the Tribunal advises caution. The development of the Act that established the Tribunal arose as a direct response to previous Government intervention—

that being our government intervention—

in member salaries and entitlements. While the Tribunal understands the relevant amendments in the Bill are well intentioned, the reality is that the history of Government decision-making and intervention in this area has been fraught with difficulty.

The submission continues—

The fundamental principle of independence of the Tribunal is arguably challenged by the proposed reform as it has the effect of directing or at least influencing the Tribunal's decision-making.

The tribunal submission goes on to indicate that if the government is determined to pursue this particular process then it would be far better advised to make an amendment to the existing act to give a direct requirement on the tribunal to consider the underlying public sector wages policy as a part of its decision-making process, not putting this ceiling which in effect encumbers the tribunal from being able to act in a fully independent way. It is again very important to reflect upon the fact that no-one has ever been able to address this so-called magical solution of coming up with a fix for politicians' pay that in any way lessens the odium that we all suffer in the community. What I have found in my time in the parliament is that I can find any number of people within the community who can tell me how much I should not be paid; I can find very few people who can tell me how much I should be paid, and that is the great challenge that we have. From the lowest possible proposal right through to people then starting to draw an analysis or some comparison of a chief executive of a major corporate company who is earning millions to someone who is a blue-collar worker earning a few tens of thousands, people have myriad opinions about what members of parliament should be paid. We should not forget for one moment that there are 89 people who are chosen and given the privilege of representing the community of Queensland in this place.

Mr Rickuss: Three-year contract.

Mr SPRINGBORG: It is a three-year contract, as the honourable member for Lockyer indicated, during which time members are responsible for making extremely difficult and challenging policy decisions and can be responsible of course for making decisions that impact upon the life and the lifestyle of many Queenslanders. If we consider that as a part of the base of a minister's salary, then we are also talking about a minister who is responsible for budgets in the area of, say, \$10 billion or even \$15 billion. I think it is important that we consider that as a part of this decision-making process. Again, I go back to what I said earlier before the dinner break. I remember very well in this place a lot of caution being provided a number of years ago when we set about changing superannuation because it was said that that would fix the problem in the community. No-one would feel aggrieved and no-one would feel that there was disparity that existed between the superannuation of politicians and the general community. Fast forward 10 years and just about everyone in the community still believes that we have defined benefit superannuation. This will not address that problem. It may be seen to be smart politics, but it is not very good policy for a range of reasons. I would imagine that there would be many members in this parliament tonight who think that, with the passage of this legislation—that will be inevitable because the government has introduced it and it will go through this place—and the retrospectivity, the retrospectivity is a small adjustment of 0.38 per cent because the determination of the tribunal was 2.58 per cent in April of this year for politicians vis-a-vis 2.2 per cent for the general wages policy for public servants and therefore the adjustment is 0.38 per cent. No, it is not. It is basically a retrospective process that applies to ensure that there is no pay rise for politicians this year. It is zero.

If that is a matter of government policy, if everyone is clear on that, then that is fine, but that is the effect of it. The tribunal has also warned that the effect of this legislation is to further create a disparity in adjustment between MPs' salaries and that which it tried to set the base against previously, because there has not been an effective increase to the base salary of members of parliament since the middle of 2013. There has been additional salary for those in office-holding positions such as the Leader of the Opposition, ministers and other people within this parliament but not for backbench members of this place. Indeed, that will not come in until the end of this calendar year. If members are clear on that, then that is fine, but I am not sure that a lot of members have actually been clear on this fact to date.

If we are going to make a decision around in some way restricting or guiding the remuneration tribunal, then its suggestion of having a clause in its legislation that directs it to give consideration to the government's public sector wages policy is fine. However, this does not seek to do that. It seeks to curtail that and says that it can be no more than what the government's public sector wages policy of the day is. If that is the case, then why does not the public sector wages policy apply for the 2014-15 calendar year or the 2015-16 calendar year? Why does it not apply equally? It is going to kick in at the end of this year, but it does not apply to the start of this year. Therefore, I think that that is the really significant disparity with regard to this and that is the reason why the LNP is unable to support that particular clause in the legislation, because if you have a tribunal then you should let the tribunal do its job. If you are going to do its job for it, then do not have the tribunal. Make the decision as far as linking pollies' pay to public sector pay rises in Queensland and let it have effect and let it follow not only next year but also this calendar year and going back as well, because this legislation does not enable that.

The other issue that the bill seeks to address is the independence or the so-called independence of the Speaker. I think it is important to have a little bit of a brief history lesson for those who were not a part of the original decision and the committee that oversaw the review of the committee system in this parliament, the effective establishment of the portfolio committee system that we have in this place, the establishment of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly and also refining the powers of the Speaker. That goes back to the action of a previous government—the Bligh government—which brought that process in. It was supported in a bipartisan way by the LNP at that time. The recommendations were bipartisan. The legislation that came through the parliament was bipartisan and had proper and good intent at the time. There was always a degree of discussion amongst the Speaker and previous Speakers about whether it was the right way to go. However, there was precedent with regard to this in other places around the world including in Canada, where the role of the Speaker was specifically refined and defined around dealing with the day-to-day management of the chamber and there was a committee which oversaw the running of the rest of the precinct on behalf of members of parliament.

So it has worked in other places and Queensland was not unique in adopting that process for the Speaker and restricting what was the historical autonomy of the Speaker of the Queensland parliament. It is also wrong to say that the Speaker was no longer autonomous, as referred to in the explanatory notes. The Speaker still had significant autonomy, but it was a different style of autonomy. It did not extend to all of the areas of the precinct. This legislation seeks to extend the autonomy of the Speaker to where it was, or very close to where it was, prior to 2011. By and large, the Speaker continues to maintain complete and absolute control over this place, as the Speaker should. As we saw the member for Lockyer find out during the course of today and as did many other members of parliament who were warned during the course of the day, the Speaker is also responsible for maintaining the decorum of the parliament.

This legislation will also see the role of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly restricted. Many functions have been brought back under the power of the Speaker and the Speaker has the ability to delegate particular matters to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly as he or she sees fit in accordance with the issues of the day. The Clerk will maintain, as I believe the Clerk should, the responsibility for employing the various personnel in the parliament—that is only proper—but the Speaker will be responsible for all of the other management and dealings of other issues, such as the accommodation of members of parliament here and off site.

The other issue is the expansion of the membership of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly to include a non-government member of parliament who is not an official member of the opposition. That is fair enough. Of course, we have an interesting situation in this parliament where we have a Speaker who is an Independent member of parliament. In order to facilitate that expansion, the legislation will need to be amended later on. We support the amendments that the Premier has given an indication that she will move later that will clarify that situation and ensure that another

non-government member of parliament who is not a member of the official opposition, outside the Speaker when the Speaker is also an Independent member of parliament, can be a member of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, if I can paraphrase it as such.

With regard to the role of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly and the change in the responsibilities of the Speaker, which has been debated much over the last four or five years, in my view that was generally done with good and proper intent to make sure that members of parliament had a greater say in the running of this place. There was good intent around that, but we recognise that the government made certain commitments around this issue previously. There has also been a call to restore the role of the Speaker to a more traditional way of doing things. By and large, the LNP will support that.

But the important point that I think remains unchanged, which was a part of the original recommendations back in 2011, was the establishment of the policy committees. Those policy committees are extremely important. Any parliament that seeks to function properly to ensure that we have legislation that is well considered should have a good and strong process that not only inquires into the policy intent behind the legislation that has been introduced into the parliament but also is able to test the various definitions of that legislation, the way that it has been drafted and to be able to take submissions from the public so that the public can be involved with regard to improving that legislation. Committees always have the right and the prerogative to initiate their own inquiries and to conduct their own investigations. That is an important part of the process of having policy committees.

By and large, for the reasons that I have outlined, the LNP cannot support that clause in the legislation that seeks to restrict the independence of an Independent Remuneration Tribunal, because it really defeats the purpose. It is not an independent tribunal. You may as well just get rid of the independent tribunal, everyone agree on a policy that the pay of the members of parliament should be linked to whatever the government's policy for public sector pay rises are at the time and basically leave it at that. That would be very easy. We would not be going through the facade that I believe we are going through tonight. Frankly, whilst it may sound populist, I believe that it is going to come back on us in the future. It is not going to solve the problem. The perceptions of the public will still exist. The only real and proper way is to have a true and proper independent process that everyone agrees on and, therefore, stands the test of time and that we get on with the business of dealing with the day-to-day management of this parliament and the government of the state rather than play lowest-common denominator politics. I am not blaming one side or the other over this, because I have seen it on both sides in my time in this place. But it is a zero-sum game and, as a consequence, we all lose.

 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (7.45 pm): As chair of the parliamentary Finance and Administration Committee that reviewed the proposed Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill, I rise in the House to speak in support of the bill, along with the proposal for amendments. The purpose of the bill is threefold: to restore autonomy to the position of Speaker by returning the responsibility for the management of the Parliamentary Service to the Speaker; to enable a non-government member who is not a member of the opposition to sit on the Committee of the Legislative Assembly—the CLA—and to provide the Speaker with a deliberative vote on all questions at CLA meetings and a casting vote in the case of a tied vote; and to retrospectively revoke determination 7/2015 of the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal and outline a new process for the tribunal to follow in making determinations about salary entitlements for members of the Legislative Assembly. The mechanics of the bill amends four current acts of parliament: the Financial Accountability Act 2009, the Parliamentary Service Act 1988, the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 and the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal Act 2013.

I commend and thank all the members of the Finance and Administration Committee: our deputy chair, the member for Coomera; the member for Barron River; the member for Stretton; the member for Broadwater; and the member for Condamine. I thank them for their hard work and for the goodwill on all sides towards reaching a consensus. However, despite that goodwill, in the end we were unable to agree on whether to recommend that the bill should pass. Although we were able to reach agreement on the amendments to three of the four acts, we were unable to do so on the amendment to the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal Act.

The government members agreed that the bill should pass with amendments, which relates to the representation of non-government members who are not members of the opposition on the CLA. I will speak to those amendments a little later. Although the opposition members agreed with those amendments, they considered that additional amendments would be required before they could support the bill.

Before I move on to comment on the bill itself, I would also like to thank all of those who gave evidence to the committee, including the Australian Lawyers Alliance, the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal, former Speaker the Hon. Jim Fouras, the Accountability Round Table, and Mr Neil Laurie, the Clerk of this parliament, as well as the dedicated departmental public servants involved.

I would like now to comment on several aspects of the bill in particular. I will not cover all of them, as I believe the committee's report makes it clear our deliberations on every issue, but there are some of note. With this legislation we have before us crucial steps towards restoring the public's faith and trust in the parliamentary and political process. In that sense, the three aims of this legislation are all connected. By restoring the autonomy of the Speaker by returning to the Speaker the responsibility for the management of the Parliamentary Service, we are moving to ensure that the office of the Speaker is legitimately independent. By ensuring that a member of parliament who is a non-government member but not a member of the opposition sits on the CLA, we are moving to greater representation and diversity and, therefore, greater transparency and better scrutiny. By setting in place a new process to determine salary increases for MPs, we are reinforcing a dignified, transparent and accountable process that meets community expectations about equity and fairness.

Now more than ever it is critical that we can send a strong message to the community about the integrity, accountability and transparency of the political processes in Queensland. Following on from the Newman LNP government, a period during which the public's confidence in the decision-making processes of the state government must surely have been at one of their lowest ebbs in years, the community must know that we are going to the greatest possible lengths to ensure their confidence.

The average person could be forgiven for thinking that the Newman LNP government was intent on making executive government and parliament some sort of secret society that only people who supported that government could join. You certainly got slapped down if you disagreed with them. There is a list of their own former LNP members who complained about never being able to question any decision in this very House that the Premier and his inner circle made. We saw multiple breaches of the integrity of the political process. They attacked the independence of the judiciary, they watered down the independence of the state's anti-corruption watchdog—

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order. It relates to standing order 118, relevance. The member is right off the target.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Order! Member, just a moment please. I call the member for Bulimba.

Ms FARMER: They watered down the independence of this state's anti-corruption watchdog, including removing the need for bipartisan support.

Mr CRANDON: I rise to a point of order. As the deputy chair of the committee, I fully understand the full content of the bill and of the deliberation of the bill and I ask for your ruling on the relevance of the debate.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bulimba, if we could come back to the bill before the House.

Ms FARMER: I am just establishing the issues about integrity and transparency. They sacked the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee and they changed the composition of the parliamentary portfolio committees.

Mr STEVENS: Madam Speaker, that is absolutely ridiculous in terms of relevance.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for Mermaid Beach. Please wait for the call.

Mr STEVENS: Under standing order 118 the member is way off the target. This bill has nothing to do with the Crime and Misconduct Commission, it has nothing to do with anything she is speaking about at the moment. Please get her back on the subject before us tonight.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bulimba, if we could once again refer to the bill in question that would be fine, thank you.

Ms FARMER: One of the major tenets of this bill is to restore the autonomy of the Speaker. The Accountability Round Table noted in its submission to our committee—

The previous legislation that displaced the Speaker from this role and gave it instead to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly (CLA), in fact gave the government of the day control over the management and operations of the Parliament, because of the way the CLA was then structured.

It went on to say—

It was contrary to the historical role of the Speaker and provided the executive government with control of the seat of the legislature.

I refer to the comments by the member for Southern Downs about the previous bill being supported in a bipartisan way. In fact, that was the last time I had the honour of being a member in this parliament. It certainly was supported in a bipartisan way. However, I think no-one anticipated when conferring that sort of power that there was going to be anyone like Campbell Newman.

Ms Simpson interjected.

Ms FARMER: Leaving a government like the Campbell Newman government with the power of parliament that had been conferred upon it previously was like leaving Dracula in charge of the blood bank.

Ms Simpson interjected.

Ms FARMER: That is why it is so important that the first bills to be debated in this parliament will have been the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill that was passed at the last parliamentary sittings that addressed right up-front the many transgressions of integrity that had occurred under Campbell Newman.

Ms Simpson interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for Maroochydore. The member for Bulimba has the call.

Ms FARMER: That was followed closely by the bill we are now considering, the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill. These are strong statements from this government about its priorities of bringing back integrity, accountability and transparency. The Premier made it clear during the state election campaign that there is more to come on that front. We have seen the parliaments of many other jurisdictions opening up their processes and making their workings far more transparent and accessible to the public and I think in particular of the mother of parliaments at Westminster. As the then Speaker of the House of Commons, the Right Hon. John Bercow MP, noted in a speech to the Hansard Society in March this year, and I paraphrase here, democracy not only needs to enjoy the weight that it deserves, it must be seen to be done.

This bill proposed by our Premier is not just a matter of doing what other jurisdictions do, it goes to the heart of what the Palaszczuk government is about and that is about integrity, transparency and accountability. It is a direct response to what the community has been telling us is important to them. Campbell Newman destroyed the trust of the Queensland people in the political process. However, those same people have placed their trust in the Palaszczuk government and we intend to show them that that trust was well placed.

Under the leadership of Mr Speaker we now have a truly independent Speaker. This is a situation that has not occurred in Queensland for a long, long time. His ascension to that role provides us all with the opportunity for a new start and a reset of how we go about business. The amendments dealing with the Speaker's role are crucial and clearly shows our determination to rebuild the independence and trust in the parliamentary process. They are based on the Premier's promise during the election that if elected she would restore the autonomy of the Speaker.

As explained in the explanatory notes of the bill, the objectives of these particular amendments are to give the Speaker rather than the CLA responsibility for the management of the Parliamentary Service, thus restoring autonomy to his office—although the Clerk of the Parliament would remain the primary employing authority for the Parliamentary Service; they would allow the Speaker to have a deliberative vote at Committee of the Legislative Assembly meetings on questions of responsibilities and a casting vote in the event of a tied vote; they would make the Speaker responsible for calling meetings of the committee and for setting the agenda for those meetings; they would ensure a non-government member who is not a member of the opposition is included on the Committee of the Legislative Assembly; they would increase the quorum at committee meetings from four to five members; and give the committee responsibility for matters referred to it by the Speaker.

The Accountability Round Table noted in its submission to our committee—

The new amendments will fortify the autonomy of the Speaker and provide an important element of the separation of the powers of government and the legislature—one of the few such remaining in our modern parliaments.

I now turn to that part of the proposed legislation that deals with the inclusion of a non-government member who is not a member of the opposition on the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. Currently the membership of that committee comprises the Leader of the House or

alternate, the Premier or alternate, the Deputy Premier or alternate, the Manager of Opposition Business or alternate, the Leader of the Opposition or alternate, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition or alternate and the Speaker or alternate. The inclusion of a non-government representative who is not a member of the opposition would mean expanding the current committee from the seven members I just mentioned to become an eight-member committee with the Speaker to hold a casting vote in the event of a tied vote. It was on this matter of representation of those non-government members who are not members of the opposition that the committee spent quite some time. All members felt very strongly that if those members were to be truly represented on the CLA then they needed to have ownership over that choice. Under the proposed legislation it would be the Leader of the House who would nominate the representative from that group and although the bill that was before us had implied that the Leader of the House would consult with the crossbenches in coming to that decision—and we know, of course, that the current Leader of the House would most certainly do that in the most respectful way—we wanted it to be much, much clearer what that process would be and that, in fact, it would be those members themselves who would be making that decision in consultation with the Leader of the House.

The other amendment relating to that group was whether crossbench members could nominate an existing member of the CLA. And, of course, we have the particular circumstances now where that could occur and it may do so again in the future. The two amendments that we recommended in our report went to the heart of the representation of those particular members. I think all of us on the committee were very pleased and grateful to the Premier for considering our recommendations and agreeing to take them up.

As I mentioned earlier, the only part of this bill on which the Finance and Administration Committee disagreed was the section of proposed amendments dealing with the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal Act 2013. Before I go any further I do wish to put on the public record my personal appreciation for the work of the tribunal to date and the very professional way they have dealt with a complex set of issues. They are an eminent group and they are to be acknowledged for their careful and informed deliberations.

The clauses of this bill dealing with politicians' salaries go to the heart of an election promise made by the Premier. The Premier promised that she would cap politicians' pay increases at the level applied to Public Service pay increases. We note that a similar system occurs in New South Wales and in the Industrial Relations Commission. That is what Annastacia Palaszczuk told Queenslanders she would do and it is exactly what she is aiming to do with this bill. If she says she is going to do something, that is what she does.

As honourable members know, the question of setting or resetting salaries for members of parliament tends to be vexed and subject to heated public debate. From our work on the Finance and Administration Committee, I know that there is some suggestion that pegging members of parliament salary determinations to those in the public sector removes the independence of the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal. However, the government members on our committee disagreed and, in fact, when questioned the tribunal chair himself noted that he was not necessarily saying that the proposed amendments would affect the independence of the tribunal. I do not see that the proposals in this bill dealing with politicians' salaries in any way compromise the independence of the tribunal or are a negative reflection on its good work. It simply puts a ceiling on what those increases can be in the same way as occurs in New South Wales and in the Industrial Relations Commission. It is putting in place a rule for the tribunal to follow; a rule that means the tribunal can independently set a salary increase at any level it wishes to, but only up to a certain limit. That is the rule and, if anything can be read from the strong reaction of the residents of the Bulimba electorate, it is one that the people of Queensland will welcome with open arms. In the lead-up to this debate tonight, all of my colleagues have said the same thing: it does not matter where they went, throughout all of the campaigning, all the doorknocking, all the one-on-one conversations with constituents, there was a really strong reaction and a lot of goodwill towards us being so predictable and definite about what that capping would be.

Funnily enough, I note what the member for Southern Downs said in terms of what he is asked about all the time when he walks down the street. I do not want to quote his exact words, but it was something to the effect that people ask him about the defined benefit fund. To be honest, no-one in Bulimba has asked me about the defined benefit fund. It may well be that that is because the Leader of the Opposition will receive a defined benefit fund. It is actually a pension that he would have received at the age of 31 if he had left this place at that time. It is interesting that he is still defending

that. However, I am grateful that when he makes the jump to the federal level, he will not be receiving a second pension. In fact, the future member for Maranoa will not be a double dipper which, of course, is one of the new catchcries of his future federal colleagues when talking about the parental leave argument.

This bill will translate the message from the community that they want to curtail excessive members of parliament salary increases. It means there is never any confusion or anticipation amongst the people of Queensland about what a politician's next pay rise might be. It allows the tribunal to proceed with dignity and independence, and provides clarity and transparency about its decision making. As former Speaker the Hon. Jim Fouras told our committee, perception is everything. Not only do we put fairness back into the process, but also we are seen clearly to have put fairness back into it. I am very proud to be considered a public servant of this state and I do not consider myself any better than any of the good public servants who support us in our work and are out there supporting the people of Queensland. I am perfectly happy to have any salary increases capped at their salary increases.

I turn to the issue of retrospectively overturning determination 7/2015 of the tribunal made on 5 March and backdated to April this year. This is no more or less than a continuation of the commitment to keep members of parliament salary increases at a rate of not more than the public sector award increases. The then leader of the opposition and now Premier was very clear that when elected these changes would happen. Members who are going to be affected by this were given prior warning. As we know, when the Premier says she is going to do something, she goes ahead and does it.

The changes proposed in this bill are important and necessary changes. We must always back the heart of our system, the separation of powers. This is not some backroom academic argument. The important role of the separation of powers is happening right here in Queensland today. No doubt the proposed legislation before us today will not be the last word on the work we need to do to ensure the parliament reconnects with the people of Queensland as a pivotal part of the state's public discourse. As our friend in London Speaker Bercow has said in a speech made earlier this year about the House of Commons—

This House is in the process of being rebuilt—it is not the finished article. Indeed, realistically, we will never achieve the finished article and it would probably be a fatal conceit to imagine that we could do so. It is in the nature of a human institution to be imperfect and improvement will always be a work in progress.

I think Queensland is definitely a work in progress after the excesses of the past three years. This bill is a step in the right direction. It represents necessary steps to send a strong message to Queenslanders about the way this government will approach its task. We need to support this bill and the amendments in the interests of accountability. We need to reconnect parliament with the people of this state, rather than being seen as a rubber stamp for the executive arm of government. I urge all members to support it.

I cannot resume my seat without mentioning the tireless efforts of the staff who support our committee in the preparation of this and future bills. Deborah Jeffrey our research director, Maggie Lilith our principal research officer, and Carolyn Heffernan and Louise Johnson our respective executive assistants have been unfailing in their dedication to what was a long and detailed examination of the bill. I thank them for their intelligence, their patience and their support.

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (8.06 pm): I rise to give a contribution as the deputy chair of the committee that examined the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015. At the outset, I join with the chair of the committee in acknowledging our secretariat and, of course, the other members of the committee for their tireless work in pulling the report together. I encourage everyone to take the time to read it. There are some good debates in the report. Most importantly, members will find that all of the evidence supports a recommendation that was received from the tribunal itself to ensure that the Premier's promise to the people of Queensland would be satisfied, but in a way that would not in any way hamper the tribunal's independence.

Two parts of the bill are without dispute; we are all supportive of them. Our committee had some debate about the crossbenchers selecting their own representative on the CLA. There was a great deal of debate on that, but at the end of the day the committee was able to come together and agree. I will talk about that briefly in a little while. Issues relating to the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal formed the more substantive part of the deliberations that we undertook in our many meetings and discussions at various times, with some of us spending up to three hours in teleconferences to be part of those very important discussions.

Initially the committee received five submissions and there were five witnesses at the public hearing. The five witnesses were the Australian Lawyers Alliance; the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal; the Hon. Jim Fouras AM; the Accountability Round Table or ART, represented by the previous integrity commissioner, Dr Solomon; and the Clerk of the Queensland Parliament, who is a very independent clerk who was able to give us good advice in relation to how we could proceed with this. In our discussions, community sentiment was mentioned. Sadly, none of that community sentiment came to the committee. I do not now believe there was any community sentiment in relation to this matter that would force us to change what we have, which is a good system, that is, a good independent tribunal. However, the suggestion was put forward in the committee.

The witnesses who attended the hearing were: Dr David Solomon AM, representing the Accountability Round Table; Professor Tim Brailsford, the chair of the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal; Ms Joanne Jessop, member of the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal; Mr Neil Laurie, the Clerk of the Parliament; and the Hon. Jim Fouras AM, a former Queensland Speaker and retired member of the Queensland parliament.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr CRANDON: I will not take that interjection at this stage. I have some very important things that I need to talk about. I make the very strong point to this parliament that in the committee we were always very careful to talk about the real issue. The real issue was the independence of the tribunal. It has nothing to do with MPs' salaries today, what they were five years ago or what they might be in five years time. It is about the independence of the tribunal. It is important for us to stay on track in that regard. It is about independence. It is about the freedom of the tribunal to make the decisions that it needs to make without political interference.

The majority of comments in relation to the tribunal were that its independence should continue. It is very important for us to remember that. I read out a list of submitters to the committee and witnesses at the committee hearing. All of them talked about the independence of the tribunal. All of them were in support of the tribunal maintaining its independence. Let me give an example from the transcript of the committee's hearing. Professor Brailsford stated—

Over the past 20 months since our establishment, I believe that we have acted very fairly, certainly independently, we have acted impartially and we have been consultative. We have gone out to public submissions. We have received I think over 2,500-odd public submissions and they are all up on the website and continue to be so. We have been very transparent, we have been very open and we have been open to media scrutiny the whole way through. We have worked very closely and effectively with the Clerk.

...

Surprisingly, the tribunal's role has been, not by intent, one where we have assumed some national leadership. Other jurisdictions either had or have, since our establishment, incorporated their own remuneration tribunals. We have found that our work tends to lead those of other jurisdictions to the extent where now we get semi-regular requests for advice from the other states and jurisdictions.

It is important to understand that the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal is seen as a leader when it comes to independence in determining the wages and conditions of members. The Hon. Jim Fouras stated—

Can I make one suggestion to the people here who are doing the job: I think if you have an independent tribunal, it should be independent. I think this idea of playing politics because we are going to be doing it like that is not the way to do things.

That is what a previous Speaker of this parliament—a Labor Speaker of this parliament—said when speaking to our committee about the independence of this tribunal. The Clerk of the Parliament stated—

I accept the right of political parties during campaigns to make political election commitments. I accept the right of incoming governments to implement those. The difficulty that I have at the moment and this is no disrespect to the Tribunal at all as I said in my submission, is that you have an independent tribunal but at the same time you are in a way at least capping or limiting it to some degree.

Three independent people gave evidence before the committee—one of them being a previous Labor Speaker of this parliament, a well-regarded member of the Labor Party and a well-regarded member of this parliament—and each one of them talked about the independence of the tribunal. It is very important to look at the evidence.

We have two choices in this House. We have two choices in our committees. We can look at what the policy is and then go out to the marketplace and look for the evidence to support that policy or we can look for the evidence and develop our policy from that evidence. In this case, we were not

able to achieve what we needed to achieve. We looked at all of the evidence and we could only come to one conclusion—that is, the independence of the tribunal should remain. Indeed, the tribunal itself brought another solution to our committee. They did not just come along to talk about the problem; they came along, as we would expect, with a solution to the problem—with a way of satisfying the Premier's promise to the people of Queensland but at the same time retaining their independence as a tribunal that will determine forevermore what our salaries and other conditions should be in a completely and utterly independent way.

In our discussions I raised the issue of independence many, many times. I went to the internet, as we all do, and I googled the word 'independence'. What does it mean? What is the definition of independence? The definitions are: not influenced or controlled by others in matters of opinion, conduct et cetera; not subject to another's authority or jurisdiction; autonomous. As a House, if we do not vote to disallow the aspect of this bill that will put a cap on the independence of the tribunal we will go against the concept of independence as supported by all those who came before the committee and spoke about that aspect of the bill.

I mentioned the CLA before. I think the chair has probably covered that very well. As I mentioned earlier, we were able to come together and have a good win. It is a good win for the parliament. I thank the Premier for her gracious decision to allow the recommendations that were made by the committee. The Independents and those sitting on the crossbenches are now able to select their own representative to be on the CLA. As part of the recommendation we have stated that if in another parliament or sometime in the future there is a deadlock then the Leader of the House at the time, whoever that might be, is able to make a decision. I acknowledge that a two-day turnaround for the Independents and crossbenchers to come to a decision on their representative on the CLA is certainly adequate time. That allows the parliament to move forward and conduct its business in an appropriate way. At the same time, it gives the Independents and crossbenchers the opportunity to select their own representative on the CLA.

I go back to the issue of the tribunal. All of us supported the tribunal continuing in its role. It was a unanimous decision that the tribunal should continue in its role. Where we differed was around its independence. Those on this side of the House supported independence and those on the opposite side of the House—the government side—did not support independence. They supported interference. They supported interference in something that has worked—that has worked so well that other jurisdictions have come to them and asked for their advice.

We supported the goal that the issue of MP salaries should never again be addressed for politically motivated reasons. They supported setting a precedent for people to point to, as was referred to by the Clerk in his words—and I am paraphrasing—that you have done it once, you can do it again. So we are out there in the marketplace and there is a pay rise coming and the so-called independent tribunal puts the pay rise recommendation forward, and there is an outcry in the marketplace and we can bring it back to the House and change it. We can retrospectively cancel it out, as we are proposing in the House today, and rewrite the rules yet again. Politically motivated reasons are the only reasons why something like that would happen.

As I mentioned earlier, we pointed to the evidence that supported not changing the act to instead embed the requirement as put forward by the tribunal. To read directly from our report—and this is paraphrasing the independent tribunal—the tribunal's submission suggested that another way to enshrine the intent of the government's policy reform is to embed the benchmark of the Public Service wage conditions within section 29 of the act which deals with the principles and factors the tribunal must have regard to when making decisions. It is giving the tribunal a set of things that it needs to give consideration to. The independent tribunal made it very clear to us on more than one occasion—certainly in its written submission and in its testimony—that it already did take those matters into consideration. I talked earlier about how many submissions it received. The independent tribunal suggested, 'Why don't you just put it into section 29? Why don't you simply say that we need to give consideration to the factors when making our decisions? That would work.' That was the argument that we put forward. Remember I said that this is all about independence. It is not about salaries. It is not about what we are going to get. It is all about the independence of the tribunal. We put this independent tribunal in place some 21 months ago and it has worked. It has worked so well that other jurisdictions, as I said earlier, have been coming to us and asking us for our advice.

Those opposite ignored the only evidence provided to the tribunal. There was no evidence to the contrary. I will use the term here—because I wrote it down a moment ago—'community sentiment'. Twenty-five months ago there was plenty of community sentiment about all of the issues. Where did that come from? That came from the fact that a previous Labor government decided it was

going to ignore the legislation currently in place—break the law, in essence—and not pass on the salary and wage decisions from the federal government to this parliament. That is fine; we all copped it. We were not here for the money. None of us—not one of us here—is here for the money. Each and every one of us is here for our communities. But that was the community sentiment. Where was the community sentiment while we were considering this bill? There was not one submission from anyone in the community. Certainly not one person from the community has spoken to me or any of the members on this side about this issue. It was a non-issue for them. It was in the mind of the Premier during the election campaign to throw that in as a sweetener or a feel-good measure to offer to the community. There was no evidence whatsoever.

To round things off, we said that the Premier's promise could be accommodated by taking the recommendation from the independent tribunal to embed the benchmark of the Public Service wage conditions within section 29 of the act. That would have done the job. That still will do the job. I call on members to support the independence of the tribunal. Do not go down the political path and support the concept that at some future date someone is going to use political motivation to make it look good for them in the community again.

Finally, I call on the crossbenchers—I hope they are listening in their rooms—to please support the suggestions and recommendations that we make—

Miss Barton: Shane is here.

Mr CRANDON: Good on you, Shane. There he is over there. Sorry, the member for Dalrymple—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Order! The member should be referred to by his proper title.

Mr CRANDON: My apologies, Madam Deputy Speaker. I call on the crossbenchers to support the recommendations that we make, and that is to embed those points in section 29 of the act.

 **Mr PEGG (Stretton—ALP) (8.25 pm):** I am glad to speak to this bill this evening because this bill goes to the heart of what this government is about. This bill will go some way to restoring the accountability and proper parliamentary process that was sorely lacking under the previous government. As parliamentarians, it is critical that we maintain the confidence of the community. The Premier has established this government—the Palaszczuk government—as one of accountability and integrity. It is important that this parliament continue this work and continue to restore the faith of the Queensland people in the parliamentary process.

This bill will accomplish that aim in three different ways. First is the restoration of autonomy to the position of Speaker within the parliament. This will be achieved by returning the responsibility for the management of the Parliamentary Service to the Speaker. Second is enabling a crossbench member to be included as a member of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly and providing the Speaker with a deliberative vote at CLA meetings on all questions. In the case of a tied vote, the Speaker will have the casting vote. The third purpose is to revoke retrospectively determination 7 of 2015 made by the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal, or QIRT. The bill provides a new process for the tribunal to follow when making determinations about salary entitlements to members of the Legislative Assembly that will ensure members' salary increases are in line with community expectations.

I will talk about each in turn and explain why they are each important measures for this parliament to adopt. The first point is the restoration of autonomy to the position of Speaker by returning the responsibility for the management of the Parliamentary Service to the Speaker. This bill implements the election commitment to restore the autonomy of the role of Speaker. The independence of the office of Speaker is central to the Westminster system. It is important because in our system of government parliament is functionally separate from the executive. Parliament is not a plaything of the executive government; it is a deliberative body in its own right.

This bill will provide for the Speaker to take responsibility for the management of the Parliamentary Service. This power will be transferred from the Committee of the Legislative Assembly to the Speaker. This means that the Speaker will rightfully have the responsibility for managing the Parliamentary Service. While the Speaker will have the responsibility for managing the Parliamentary Service, the Speaker will not be the employing authority. Importantly, the Clerk of the Parliament will continue as the employing authority. This bill will not change the current situation where the Clerk will be the employing authority for the officers and employees of the Parliamentary Service. This is of course similar to the situation that exists in government departments.

The second purpose of the bill is to enable a crossbench member to be included as a member of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly and to provide the Speaker with a deliberative vote at CLA meetings on all questions, and in the case of a tied vote the Speaker would have the casting vote. These legislative changes will ensure that the CLA reflects the diversity of the parliament and assists in enhancing the role of the Speaker.

The Committee of the Legislative Assembly is currently comprised of: the Leader of the House or alternate, the Premier or alternate, the Deputy Premier or alternate, the Manager of Opposition Business or alternate, the Leader of the Opposition or alternate, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition or alternate, and the Speaker or alternate. The bill will enable a crossbench member to be appointed to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. Clause 24 amends section 81 to enable the inclusion of a crossbench member to be included in the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. There will be a crossbench member of the CLA provided that there is at least one crossbench member elected to the Legislative Assembly. The crossbench member will have the right to nominate another crossbench member to undertake their role in the CLA in circumstances where they are absent.

As the addition of the crossbench member results in the size of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly increasing from seven to eight members, it logically follows that this bill will increase the quorum at a meeting of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly from four members to five members. Importantly, a crossbench member is defined in the bill as 'a member of the Assembly who is neither a government member nor an opposition member'. This change will seek to respect the political diversity of the parliament and respects the rights of crossbench members to participate in the CLA. It is only fair and right that the diversity in this place is reflected in the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. It will also build on the Labor tradition of working respectfully with the crossbench. I know that the former Beattie government had a strong working relationship with the crossbench and I look forward to this continuing. I also think it is vitally important that the Speaker will have the casting vote on the CLA. This is an important component of enhancing the role of the Speaker, in addition to returning the responsibility for the management of the Parliamentary Service to the Speaker.

The other issue I wish to speak on, which is the third purpose of the bill before us tonight, is to revoke retrospectively determination 7 of 2015 of the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal. This bill provides a new process for the tribunal to follow when making determinations about salary entitlements for members of the Legislative Assembly. This issue is important to get right to restore public trust in the political process, so the House will bear with me as I spend time going through the details. Unfortunately, there is a clear record of those opposite opposing transparency and accountability in relation to the salary of MPs. In 2013 the former Newman government declared that their bill was urgent and wanted to ram it through the parliament. The then leader of the opposition and now the Premier and Minister for the Arts moved an amendment to place a limitation on annual salary increases. Both of these amendments were opposed by the then government and the divisions resolved in the negative. There was also an amendment moved by the member for Mount Isa. The member for Mount Isa moved an amendment that a tribunal determination—

... must not increase the salary of a member of the Assembly for a year by more than the greatest of the following—

- (a) the percentage increase for an ambulance officer's wage or salary for that year;
- (b) the percentage increase for a fire service officer's wage or salary for that year;
- (c) the percentage increase for a police officer's wage or salary for that year.

The then government chose not to respond to the amendments and voted against the amendments.

I think it is important to recognise the role of the tribunal and place on the record recognition of the hard work that the tribunal has done, and I note that some of the previous speakers have done this also. I think it is also important to examine the background to the introduction of the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal Act. I also believe it is very important to reflect on the hard work of the people who are currently covered by the State Government Departments Certified Agreement, commonly known and referred to as the core agreement. I want to say at the outset that the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal is doing a great job. The tribunal has discharged its duties in an independent manner and it has consulted widely. The tribunal has undertaken a lot of work. This work that the tribunal has undertaken will provide the basis for the salaries and allowances for MPs into the future.

In technical terms, while the determinations of the tribunal are not currently subject to amendment or disallowance by the parliament, the parliament is able to overturn a tribunal determination by a retrospective act of parliament. This requires the revocation retrospectively of a determination that was made by the tribunal on 5 March 2015. So why are we revoking that determination?

The first point to make is that the determination provided for a salary increase for members of 2.58 per cent from 6 April 2015. This figure of 2.58 per cent exceeds the next public sector increase, which is going to be 2.2 per cent in December this year. So there is a clear mismatch here. In order to bring back some manner of trust in our state's political process, it is appropriate to retrospectively overturn this decision and bring it into line with community expectations and with the increase that our hardworking Public Service will be receiving. It is completely appropriate that action is taken to make sure salary increases for MPs are in line with community expectations. It is only fair and just that wage increases for MPs are not placed above this level.

I have heard the argument made that the cap on the level of pay increases that members will receive somehow removes the discretion of the tribunal. This change will serve to place an effective cap on the increase that members can receive. Of course the tribunal retains the discretion to award an amount that is less than the core Public Service increase, so this figure is actually better seen as a limit—effectively, a ceiling on the increase that can be made.

The tribunal will still retain the right to independently set the level of remuneration that MPs receive. Once a Public Service salary decision is made, the tribunal must within 90 days make a determination regarding the salary entitlements of members. Unless this Public Service salary decision has been made, the tribunal will not be allowed to make a determination regarding a member's salary entitlement. The process is very simple: a decision is made on the salary of public servants and only then can it decide on the salary increase for politicians. I think that is a fair bargain. I ask those who oppose this aspect of the bill how they can justify receiving an increase that is above that core Public Service increase. The people of Queensland deserve transparency and accountability.

Whilst retrospective legislation has been criticised as repugnant when it comes to pay increases for MPs, it was not repugnant when it came to removing job security clauses from EBAs and it was not repugnant when retrospectively changing pay deals for cleaners and wardies in Queensland Health. When it comes to taking money off the lowest paid public sector employees in the state—the 002s and the 003s—members of the previous government did not cry then that retrospective legislation was repugnant. The previous government showed how out of touch they were with ordinary people, and that is a mistake that this government will not make. Of course all members ought to have been aware of the proposed changes to salaries prior to the introduction of this bill. It was a very clear election commitment.

I think when we analyse this increase question, it is very important that we look at who is currently employed under the core Public Service agreement and the important roles that they undertake in the community. The core Public Service agreement covers residential care officers from the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. These residential care officers, or RCOs, provide home support and care for people with severe disabilities. They work in the homes of clients and they provide around-the-clock care.

Many RCOs work with the same clients for many years. They become close friends with their clients and their families. Many of them do shiftwork and work unsociable hours. They do not do it for the money; they do it because of their commitment to their clients and their commitment to the community. I ask: does anyone here truly think they deserve a wage increase over and above what these workers would receive?

The core Public Service agreement also includes child safety officers, who play a vitally important role in our community. They work with some of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children. These workers have to deal with very difficult family situations day to day. It is a job where they cannot simply leave their troubles at work for the next day. These child safety officers do not do this job for the money; they do this job because of their commitment to improving the lives of children. I ask: does anyone truly think that it is unfair that members of parliament would receive a salary increase over and above what these child safety officers receive?

The core Public Service agreement also includes park rangers from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. Our hardworking rangers do vital work in protecting our natural environment and also in education about our natural heritage. They work in remote locations across the length and breadth

of Queensland, from Queensland's many islands to the Simpson Desert. They protect our natural flora and fauna, they fight fires and maintain national parks for us all to enjoy. These rangers do not do this job for the money. In fact, there are many rangers working as operational employees who have higher degrees. They do this because of their commitment to protecting our natural environment. I ask: does anyone believe that they should receive a wage increase over and above what our hardworking park rangers would receive?

The core Public Service does not just include park rangers, child safety officers and RCOs. It also includes a range of professionals such as psychologists, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, social workers and case managers—people who do a lot of hard work in our community. These hardworking professionals use their skills to improve the lives of people with a disability or children from troubled homes. They do not do this job for the money; they do it because of their commitment to their chosen profession and the positive impact they can make on other people's lives. Is there anyone who thinks MPs should receive an increase higher than what these hardworking people receive?

Of course, these hard-working people are not the only Queenslanders putting in the hard yards for our community. I could go on and on about the range of hardworking Queenslanders employed under the core Public Service agreement and the important role that they play in the delivery of vital services in this state. The range of roles and the variety of positions covered by the core Public Service agreement highlight how important it is.

In addition to these hardworking Queenslanders, we also have so many hardworking volunteers in this state. It was National Volunteers Week last week. I know my local area would not be the same without the contribution of volunteers from carers to fundraisers, to online volunteers. These people work so hard to make our community a better place for no financial reward.

In saying this, I do not intend to denigrate the hard work that some members do in this place. However, I think it is important to bear in mind the hard work of many selfless community members when we debate issues such as this. The Premier made a clear election commitment to ensure that wage increases are in line with public expectations. This matter was taken to the election and the people have spoken. It is vitally important that there is a safeguard against excess.

In determination 1 of the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal there was extensive discussion and comparison in relation to Public Service salary. At the hearing of the Finance and Administration Committee the tribunal did confirm that they already have implicitly considered Public Service salaries in making determinations to date. This legislation will assist by requiring an explicit consideration of Public Service salaries in a context in which they are currently implicitly considered. It will provide a clear safeguard to ensure integrity and accountability.

I will conclude by stating that this bill will restore autonomy to the Office of the Speaker. This bill will enable a crossbench member to have a say on the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. This bill will ensure that wage increases that members receive will be in line with community expectations. I said at the beginning of my speech that the people who live in my local area and the people of Queensland deserve integrity and accountability in government. This bill will deliver that integrity and accountability. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (8.44 pm): It is a pleasure to rise this evening to speak to the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015. At the outset can I please acknowledge the work that the committee members did in the preparation of this report? The member for Bulimba, the chair of the committee, has touched on it. However, I think all members of the committee would agree that, despite some significant philosophical differences, we worked incredibly hard to make sure that the committee was able to table a report in the House. We wanted to show that, as a committee, we were capable of putting aside our partisan differences and working together to truly serve this parliament as arbiters of the strengths and weaknesses of legislation, as is the role of committees. I know that the secretariat in particular worked incredibly hard to make sure that the points of view of both government members and opposition members are reflected in the report. It is a testament to not only the members of the secretariat but also the way in which the government and the opposition were able to work together to create this document. Whilst perhaps this document does not make a recommendation on whether or not the bill should be passed, it is a document that is reflective not only of the submissions that the committee received but also of the points of view of the various committee members.

Certainly, all members of the committee, particularly those of us who served in previous parliaments, would agree that in this, the 55th Parliament, it is indeed a new way of doing things. An ability for us to work together to try to achieve really good outcomes is what this committee system is

supposed to be all about. It is truly heartening that we are able to come together and do that even if on some of these big issues we cannot come to consensus and agreement. We are able to try to work together for the betterment of the parliament and in the full knowledge that this is about protecting the institution of the parliament and the institution of the committee system.

One of the things that we were able to agree on is the changes to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly and the changes to the role of the Speaker. I do not intend to canvas these changes in too much detail because I know that the member for Maroochydore in particular is incredibly passionate about these issues and is also incredibly knowledgeable. Having been a longstanding member of this House, having entered at a very young age, she has seen many iterations of the role of the Speaker and the responsibilities of the Speaker. Of course, she has seen the Committee of the Legislative Assembly come into being and has served in an incredibly senior role on the Committee of the Legislative Assembly.

One of the things I wanted to particularly highlight—and I am incredibly proud that we have been able to achieve this—is the changes that we have seen the government announce via amendments with regard to the crossbench members of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. I would like to acknowledge that, after some discussion and deliberations, the government members of the committee were able to come to agreement with the opposition members. First and foremost, the opposition members of this committee were very, very clear that the members of the crossbench deserve due recognition and acknowledgement. If crossbench members are going to serve on the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, the opposition members of the committee thought that it was only appropriate that they be afforded the respect of being able to choose their own representative. I would like to acknowledge that not only did the government members of the committee come to the table and agree with us on that, but the government has accepted that recommendation and the Premier will be moving an amendment at the end of the second reading debate. I think all members of the House would agree that it serves the House well when we are able to work together collaboratively and we are able to show deference and respect to our colleagues, regardless of what side of the aisle we sit on and regardless of the colour of our persuasion. I look forward to supporting that amendment. I am sure that the crossbenchers themselves will contribute to the debate, and I am sure that they look forward to being able to choose their own representative to sit on the CLA.

Despite the agreement that we were able to reach with regard to changes to the CLA and the crossbench membership, the changes that are being made to the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal were something that we were not able to come to agreement on. Having highlighted the way in which the committee was able to work together, it is testament to the hard work of the six members of the committee and in particular the deputy chair, the member for Coomera. With the secretariat and the chair, we were able to put together a body of work that is reflective of the submissions and reflective of the will of the members. At the end of the day, as the Leader of the Opposition has said, it is not appropriate that members of parliament are involved in setting their own salaries. It is an argument that members of parliament will never win. It is not about the amount; it is not about the percentage; it is about the perception. The moment we say that we are giving power back to members of parliament to set their own salaries, members of the community are going to think that we are just going to run away and do absolutely ridiculous things.

The key thing about the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal is that it is just that: it is an independent tribunal that is free of government intervention and interference. One of the things that was said in the QIRT's submission was this—

The fundamental principle of independence of the Tribunal is arguably challenged by the proposed reform as it has the effect of directing or at least influencing the Tribunal's decision-making.

I guess the question for members of this House is: where do we draw the line? At what point is it okay for governments to start taking over every single independent decision-making body in this state? There is a reason that the Independent Remuneration Tribunal is there. The federal parliament has an Independent Remuneration Tribunal so that members of parliament are at arm's length from the decision-making. There was an Independent Remuneration Tribunal established in Queensland so that members would be at arm's length from the setting of their salaries. That is why the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal has been a guiding light for other similar bodies in other jurisdictions, because everyone appreciates why it is just so important that we do have that separation.

The Independent Remuneration Tribunal came about because in 2013 some former members of the House were disappointed that the previous salary increases which had been seen in the federal arena had not been passed on to the state arena. At that time legislation was still in place which

provided a nexus between the salaries of federal members of parliament and state members of parliament. All members of the House agreed that it was appropriate that we break that nexus, because by that time the Commonwealth parliament had gone through a significant reform process when it came to their salaries. It was appropriate in 2013 that we made the decision to break that link, to end that nexus. In order to do so appropriately, a number of options were considered. The Clerk detailed those not only in his submission to the committee but also in the evidence that he gave to the committee when we had a public hearing. There were a range of scenarios considered, but each and every time members of this House agreed that it was appropriate that the government and members of this House be at arm's length from determining and setting their own salaries. As the Leader of the Opposition has highlighted, members of parliament do not win when they enter into an argument about their salaries. It does not matter what the amount is, it does not matter what they are doing, in the public eye, the moment that members of parliament start interfering with their salaries, there is an immediate perception that it is about doing anything and everything that we can to increase our salaries.

The reality is that often when members of parliament are elected—and I am sure the new members of this House can attest to this—they have absolutely no idea what the salary is and no idea what the additional salary is for membership or chairmanship of a committee or to be another office holder like a whip or deputy whip, because members of parliament are not here for the remuneration. Members of parliament are here to serve their communities and to be advocates for their communities and to make sure that they set a good example for communities by their actions. By maintaining an arm's length distance from those determinations, we have been able to send a message to our communities that it is not appropriate that we take back control.

There were many issues highlighted in the submissions and evidence that we received at the public hearing, but as the member for Coomera has said, every single submission that was made to our committee stressed clearly and very deliberately that they thought these changes were not appropriate because they would impact on the independence of the Independent Remuneration Tribunal. The Clerk said that it would impact on their independence. The Independent Remuneration Tribunal itself clearly indicated that they believe it impacts on their independence and their ability to do their job. The Accountability Round Table in Queensland, which is led and represented by a former Integrity Commissioner in this state, spoke before the committee in public and said that it is not appropriate to remove the independence of the remuneration tribunal. An esteemed former member and Speaker of this House, the Hon. Jim Fouras, stressed the view that, if you are going to have an Independent Remuneration Tribunal, it should be just that: independent.

It is not called the Queensland directed remuneration tribunal; it is called the Independent Remuneration Tribunal for a reason. You have to wonder what the point is of having the tribunal if we take away their key functions and their key powers. That was something that the Clerk himself raised. He said, 'If you are going to do this, then what is the point of having the Independent Remuneration Tribunal in the first place?' You may as well return those powers to the Clerk, because the only thing that the Independent Remuneration Tribunal has any power of determination over is members' allowances. I am sure that all members of this House would agree that allowances are well spent in our community, both supporting community organisations and keeping members of the community informed of the decisions that are made in this House. Effectively, all you are doing is giving the tribunal an imprimatur to consider the allowances that members of parliament are paid.

The other thing that I wanted to touch on as well is retrospectivity. If this bill is passed tonight, effectively the base salary of a member will not have changed since 2013. Given that the next wage determination for the public sector is not until the end of this year, it will not be until three months into the next year that a new base salary is set, which will mean that it is nearly three years since the original determination regarding the base salary of members of parliament. It is also important to note that the Independent Remuneration Tribunal highlighted in their written submission and in the evidence that they presented at the public hearing that by the time you do the maths—and the Leader of the Opposition also highlighted this—the determination that came into effect on 6 April is, in effect, less than the determination of 2.2 per cent for the public sector. But at the end of the day, it is not about the numbers; it is about the sanctity and independence of the remuneration tribunal.

We have to make the decision in this House whether or not we want to send a message to our communities that we think it is okay for us as members of parliament to determine our own salaries. With all due respect, Mr Deputy Speaker, I do not think it is okay that I determine my own salary. I do not think it is okay that the deputy chair of the committee, the member for Coomera, determines his

own salary. It is not appropriate. What is appropriate is that we empower the Independent Remuneration Tribunal to make that decision for us—a tribunal which is able to take into account a whole range of different factors. At the public hearing Professor Brailsford, who is the chair of the Independent Remuneration Tribunal, highlighted that they take into account things like the determination of public sector salaries.

That was one of the reasons the opposition members of the committee suggested that perhaps we could take into account the advice and the suggestion of the remuneration tribunal that we amend the legislation to direct it to take those things into account, because there are a number of factors that must be taken into account.

At the public hearing the Clerk provided the committee with a document he had put together which detailed the rises that have been seen in both public sector wages and MPs' salaries over the past 20 years. Unfortunately, I did not bring it to the chamber with me to table it for the benefit of the House. The Clerk's document clearly indicated that over the years there have been varying degrees of increases. There have been years when MPs have had increases; there have been years when the public sector has had increases. The member for Condamine has very helpfully pointed out that it is at the back of the committee report. I encourage all members to have a look at it.

The document shows by way of comparison that, taking into account the determination that would come into effect on 1 December this year, the total cumulative increase since 1 May 1995 for the core Public Service was 69.9 per cent and for members, to the base salary, it was 69.5 per cent. Again, just for the benefit of the House, the increase for the core Public Service was 69.9 per cent and the increase for members of parliament was 69.5 per cent. I thank the member for Condamine for his assistance. I hope I did not steal some of his speech. I am sure he will be able to speak eloquently to that in his contribution as well.

That just highlights that there is a furphy out there that linking salaries is going to provide the kind of relief that the government thinks it will and is going to provide the kind of public confidence that the government thinks it will. The reality is that, at the end of the day, the moment you give members of parliament the power to determine their own salaries you are sending a message to the community that it is okay for members of parliament to determine their own salaries and to have a significant say in what their salaries should be. The other message you send is that the moment something gets a little bit difficult, the moment there is a perception of unpalatability, it is okay because the government will ride in on a white horse and fix it.

That sets a very dangerous precedent, because the role of committees and the role of this parliament is not to be populist. The role of this parliament is to make determinations and decisions about legislation that will have the best impact for the people of Queensland. I encourage new members of this House to think about what is going to have the best impact for the people of Queensland: an independent remuneration tribunal at arm's length from the government, which has representatives from the business sector as well as industrial organisations, making those decisions for us; or members of parliament sitting in this House making that decision for us. What message do we want to send to the people of Queensland?

The message I want to send to my community and to the rest of Queensland is that members of parliament should not be involved in determining their own salaries. It is not appropriate. I want someone else to do it so that we are at arm's length, so that there is integrity, so that there is accountability. Accountability is not me determining my own salary; accountability is entrusting someone else who is smart enough to understand the implications of the role and the implications of their decision to make that determination for us. That is the message that I want to send to the people of Queensland.

I encourage all members of this House to really think about what message they want to send to their communities. At the moment, the Labor members of this House are saying that it is okay that they set their own salaries. At what point do they think it is okay to stop raising them? At what point is it okay for the Labor members to stop raising their own salaries? I urge all members to think about the implications of that message.

Mr Crandon interjected.

 **Mr CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (9.04 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill. I thank the member for Coomera for his interjection before I stood and asking me to keep it to five minutes because he has an appointment somewhere, as many of us probably do.

As a member of the newly formed Finance and Administration Committee for the 55th Parliament I am delighted to stand to speak on this our first bill—the first of many, I am sure, that will be deliberated on by the Finance and Administration Committee. I take this opportunity, as others before me have tonight, to congratulate our chair, the member for Bulimba, the other committee members—the members for Coomera, Broadwater, Stretton and Condamine—and, of course, our hardworking secretariat.

It is well known that, with an equal division of members from both sides of the House on committees, there will be at times agreement, at times disagreement and at other times partial agreement on various sections. I can assure the House that the Finance and Administration Committee has had its fair share of robust discussion. What is important, however, is that the committee is able to continue with mature and honest discussion, allowing itself to be seen by departments, stakeholders and Queenslanders to be working as a unit, operating as a team with parliamentary staff, and essentially teasing out potential issues, ideas and benefits that come to us. I am not going to run across every detail on this, because we have heard it a number of times already.

Mr Crandon: Four minutes to go!

Mr CRAWFORD: I take that interjection. Thank you. We have already heard tonight some common ground on many parts of the bill before us. We have also heard some clear differing opinions on others. I will be brief where I can be. Essentially, the bill is roughly divided into three sections, being the autonomy of the Speaker, members' salary increases and the crossbench representative on the CLA.

In relation to the autonomy of the Speaker, as members will have heard, the bill proposes to restore some autonomy to the Speaker by making the Speaker rather than the CLA responsible for the management of the Parliamentary Service, including its budget. As others who have spoken before me have said, essentially, this is about bringing it back to the way it was, with the exception of the Clerk being responsible for employment. When we teased this out at a committee level there was a general consensus from all people we spoke to, as well as on the committee itself, that this was a good idea. Various people we interviewed were happy with the concept, especially given that the Clerk will retain control in the employment role for parliamentary staff.

The Premier stated when introducing the bill that during the election campaign the government committed to restoring autonomy to the position of the Speaker in parliament, and today through this bill we are delivering on that. The Premier went on to say that under this bill responsibility for the management of the Parliamentary Service will transfer from the CLA back to the position of Speaker, with the Clerk of Parliament remaining as the employment authority.

I think we can move on to the second section, which is the one which caused most of the robust discussion at the committee and, as we have heard, tonight. That is to amend the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal Act 2013 with respect to four particular objectives: to retrospectively overturn determination 7 of 2015, which was the grant of a 2.58 per cent salary increase to members from 6 April this year; to allow the Clerk to recover the overpayments made since; to place a limit on the tribunal so that it cannot determine a percentage pay rise to MPs greater than the salary increases to public servants; and to provide that within 90 days of an announcement of a Public Service salary increase the tribunal must make a decision on the extent of any salary increases for MPs and that any increase must take effect from the same date that the Public Service receives its.

I turn to the statement made by the Premier when introducing this bill that the principle of linking MPs' salary increases to that of public sector employees was enshrined in a policy announced during the election campaign and how the Premier intends to honour this pledge and commitment with Queenslanders. This section of the bill was where the committee spent most of its time receiving statements, hearing evidence and conducting its own deliberations, of which there were many. What came from these submissions and from the hearings, as we have heard before, essentially was in relation to the role of the tribunal and whether this bill in some way removes or cripples the effectiveness of the tribunal to be truly independent. Arguments on the one hand say that an independent tribunal should have no restrictions and no interference, as we have heard. On the other hand, we have the argument that the tribunal should not deliver salary increases to MPs that may seem fair and reasonable when assessing skills, job descriptions and our roles but may, in fact, be unfair and deemed unjust within the community at large. We all know that the topic of politician or MP pay rises in the community is one that always attracts a great deal of debate. Whether you are at a barbecue or even just at a family event, everyone seems pretty keen to talk about it, as I am sure everyone in the House knows.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr CRAWFORD: I do not drive a government car, no.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr CRAWFORD: Yes, that is right. The announcement of this policy by the Premier when in opposition last year was warmly welcomed by the people of Queensland—not only the workers but the business operators, executive people, families and the like. In fact, I cannot recall one person saying to me that they firmly feel that MPs' salaries should be increased by a sizeable amount. On the same topic, I can recall hundreds of comments from people asking that politicians' pay rises be somehow linked to the average worker's pay or to CPI or to the economy or to some other productivity related calculation. The announcement by the Premier when in opposition is a true show of respect to Queensland public servants that if their pay rise is to be held at a level or raised slightly or raised by a lot then potentially so is ours. What is good for Queensland public servants should also be good enough for us. The Clerk tabled a document—the member for Broadwater mentioned it earlier; it is actually in Appendix E of the committee report which has been tabled—which shows that between 1995 and 2015 salary increases for core public servants and MPs have, over time, averaged out to around about the same at around 69 per cent.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr CRAWFORD: We are down half a percent. Some would argue this evidence has worked well. However, the tribunal only came into effect two years ago so we cannot say that the tribunal is responsible for that being the same because this has been going since 1995. What seemed obvious was that it was more a fluke that from 1995 to 2015 the numbers added up to about the same but there was no real science behind any of that. When we look at the core Public Service, in some of those numbers have seen steady growths between one per cent and 4½ per cent whereas over the same time we have seen MP pay rises not as steady. There have been more periods and more years where there has been nothing and when we have seen rises they have been between 1.6 per cent and 8.5 per cent. When we look at how the community perceives this, no doubt every now and again in the news they see an MP pay rise and, of course, when it is 8.5 per cent we know what they think.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ryan): Order, member for Barron River. There is too much conversation in the chamber. I will wait for the House to come to order. The member for Barron River has the call.

Mr CRAWFORD: Whilst we got closely to the same place, the road for MPs was bumpier, the rises less often and the increases, when they did come, were often marginally higher than the previous public sector wage rise. This creates the public perception that MPs are receiving dramatically higher rises and thus increased negative publicity for members of parliament.

Committee deliberations confirmed the utmost respect for the tribunal and the work that it has undertaken since its inception in 2013. The tribunal has undertaken its work in a truly independent manner and should stay in place. Discussion occurred in respect of section 29 of the act with regard to the tribunal's submission and proposal to achieve the government's intention by embedding within section 29 the requirement that the tribunal have regard to the benchmark of the Public Service. Further proposals from the non-government members were to perhaps change a word from 'may' to 'will', thus making the requirement stronger. The opportunity was discussed, but there was no agreement in the committee. The section 29 proposal, whilst a move in the direction of the government objective, does not fully achieve the government objective and would not satisfy the Queensland public that the full extent of the Premier's commitment has been undertaken and thus I could not support it.

When researching the evidence and the history of MPs' salary increases—and it was briefly referred to earlier by the member for Stretton—I refer to an urgent bill that was introduced by the former premier on 6 August 2013 being the very bill that we are now amending. During that debate the Leader of the Opposition at the time, the member for Inala, moved to amend clause 30 to include the words 'ensure that the financial position of the state and the state's fiscal strategy are taken into account'. That amendment was voted down by the government at the time. A further amendment was then moved by the member for Mount Isa which added the requirement for making a decision under clause 30 that it must not increase the salary of a member of the Assembly for a year or more than the greatest of the following: a percentage increase for an ambulance officer's wage or salary for the year; a percentage increase for a fire service officer's wage or salary for the year; and a percentage

increase for a police officer's wage or salary for the year. The government opposed the amendment and, according to the committee report, voted it down without discussing it. The opposition leader and member for Inala tried again with a further amendment along similar lines and it was voted down with the majority that the government possessed in the 54th Parliament.

The government gets it. We get it now in government and those who were here in 2013 got it then. I think the member for Mount Isa was pretty close to being on the money in 2013 with his amendment and, as a former paramedic, I would have welcomed that amendment had it been successful. Unfortunately it was not. Perhaps if his amendment were considered back then, we may not be deliberating this topic tonight. Those on this side of the House have maintained a consistent and fair approach on this topic; those opposite are changing their minds between what was not acceptable to them in 2013 with some common-sense amendments and suddenly in 2015 they want to insert similar wording into the bill through the clause 29 idea. The government proposal is just, it is right and whilst not word for word with the member for Mount Isa's amendment in 2013 it fits, and I trust that tonight he agrees.

In relation to the argument around the 2.58 per cent and the 127 days and the argument that MPs will somehow lose out, we must look at not only the value of the percentage rise but how that translates to actual dollars and cents when we work it out, because a simple percentage figure is not necessarily the answer. When you increase a worker's pay on, say, \$50,000 a year—a public servant—by three per cent, you give them an increase of \$1,500. When you apply that same three per cent to a backbencher on roughly \$160,000, it calculates to a \$4,800 increase. The percentage is not enough. We need to look at the actual dollar figure. I welcome the tribunal to continue to determine MPs' salary increases and believe that this bill's intention will continue to give the tribunal the latitude it needs to properly assess the effects of salary increases, not just in percentages but in actual dollars and cents.

The community has a right to be vigilant on its views of MPs' salary increases and until there is a truly safe framework for the tribunal to operate in to determine salary increases, salary freezes or changes to salaries it determines to be fair, it is reasonable and it is truly transparent for the people of Queensland to place a limit on how high any salary increase can be. I believe that the most effective way to achieve this is to place a percentage cap on the tribunal's upper limit and to determine this percentage through the public sector salary increase, as outlined in the bill. If it is good enough for our police officers, our nurses, our paramedics, our firefighters, then it is good enough for me and I am sure that it is good enough for my colleagues sitting beside me.

The third and final section of the bill relates to enabling a crossbench member to be included in the membership of the CLA. Currently, the CLA consists of seven members, comprised of both government and opposition members, but it does not cater for any members of the House who are not part of either the government or the opposition. Currently in this parliament we have four members on the crossbench. In many Australian parliaments it has become the normality to have members who are not members of the two main political parties. I believe that the membership of the CLA should respect this change in today's parliaments for now and into the future.

The proposal in the bill that went before the committee was to allow a crossbench member to be part of the CLA. There was a general acceptance by the committee and those who provided submissions that it was a sound idea. The committee found some issues surrounding the selection process for such a crossbench member. When there is no crossbench member of the House, clearly, there is no crossbench member on the CLA. That is pretty straightforward. When there is one crossbench member in the House, that member will be the member on the CLA. Again, that is pretty straightforward. But discussion surrounded the issue of when there was more than one crossbench member and how a crossbench member would be appointed to the CLA. Initially, the bill provided that the Leader of the House was to appoint the crossbench member. However, the committee agreed that, although the current Leader of the House is likely to make a sound decision if he were required, we are implementing a change that carries forward and needs to ensure that future leaders of the House will always act in the best interests of the crossbench without interference from others.

The committee recommended that it should be the crossbench members themselves who shall meet and determine who is to be their representative on the CLA—to determine among themselves without interference. I am aware that the Premier will be addressing this matter when she moves her amendment. It is noted that, in order to expedite the appointment, the crossbench needs to work with the Leader of the House as essentially they need somebody in a senior position to whom they can consult, get advice from and work with. So we agreed that the Leader of the House is the most

appropriate person for that position. But we also agreed that the Leader of the House should not have a vote if any such ballot is to go forward when selecting a crossbench member for the position on the CLA. If the crossbench members cannot make a decision owing to a tied vote or for some other reason, it should be the Leader of the House who ultimately should make that decision and select the crossbench member to sit on the CLA. I support the bill.

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (9.22 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015. A report on the bill has been tabled by the Finance and Administration Committee, of which I am a member. The bill amends the Financial Accountability Act 2009, the Parliamentary Service Act 1988, the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 and the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal Act 2013.

As a new member of the Queensland parliament, this is my first experience with the operational aspects of the parliamentary committee system. In this state parliament, we have no upper house, making the work of these committees essential for the scrutiny of legislation before it passes through the House. The first part of the report, which deals with amendment No. 1 contained in the bill, concerns returning the authority of the Speaker's privileges from the Committee of the Legislative Assembly—the CLA. This position was supported by submissions that were lodged by the Clerk of the Parliament, the Accountability Round Table, the Hon. Jim Fouras and the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal. The committee was in favour of this commitment proceeding in its current form.

The second amendment in the bill is to include representation by the crossbench on the CLA, which was supported by the submissions, albeit with some reservations as to how the selection process would be conducted. The crossbench members should have representation and, importantly, have the opportunity to select a representative of their own choosing. In the event that a clear result could not be reached, as in a tied vote, then the Leader of the House would make the appointment, but only in this instance. We supported this amendment.

The amendments in the bill to the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal Act 2013 did not receive the same support from the submissions received or from some of the members of the Finance and Administration Committee. The proposed amendments would attach any future salary increases to increases to public servants' salaries. In my view, this process poses a question of what exactly is the role of the independent tribunal. For many years the issue of members' salaries has been a problem for the government of the day. Before the establishment of the independent tribunal, the salaries of state members of parliament increased in line with increases in the salaries of federal members of parliament. However, this process still allowed for interference by the government. An example of this interference was when former premier Anna Bligh froze salary increases in 2010 and again in 2011. Eventually, the discrepancy in salary increases between state and federal members of parliament would need to be balanced and that would ultimately present a problem for the incumbent government.

The establishment of the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal in 2013 finally ended any involvement of members of parliament in determining their own salary level. There are several fundamental differences between being a member of parliament and being employed in the Public Service. A member of parliament does not receive holiday pay, leave loading, sick pay, maternity leave and many other entitlements that are negotiated with the employer if a person is employed in the Public Service or in private enterprise. This is not a complaint; it is simply a fact to highlight that the salary of a member of parliament is in no way similar to that of many people employed by the Public Service.

The independent tribunal takes into account the salary of the member of parliament and the expense allowance before making an independent judgement on any increases. As previously stated, the tribunal was established in 2013 and, during this relatively short time, there have been no complaints made about its independence or the process it has followed. In its submission, the tribunal noted—

The principle of independence of decision-making is a foundation on which the Tribunal was established and this principle is underscored by safeguards which are contained in the current legislation that governs the Tribunal. Since its inception, the Tribunal has had continual regard to the principle of independence in all of its deliberations. The Tribunal believes that its actions and decisions have been consistently unbiased, neutral and apolitical.

The submission goes on to state—

Taken as a philosophical stance it then becomes quite difficult to honour the true spirit of what that means if the act is changed such that there is direction over explicit benchmarks.

The tribunal in its submission states further—

... we did not actually say that the legislation removes the independence but there is an element in terms of the direction in which that is headed.

So the tribunal had its own concerns about this amendment. There is an old saying, 'If it's not broke, don't fix it.' I can only presume that the motivation for this amendment is popular politics, which would be very disappointing. We need to leave the independent tribunal as it is presently to enable it to function effectively free of any political interference. I do not support this part of the bill.

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (9.28 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015. The objects of the bill, as outlined in the Premier's introductory speech, have three major purposes. Firstly, the bill will restore the autonomy of the position of the Speaker by making the Speaker, rather than the Committee of the Legislative Assembly—the CLA—responsible for the management of the Parliamentary Service and it will provide the Speaker with a deliberative vote on all questions at CLA meetings as well as a casting vote in case of a tied vote. Secondly, the bill will enable a crossbench member to be included in the membership of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. Thirdly, the bill will retrospectively revoke determination 7 of 2015 of the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal, which provides for a 2.85 per cent salary increase to state members of parliament from 6 April 2015.

The bill will place a limit on the tribunal so that it cannot determine percentage salary increases to members of parliament greater than the percentage salary increases received by public servants. The various clauses of the bill will facilitate amendments to the Financial Accountability Act 2009, the Parliamentary Service Act 1988, the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 and the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal Act 2013.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am sure I do not need to tell you that the independence of the office of Speaker is a central tenet of the Westminster system of government on which the Queensland parliament is based. The office of Speaker is an ancient one dating back to early English parliaments in the 14th century and is almost as old as parliament itself. The earliest year for which a presiding officer has been identified is 1258 when Peter de Montfort presided over the parliament held in Oxford. Early presiding officers were known by the title parlour or prolocutor. Sir Thomas de Hungerford was the first person recorded in the rolls of the Parliament of England as holding the office of Speaker of the House of Commons. He was chosen in 1377 to act as Speaker.

Mr Crandon: A history lesson.

Mr MADDEN: It is. The government acknowledges that the Speaker is representative of the House and its powers, rights and immunities because this is a government that believes in integrity and accountability. In the recent state election campaign the government made it clear it was committed to restoring the autonomy of the position of Speaker and with this bill the government is delivering on that commitment.

In the Queensland parliament traditionally the management of the Parliamentary Service was the responsibility of the Speaker. In 2011 the government of the day transferred the Speaker's responsibility for the Parliamentary Service to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. This bill reverses that decision. The bill has been reviewed by the Finance and Administration Committee which has made two recommendations. Recommendation 1 relates to how a crossbench member is selected by nomination to parliament for appointment to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, while recommendation 2 clarifies the membership size of the committee when parliament contains crossbenchers. The government supports both recommendations of the Finance and Administration Committee. Clause 23 of the bill amends section 79, definitions for chapter 5 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001, to define a crossbench member as a member of the Assembly who is neither a government member nor an opposition member. Section 81 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 currently sets out the membership of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly to comprise the Leader of the House or alternate, the Premier or alternate, the Deputy Premier or alternate, the Manager of Opposition Business or alternate, the Leader of the Opposition or alternate, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition or alternate and the Speaker or alternate, being seven members in total. Clause 23 of the bill amends the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 to allow a crossbench member to be included in the membership of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly.

In its report the Finance and Administration Committee noted a concern that it was possible that a future Leader of the House may not consult with crossbench members and may not nominate for appointment to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly the crossbench member that the crossbench members select. In response to these concerns of the Finance and Administration Committee the government proposes an amendment that sets out a transparent nomination

mechanism for crossbench members to follow that allows for the Leader of the House to determine the crossbench member to be nominated to parliament if crossbench members are unable to reach agreement. With regard to the Finance and Administration Committee's recommendation 2 concerning the composition of the CLA, it is proposed that the number be seven or eight members depending on whether or not the membership includes a crossbench member.

The Finance and Administration Committee report notes that, while the non-government members disagreed, the position of the government is that it will deliver on its election commitment that the salaries of MPs will not increase by a percentage rate higher than that of public servants as per the relevant clauses of the bill. Clause 33 of the bill inserts a new division 4 into part 6 of the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal Act 2013 to provide the revocation and transitional provisions for the proposed Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Act 2015. The proposed section 72 provides for a retrospective revocation of determination 7 of 2015 made by the tribunal on 5 March 2015. The proposed new section 73 allows the Clerk to recover from members any overpayments of salary that are made from 6 April 2015 until the day the bill commences and determination 7 of 2015 is retrospectively revoked.

The task of the Finance and Administration Committee was to consider the policy outcomes to be achieved by the legislation, as well as the application of fundamental legislative principles—that is, whether it has sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals and to the institution of parliament. I believe that the committee has achieved this goal and I would like to thank the committee members for their diligence in doing so. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (9.36 pm): I welcome the move to restore key functions to the role of Speaker of the Queensland parliament which were removed under the Bligh Labor government in 2011. As Speaker in the 54th Parliament I found that MPs and, yes, even journalists were confused about who was responsible for what—and who could blame them? These structures were poor, but that was the legislation's fault as the legislation was poor. Despite the best intentions of a few, the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, as the supreme governing body over parliamentary services and accommodation, bipartisan as it was, was a failed experiment. I will outline in summary the four reasons: firstly, it met in secret with no Hansard and no public gallery; secondly, the structure was fractured—in other words, it confused the heck out of people as to who was in charge of what, as someone must be responsible for decisions and be able to talk about them; thirdly, it excluded the crossbenches; and, fourthly, it was logjammed.

The secrecy fuelled confusion and frustration, and not just for the journalists who contacted me. I did have journalists who would contact me about issues where there had been decisions and I was not authorised as the Speaker to talk about them. Furthermore, I had no vote on those matters. Clearly, those things should have been able to be brought out into the public by someone who was responsible, not a committee that met in secret. Journalists understandably and rightly were frustrated. The system was confusing. As I have heard tonight, members do not understand or have not read the Parliament of Queensland Act. The CLA process violated the Westminster democratic principle of a minister of the parliament clearly being responsible. We see it as a concept that ministers of the Crown should be responsible and be able to answer for decisions. The same should be said of Parliament House. For example, if I were on the committee as the Speaker and I advocated to save journalists money and make sure they had a space to report from without being charged rent, I would have been in contempt of parliament for confirming those details. How ridiculous that there were conversations and advocacy that people on that committee could undertake and they could not talk about them. To illustrate further this issue of secrecy as a reason the bipartisan CLA experiment as a supreme management body failed, there was no Hansard and there was no public gallery for matters which should have been in public.

Under these rules, the Speaker was potentially subject to decisions of a committee that met behind closed doors and I could rarely talk about those decisions due to parliamentary privilege. Also, given that when presiding publicly from the chair of the House the Speaker potentially had to pull up the same people, from government and opposition benches, on the floor of the parliament, it is not a good structure. Despite the worst of the 2011 failed changes, by the rules of this House the Speaker has always been accountable to the parliament. That has never changed. However, I am pleased that there will no longer be any confusion about the fact that it is better for the Speaker to answer directly to the parliament, where there is a public gallery and Hansard, rather than to a committee where there is neither.

The second reason this CLA process failed was the fractured lines of authority, that is, someone who is clearly responsible for certain decisions. As Speaker, on a number of occasions I spoke publicly about the fractured lines of responsibility and overlapping responsibilities. The 2011

changes, which shifted considerable power away from the Speaker to this bipartisan committee and the Clerk, were poorly understood and had significant unintended consequences, the greatest of which might have been confusion amongst members of the public, and I will outline a few others in a moment. Good governance requires clear lines of authority so that there is no confusion over who is responsible for decisions. The converse is true, that is, if everyone is responsible then really no-one is responsible. In other words, you need to know who has made the decisions and someone should be made to answer for those, quite clearly.

One of the most serious flaws—probably the most serious flaw—of these compromised authorities was epitomised by the issue of security. I firmly believe that whoever is in charge has a duty of care to fulfil their role diligently, competently and in good faith for the public and parliamentary good. That requires understanding what your role actually is. Certainly, that is what I sought to do without fear or favour as the Speaker of the 54th Parliament. At least the 2012 amendments to the Parliament of Queensland Act put the Speaker onto the CLA, which was the governing body, although as a non-voting member. The fractured lines of authority caused by the 2011 changes remained. Despite the 2011 changes, the Speaker was still responsible for security policy due to having oversight of behaviour on the precinct. In 2012, to ensure that the parliament was as safe as possible for members of parliament, their families, the staff and visitors, as Speaker I commissioned an independent security review by internationally regarded experts and counterterrorism police who recommended capital and operational upgrades. However, the CLA, not the Speaker, was responsible for capital works programs and the oversight of the budget to implement a number of those resulting recommendations. As those were closed-door meetings, I cannot outline what happened, I am restrained by parliamentary privilege and there was no public gallery or Hansard.

As is outlined on the public record, the issue of security and capital upgrades was quite a challenging process. In the midst of all of this, there was a break-in of the Parliamentary Annexe, that is, into the building. Subsequently, I am pleased to say that, with the support of the CLA, more security improvements were eventually made, including to the areas where the intruders had entered the precinct and the building, which are areas that had been identified in the original reviews. I would like to publicly acknowledge the CLA delegates who understood the importance of security. Unfortunately, due to secrecy I cannot. However, I will acknowledge that there was diligent work done by parliamentary staff, including my own from the former Speaker's office, who helped in the implementation of the improvements. The process is ongoing and I wish the new Speaker and the staff all the best in seeing it followed through and continually improved. Looking after the security and safety of members of parliament, the public, guests and staff in this precinct is a sacred trust. We have great staff who have nothing to do with the political process, but whose diligence and independence, together with that of the police, ensures that the 89 politicians of the Queensland Parliament can fulfil their parliamentary duties in safety. Who is liable if anything went wrong? I asked that question, but a clear answer could not be provided to me. The real issue was who was responsible for keeping people safe? My view is that it is better to keep people safe than prove liability after a tragedy. It is better to do all that one reasonably can to keep this place safe for all.

The third reason this secretive CLA closed-door experiment failed, bipartisan though it was, is that the crossbenchers were not represented. Yes, there were equal votes between government and non-government members, but traditionally the Speaker, regardless of political party background or personal political belief, represented the whole party, government and non-government, including crossbenchers. Under the 2011 laws, the Speaker did not even have a vote. As I have mentioned, the CLA eventually became logjammed. I know that it will continue as a body to which the Speaker can refer matters. I hope that it is seen as a strategic advisory body. Ultimately, the Speaker will still be responsible, but there is merit in having a body to provide advice on strategic issues.

Yes, there has been confusion about how these rules have operated and I have heard that in the debate tonight. One thing that we should know is that the CLA was bipartisan. Its membership included government and non-government members. The now Premier and now Treasurer attended those meetings, as did other senior opposition members, and nothing could be passed by the CLA without their approval. The only time when the CLA did not have control of the precinct was in the interim between the end of an election and the commencement of the incoming government. During the interim period, those powers lay with the Clerk until the new CLA was formed. The autonomy of the Speaker's role in this bill is autonomy from the secretive CLA that is a closed-door committee. I support these amendments to the Parliament of Queensland Act—

(Time expired)

 **Miss BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (9.46 pm): Today I rise to speak in support of the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015. The community was not happy with the previous government because the previous government possessed an innate hypocrisy. At the same time they were cutting 14,000 public sector jobs, they were awarding themselves pay increases that are the equivalent of the average income of those in my electorate. At the same time that they were requiring government entities to cap their pay increases at a maximum of 2.2 per cent, they were enabling a tribunal to award themselves exorbitant increases into the future. The largess of the previous government stands in contrast to the rhetoric of belt tightening. This bill starts to change some of that.

We in this place consider ourselves leaders, but fundamentally leaders are not leaders if they do not lead by example. What sort of example is it if we in this place are asking Queensland's hardworking public servants to take an increase that is lower than the increase that we ourselves receive? Leadership is a privilege and an honour, and with the sacrifices involved in being in this place a level of pay is appropriate, but every single Queensland public servant I have met—nurses, radiographers and doctors in our hospitals; teachers, teacher aides and school cleaners in our schools; police, fire and rescue personnel; and so many other front-line hardworking essential staff—make sacrifices every day. We must not devalue their work in comparison to ours. This bill addresses that through the limiting of salary increases to be in line with the increases paid to the rest of the Public Service. If it is good enough for them with all they do for us, then it is good enough for us.

This bill overturns the Queensland Industrial Relations Tribunal pay increases from 6 April 2015 and recovers overpayments to us in this place. That is a good thing. Those opposite cannot accept it, they do not like it and they have not adjusted to the fact that they lorded it over Queenslanders for three years and Queenslanders responded by throwing them out. I can tell the House that we are the clean-up crew and we are just getting started putting things right.

During the campaign I came across a school cleaner in my electorate named Sharon. Sharon has diabetes and her husband, Colin, has a heart condition. Sharon was having trouble making ends meet. It had always been a struggle, but she took pride in the life that she had made for herself and her family. Cost of living only goes one way. It only gets more expensive each day. Sharon told me that it was getting harder and harder.

Numbers do not lie. Inflation is running at over 2.6 per cent. If one's pay is going up by only 2.2 per cent then the gap comes from savings or from household borrowing or from Queenslanders going without. For Sharon and Colin this came down to a choice between food and medicine. I for one cannot stand that in 2015 a fellow Queenslanders of mine has had to make this kind of choice. She works hard keeping our schools clean for our kids and she deserves more than that devil's choice. We can do better than this and we can motivate ourselves by making sure our decisions around pay are in line with that of public servants like Sharon.

We committed to these things in the election campaign. This justifies the faith of those who campaigned against the LNPs largesse and for the Labor Party's approach. Governance is important. Queensland Labor is the party that brought people transparency and accountability and we deliver again.

This bill restores autonomy to the Speaker and the Speaker's responsibility for the management of the Parliamentary Service. We will have a crossbench member on the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. Crossbench MPs keep us honest—they did in 1988 and they will again now. They are an important part of the proper functioning of this place and an accountability mechanism. This importance should be reflected in a voice in the operation of this place.

My local member when I grew up taught me much about this place—the Hon. Jim Fouras, a former member for Ashgrove and former Speaker of this House. I refer to his submission to the Finance and Administration Committee. He stated—

The separation of powers and functions of the parliament, executive government and judiciary provide fundamental checks and balances in any truly democratic society. Unfortunately this is a concept that some find esoteric and this creates difficulty in understanding.

He also spoke about what he saw as the two key roles of the Speaker of this House, as inherited from our parent Westminster parliament in the UK. The first is to chair and control the proceedings in this House and the second is to represent the House separate and distinct from the government. Integrity begins in this House. If we cannot get it right here, how can we possibly get it right anywhere else?

I will leave the House with this thought. The average income in my electorate is just under \$40,000 for a full-time worker and \$30,000 for a part-time worker. This is several thousand dollars per year below the Queensland average. I will note and bring to the attention of the House that it is only half the pay rise that those opposite arranged to be awarded to themselves in the last term.

When public servants went in to negotiate with the previous government for cost-of-living increases, what did they find? They were told they could choose between a pay rise or workplace conditions like safety and training. They were told that they could choose to keep their jobs against contestability and outsourcing, but only if they passed up a cost-of-living adjustment to their pay. Queensland's front-line public servants have been treated shabbily by this crew opposite. We are going to do something about it, starting in this place.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (9.53 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the debate on the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015. With regard to the provisions relating to the Speaker, the explanatory notes state that the policy objectives of the bill are that it—

restores autonomy to the position of Speaker by making the Speaker, rather than the Committee of the Legislative Assembly (CLA), responsible for the management of the Parliamentary Service, including its budget;

provides the Speaker with a deliberative vote at CLA meetings on questions regarding all of the CLAs remaining responsibilities and a casting vote in the case of a tied vote;

provides that the Speaker, rather than the Leader of the House, is responsible for calling CLA meetings and setting the agenda;

allows a crossbench member to be included on the membership of the CLA;

increases the quorum at a CLA meeting from four to five members (MPs);

gives the CLA responsibility for any matter referred to it by the Speaker;

I think these provisions are good. It returns power to the Speaker. It was a failed experiment from the beginning that was supported by the two major parties.

The previous bill gave power to the CLA. I believe that that power was abused. I recall that one member of parliament got offside with the CLA and they put that member into what is called the dungeon on level 7. Another two MPs got offside with the CLA and they put them in one of the worst rooms in the Parliamentary Annexe. That was an abuse of power. It is good to see that the Speaker will perform an administrative role when it comes to the Parliamentary Service. I believe this is good for democracy in Queensland.

I give credit where credit is due to the Leader of the Opposition. He indicated that the Newman government did not handle the issue of the pay rise for politicians very well. It was atrocious. It was bad medicine. It sickened me, but it also sickened Queenslanders to see mass sackings. We saw mass cuts to programs. We saw cuts when it comes to lawnmowing vouchers for pensioners. We were told that we had to tighten our belts and then we had a government that pushed to give themselves a massive pay rise. It was not a good thing to do. It was a bad moment for Queensland.

We have seen a massive turnover of members of parliament in the last four years. There have been around 70 of them; it could be more. I believe the pay rise was to be \$60,000 for ministers and \$70,000 for the Premier. That pay rise made the former premier a more highly paid politician than Obama.

KAP moved an amendment at that time to link pay rises of politicians to that of public servants. We could see that we have valuable public servants such as ambos, fireies and nurses. They are No. 1 when it comes to the most valued and trusted professions. Politicians are rated 49th out of 50 most trusted professions. We are linking ourselves to those in the most trusted professions. I feel that that is a good move.

This legislation brings back fairness and balance. It helps remove the bad perception that we are out to smash the little players while politicians feather their own nests. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (9.58 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015, introduced by the Premier. In 2011 the government transferred decision-making responsibilities regarding the management of the Parliamentary Service from the position of the Speaker to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly and, in some cases, to the Clerk of the Parliament.

During the election campaign the Australian Labor Party committed to returning integrity and accountability to the Queensland parliament. To this end, it included a commitment that the autonomy of the Speaker in the parliament would be restored. The bill proposes to amend the Parliamentary

Service Act 1988 to return responsibility for the management of the Parliamentary Service from the CLA to the Speaker. However, the position of Clerk will remain as the employing authority for the Legislative Assembly of Parliamentary Service officers and employees, as has been the case since 2011.

As the size of the CLA will increase from seven to eight MPs under this bill, the bill also proposes to increase the quorum of CLA meetings from four to five MPs. This is in line with the quorum for the parliament's portfolio committees when they comprise eight MPs and ensures true and fair representation at all times.

To further enhance the importance and autonomy of the position of Speaker within the parliament, the bill proposes to amend the act to give the Speaker a deliberative vote on all questions at CLA meetings across all of its areas of responsibility together with a casting vote should a vote on any question be tied.

This bill also addresses the inequity in pay increases for members of this chamber and Queensland's public servant workforce. In economic times such as that which we are presently experiencing, politicians must lead by example. After only three months since the election of the 55th Parliament of Queensland, it would be inappropriate and totally unacceptable for its members to accept any form of a pay rise. Further, not only should members' pay not increase in the immediate future; next time a pay increase is even considered it should be fairly considered and be in line with that of the public servants of Queensland.

Unlike the former government, this government believes that those working at the coalface supporting the work of members of parliament deserve financial respect and recognition. While the offer to public sector employees was a 2.2 per cent salary increase, the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal has granted a 2.58 per cent salary increase to members of the Legislative Assembly from 6 April 2015. While the recommended increase for members of parliament is not significantly more, it simply should not be higher at all. This bill will retrospectively overturn the determination of the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal, which grants a 2.58 per cent salary increase to members of the Legislative Assembly from 6 April and will allow the Clerk of the Parliament to recover the salary overpayments to MPs between that date and the passing of this bill. If a 2.2 per cent pay rise is considered good enough by those opposite for our hardworking public servants, then surely it should suffice for those of us sitting here in this chamber.

Public servants have for too long been the forgotten mortar in the bricks of Queensland. It is not only those public servants we encounter in our everyday life like teachers, teacher aides, nurses, policemen, firemen and ambulance workers but also the thousands of employees in many Queensland government departments. It also includes those ably assisting in this very chamber tonight. Every public servant makes a huge contribution to keeping our state powering on each and every day. This Labor government recognises that they are very deserving of equal monetary consideration. To that end, this bill will place a limit on the tribunal so that it cannot determine percentage salary increases to MPs greater than percentage salary increases received by our public servants. I strongly encourage all members to support this bill tonight.

 **Mr de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (10.02 pm): I will be as brief as I can, although this is quite an important issue. This bill is one of many measures that will restore fairness to our community—fairness for workers, fairness for jobseekers, fairness for farmers, fairness for the sick, fairness for front-line workers like police, nurses and teachers, and fairness for those with a disability. Earlier, the member for Coomera spoke at length about independence. I want to point out that fairness and independence are not mutually exclusive concepts, and independence does not mean freedom from scope, nor parameters.

I have long said that the recent Queensland election was about the people who deliver essential services in our community—teachers, nurses, child safety officers, utility workers, doctors and school cleaners. Employing them is core business for our government. These are the people who work tirelessly to provide the services that many take for granted. These are the people who serve our community, who make our lives better and who deserve our respect. They expect us to act fairly. This bill restores fairness in a very real and symbolic way.

This bill will receive a strong welcome from those workers and their families. Importantly, it will require the Independent Remuneration Tribunal to follow a new fair process in making determinations about the wages paid to members of parliament. It is a process that is now fair but will also remain independent. Defending members' wage increases well above those paid to other government employees could be described, at best, as an error of judgement by the former government, but

history shows us that it was a fatal and somewhat incomprehensible blunder. The extent of the blunder is evinced by just how apparently ignorant the former government was to how this was received by the public.

I thank the members of the Finance and Administration Committee for their report. We will take note of the recommendations of this committee. I note from the report tabled by the Finance and Administration Committee that during the debate on the original tribunal bill on no fewer than two occasions did the then opposition and the crossbenchers attempt to reach the same outcome of fairness that we are seeking now. On both occasions members representing their communities from the non-government, non-LNP side of the chamber tried to impose on the process the very same limitations that were being imposed on the rest of the workforce by the then LNP government.

Whilst the LNP government was engaging in secret briefings on the state's fiscal situation, to which the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission was bound to rely on but which could not be cross-examined by the workforce nor a counter-argument put, at the same time it was rejecting the same imposition on itself. A firefighter friend of mine named Paul commented on this matter regularly—

Mr RICKUSS: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member is straying a long way from the bill at the moment.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Order! The member is referring to independence, which has been spoken to often. I believe it is relevant. I call the member for Springwood.

Mr RICKUSS: Madam Deputy Speaker, I refer to the long title of the bill. There is nothing in the long title of the bill that goes anywhere near this.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have made my ruling.

Mr de BRENNI: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. For my friend Paul, a firefighter and public servant who commented on it regularly and whom I listened to when he stood on the steps of the Executive Building to protest it, it was only about fairness. When the rights of workers to bargain were being hobbled, the same expectations on politicians were being rejected.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr de BRENNI: And I still hear them being rejected. The same people who say it is not right to confer a limitation on the setting of their salary were at that time setting an arbitrary figure on everybody else's. I note it is now recognised by those in the opposition that the topic of members' salaries was in fact subject to significant and negative public opinion. Not only does the Palaszczuk Labor government believe members' salaries should not be able to be increased by a rate higher than that applying to public sector employees; this is a belief shared by all Queenslanders. It was this failure to share the beliefs and values of the overwhelming majority of Queenslanders that saw so many members of the then government receiving a momentous wake-up call. I refer to an ABC News online article of 13 July 2013, which quoted a ReachTEL poll conducted in July 2013 which inquired into the—

Mr RICKUSS: Madam Deputy Speaker, we are now getting commentary on news data. There is no relevance—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. Would the member for Lockyer please resume his seat. I call the member for Springwood.

Mr RICKUSS: I raise the point of relevance. It is totally irrelevant.

Mr de BRENNI: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am nearing a conclusion. A total of 75.2 per cent of Queenslanders believed that state politicians' wage rises based on this independent poll should be limited to that of employees in the Queensland Public Service. Our bill will do that. Our bill provides that the tribunal cannot increase the base salary or additional salaries of members by more than the percentage amount of the salary increases that public sector employees have been granted. It also provides that any increase to the base salary or additional salaries of members determined by the tribunal must have the same commencement date as the increase granted to public sector employees. Paul, the firefighter, tells me that is only fair.

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (10.07 pm), in reply: First of all, I thank everybody for participating in the debate tonight. I thank all honourable members for their contribution to the debate on the bill. As I outlined previously, it gives my government enormous pride to introduce legislation that rights the wrongs of the past. What I mean by that is the first issue in relation to restoring the powers of the Speaker. As the member for Maroochydore quite

rightly pointed out, as the former Speaker in this House, it did not work. It was a failed experiment. We have learned from those mistakes and we are now correcting that wrong and making it right. I thank the member for Maroochydore for her strong stance tonight in relation to very important issues.

The member for Maroochydore also raised some significant issues that she was overseeing when she was Speaker and, if she had those powers, would have been able to be more frank in her assessment of issues but unfortunately could not due to the confines of what she could say in relation to privileges of that committee. However, I would also make the point that the government of the day was also represented on that committee and her colleague, the member for Clayfield, had a big say on the running of that CLA.

Mr Nicholls: How could I? I was just one of seven.

Ms PALASZCZUK: He knows the truth. The second issue is, of course, having a member of the crossbench on the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. I think everybody accepts that that is the right thing to do. The Committee of the Legislative Assembly should reflect the composition of this parliament. It is fair and equitable to have a member of the crossbench committee fairly represented on that committee.

On the third issue about the MP pay rises and linking them to public sector increases, I want to make it very clear. We heard from members opposite tonight and we heard the Leader of the Opposition asking, 'Where is the evidence?' I will tell the House where the evidence is—it is the recent election we just had. I made it very clear during the election campaign—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They do not like it.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Order on both sides of the House. The Premier has the call.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The community expects more from its members in relation to pay rises. They expect more. What this legislation does is it links the pay rises to that of our public servants—and that is the right thing to do. It is the right thing to do; it is the moral thing to do. They wanted to talk about morals earlier today. Where was the morality when they awarded the former premier a pay rise equivalent to that of the President of the United States? It is not any secret—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Madam Deputy Speaker, the member for Kawana is interjecting and he is not in his seat.

Mr Bleijie: The big issues of the day.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, the big issues. Let me come to the member—

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Premier, will you resume your seat. I am about to issue a general warning. Members can only interject in this House if they are in their seat. That is a rule of this parliament. Please respect it. I call the Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The member for Kawana had a lot to say when he was the state's Attorney-General, and was it not absolutely embarrassing! We saw the bungled boot camps, we saw the trashing of integrity and accountability—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Kawana, you will cease interjecting. The Premier has the call.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We saw the trashing of democracy in this state. That is the legacy of the former LNP government. Let me reiterate this very clearly: it was completely unacceptable that the former premier of this state was awarded a pay increase which was almost equivalent to that of the President of the United States of America. That was wrong and that was shameful. During the election campaign, I spoke to members of the public, to the communities and to families right across Queensland, and they made it very clear that they supported my stance on linking any future increases to the increases of public servants, and my government will stand by that decision. The moral question tonight is this: will this opposition stand by their moral convictions? I dare think they will not.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members, I cannot hear the Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The community expects more from the standards in this House. What we have seen from those opposite is that they have learnt absolutely nothing.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister for Education, we do not need your provocation.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister for Education!

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The Minister for Education will be warned if she persists. I call the Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Is it not wonderful to see—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr Elmes interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: And the member for Noosa will be warned if he persists.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Is it not wonderful to see the member for Ashgrove back in this House. In summary, I would like to thank the members very much, but tonight it is about the public expectations. There is nothing more important than meeting those public expectations, and that is what my government is intending to do each and every day. That is why we will stand up for integrity and accountability in this state. That is why we are committed to restoring front-line services. That is why we are committed to protecting the environment. We will make sure that Queenslanders do not forget the legacy of the past, the legacy of the arrogance. That arrogance was clearly demonstrated to everybody, loud and clear, when they awarded themselves those massive increases. It is not happening anymore.

Tonight we right the wrongs of the past. Today is a good day for democracy because the Speaker's powers will be restored. The Speaker will run this parliament in the way that he sees fit. That is the right thing to do. Finally, the crossbenches will get a say on the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. During the last parliament in the last three years, they were shut out of any kind of decision-making. I reflected just recently on the first three months of the former government, and it reminded me when I looked through the booklet that they threw the then opposition out of the parliamentary precinct within the first three months. Do members remember that? Today is another anniversary. It is the anniversary of when the former health minister three years ago cut the funding for the AIDS Council in this state—

Mr Stevens: Mr Speaker, the relevance on this—

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is their legacy. Well, no more. Queenslanders woke up in January. They were sick and tired of the arrogance and of them being out of touch. You only have to look at the front bench over there to see it is still the same. The Leader of the Opposition was the health minister in this state. The member for Clayfield was the Treasurer.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Premier, you are provoking them. Perhaps you should speak through the chair please.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Speaker, I come to the member for Kawana—can I say any more about the member for Kawana? Where was the rule book? He is a disgrace, an absolute disgrace. It is going to take us a while to fix up the mess but we will work every day to fix it up and make sure that Queensland is a better place.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 23, as read, agreed to.

Clause 24—

Ms PALASZCZUK (10.19 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 24 (Amendment of s 81 (Membership))

Page 14, line 25 to page 15, line 11—

omit, insert—

24 Amendment of s 81 (Membership)

- (1) Section 81(1), all words before subsection (1)(a)—
omit, insert—
 - (1) If no member of the Assembly is a cross bench member, the committee comprises the following 7 members—
- (2) Section 81(2)—
renumber as section 81(3).
- (3) Section 81—
insert—
 - (2) If any member of the Assembly is a cross bench member, the committee comprises 8 members, being the members mentioned in subsection (1)(a) to (g) and—
 - (a) if only 1 member of the Assembly is a cross bench member—that member; or
 - (b) if 2 or more members of the Assembly are cross bench members—
 - (i) a cross bench member nominated by the Leader of the House under section 81A; or
 - (ii) another cross bench member nominated by the cross bench member mentioned in subparagraph (i) to be that member's alternate.
- (4) Section 81(3)—
insert—

cross bench member does not include the Speaker.

I table explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper: Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes to Hon. Annastacia Palaszczuk's amendments [\[438\]](#).

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 24, as amended, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

Ms PALASZCZUK (10.19 pm): I move the following amendment—

2 After clause 24

Page 15, after line 11—

insert—

24A Insertion of new s 81A

After section 81—

insert—

81A Nomination of crossbench member

- (1) If there is a vacancy in the membership of the committee under section 81(2)(b)(i)—
 - (a) the members of the Assembly who are cross bench members must—
 - (i) choose, by majority, a cross bench member to be the nominee for membership of the committee; and
 - (ii) advise the Leader of the House in writing of their choice; and
 - (b) the Leader of the House must nominate the chosen member to be a member of the committee.
- (2) The Leader of the House does not have a vote in any process used by the cross bench members to choose a member under subsection (1)(a)(i).
- (3) However, if at least 2 sitting days have elapsed since the vacancy arose and the cross bench members have not complied with subsection (1)(a), the Leader of the House may choose a cross bench member and nominate that member.
- (4) In this section—

cross bench member does not include the Speaker.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 25—

Ms PALASZCZUK (10.20 pm): I move the following amendment—

3 Clause 25 (Replacement of s 83 (Meetings))

Page 15, line 20—

omit, insert—

- (3) A quorum is—
- (a) if the committee includes a cross bench member under section 81(2)—
5 members; or
 - (b) otherwise—4 members.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 25, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 26 to 28, as read, agreed to.

Clause 29—

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (10.20 pm): Without wishing to go over the ground that we previously discussed in the substantive debate on this bill, I indicate that I said earlier that the LNP opposition would not be supporting this particular clause. The reason is that it impugns the intention of the original act of parliament, which is the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal Act. At the time it was a position supported by the then opposition; there was support for the notion of an independent remuneration tribunal for all the reasons that were outlined at the time, and that is that we do need to have an independent remuneration tribunal. If we are then going to start to dictate how it makes its decisions and set a particular scope, then by that very definition no longer is it an independent remuneration tribunal. I again refer members to what was a very good submission from all of the tribunal members who submitted to the committee when the legislation was reviewed. They indicated their concern with regard to the way that this would impact upon their ability to properly consider the worth of members of parliament and to make a decision with regard to appropriate research and the facts at hand. That is the reason that we cannot support that particular part of the legislation.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The government will be supporting this clause, as we will all of the clauses of this part of the bill. There is still a role for the independent remuneration tribunal. However, I made it very clear, as the members of my government have made very clear and has the member for Dalrymple, that we believe that the pay rises should be linked to the Public Service increases and they should be no more than that. It is the right thing to do. I urge all members to support this clause tonight.

Division: Question put—That clause 29 stand part of the bill.

AYES, 46:

ALP, 43—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, Pyne, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

INDEPENDENT, 1—Gordon.

NOES, 42:

LNP, 42—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Cripps, Davis, Dickson, Elmes, Emerson, Frecklington, Hart, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, McVeigh, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Perrett, Powell, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Seeney, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Walker, Watts, Weir.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 29, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 30 to 34, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (10.28 pm): I move—

That the bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

Question put—That the bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (10.29 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

Question put—That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Resumed from p. 734.

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (10.29 pm): May I say from the outset tonight that it is great to be back in this place. As I cast my eyes around the chamber here this evening, I again congratulate all members upon their election to the 55th Parliament and once again congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on your appointment. I congratulate the Premier and her team on their win, but rest assured that Her Majesty's opposition will hold the Labor government to account for every day of every week of every month of this parliamentary term regardless of how long that will be. Time will tell, Mr Speaker.

I also lament the loss of many of my LNP colleagues. I particularly miss my mates from Central, North and Far North Queensland, almost all of whom were defeated or retired at the last election. I am pleased to be back alongside the new member for Burdekin and the 'big fella' himself, the member for Hinchinbrook. Between the three of us, we have the north covered. It will be a team effort now with just the three of us north of Bundaberg, which underlines how we as an opposition need to re-engage with the people of Queensland—especially regional Queensland. That work is well and truly underway, and I commend the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in particular for their efforts so far in that regard. I also thank them for their support and the opportunity to serve as the only shadow assistant minister in this 55th Parliament as shadow assistant minister to the opposition leader for North Queensland. Given my unashamed passion for the north—or, if you wish, those countless communities north of the Tropic of Capricorn—I relish that opportunity indeed.

Having said that, in this business it is not just about winning elections; it is about standing up for what one believes in and standing up for one's community, no matter what the consequences are. That is why as a first-term MP I drew a line in the sand on issues such as 100 per cent FIFO and sugar marketing, which are issues that I have banged on about through the appropriate channels. In relation to the latter, I am pleased to be part of a team that recently announced its intentions to make much needed pro-competition amendments to the Sugar Industry Act 1999. I look forward to speaking on that in due course, given the importance of Australia's \$1.5 billion sugar industry, so important to Mackay and the Whitsundays and many other cane-growing communities.

In relation to 100 per cent FIFO, I am proud of my role in this debate. Again I stress that I will never support any proposal to approve any mine in our backyard on a 100 per cent FIFO basis, unlike the last Labor government which approved two of them under the premiership of Anna Bligh. That is a fact. Unfortunately, we did not articulate our position on FIFO to the voters, and we paid dearly for that. One only has to look at what happened to the neighbouring seat of Mirani. As I told the Courier-Mail in the wake of that disastrous campaign, Tom Newbery, Ron Camm and Sir Joh would all be turning in their graves.

Three years ago I spoke about my vision for the region that I proudly represent, the Mackay-Whitsunday region, which is now not faring as well economically as it should be. Like so many of our regions following the change of government—let's not sugar-coat it—it has only got worse. Historically we were the envy of the rest of the nation. Between our sugar, coal, tourism and cattle industries, as well as others, our diversified economic base was a source of great pride. Not only that, it was the reason why we were the biggest regional economy of the north. That is a big statement when you consider that we are talking about only three local government areas.

No matter for whom we bat politically, we are all in this place because we won the election. But winning is not our core business—it is serving the people, caring for the people and making a difference. That is something that I am most honoured to do, especially with this year marking the 150th anniversary of my family being in the Mackay-Whitsunday region. It was back in 1865 that Constable Patrick Costigan arrived to further his career as a police officer. Put simply, like so many others from all walks of life and from all corners of the globe, my Irish-born great-great-grandfather

came to the north in search of opportunities hoping for a better life, a chance to start a family, a business, to farm the land—all sorts of pursuits—not just in North Queensland but across the length and breadth of this great state.

It is also important to remember that some had no choice: just ask the descendants of the Kanakas, who continue to make a significant contribution to our local community, and others up and down the coast. I am proud to call many of those descendants long-time mates. Of course I also acknowledge the traditional owners of the land I represent: the Yuibera people, the Gia people and Ngaro people, all of whom are wonderful people.

As I mentioned earlier, my electorate is hurting economically and so are many others, especially in the regions. That is why I was thrilled to see the recent announcement in the federal budget of \$5 billion in finance being made available to develop infrastructure projects in Northern Australia, and I commended the Prime Minister personally earlier this week when I saw him in Mackay. Many people may not realise it, but north of the Tropic of Capricorn we have about five per cent of the nation's population but we produce about 50 per cent of the nation's export income. It is a staggering figure, and there is no doubt in my mind that Australia's future prosperity—and certainly Queensland's future prosperity—can be found in the huge expanse of Central, North and Far North Queensland.

It is my hope that, through this fund, we see nation-building projects come on line like the Urannah Dam, which is in a remote part of my electorate west of the Clarke Range two and a half hours by four-wheel drive from Collinsville. It is a bit off the beaten track, but it is a dam that has been talked about—along with the Elliot Main Channel—since the early 1960s, well before the construction of the mighty Burdekin Falls Dam just to the north. I mention the Burdekin Falls Dam because it is the benchmark—approximately 1.9 million megalitres—but Urannah is certainly no turkey's nest by comparison. If constructed, it would have an impressive storage capacity of 1.5 million megalitres—

Ms Leahy: A megadam.

Mr COSTIGAN: It would be a megadam. I take the interjection from the member for Warrego. It would be comparable to the Burdekin, bigger than the Fairbairn Dam on the Nogoia River near Emerald, and more than three times bigger than the Peter Faust Dam near Proserpine in my electorate. What could this water be used for? Well, at 220 metres above sea level, fed by an annual rainfall of more than 20 inches on the old scale, the Urannah Dam could provide water for up to 30,000 hectares of irrigated farmland downstream along the Bowen River, as the member for Burdekin would well know. It could provide water for new mining projects in the northern Bowen Basin right across to the yet-to-be-developed Galilee Basin and, if we are fair dinkum, a baseload power station to serve the energy needs of North Queensland.

This dam would prove a magnet for tourists, spawning opportunities in eco-tourism and Indigenous tourism. With its construction it certainly ticks all the boxes of building a four-pillar economy, which was one of the great hallmarks of the former LNP government. It is worth noting that the project was advocated for by the former member for Bowen, the late Sir Peter Delamothe, who was attorney-general in the Nicklin, Pizzey, Chalk and Bjelke-Petersen governments. Every time I see his face on the big mural in Herbert Street, the main street of Bowen, where the 'Doc' practised many moons ago as a surgeon and around the corner from where I started my career 26 years ago, I think of the Urannah Dam project. I feel that it is my duty to follow through and get the job done, and I reckon that I have one or two mates who are willing to back me up on that. Unfortunately, we have some key decision makers in the region I represent who have no idea about the dam, no idea what it means for our region and no idea about jobs and the industry that comes on the back of such a project. In fact, they would have absolutely no idea where the dam site is. That needs to change for us to make it happen.

I remain deeply committed to the project, and tonight I call on those decision makers and people of influence to lift their game and support my endeavours to deliver on what would be a game-changer for the north. It is also my strong desire to see the sustainable expansion of the Abbot Point coal terminal, especially with so many communities between Mackay and Townsville doing it tough. Abbot Point was always destined to become a major coal port. I remember that when I was working on the local newspaper, reporting on the shipping movements of all things as well as the court news, the council news, the sporting news—all sorts of news for the *Bowen Independent* and when the so-called Caley Valley Wetlands were nothing more than a man-made duck swamp.

For the sake of people in Bowen, the Whitsundays, Mackay, the Burdekin and Townsville, the expansion of Abbot Point needs to happen sooner rather than later. We have seen too many people pack their bags, too many people lose their businesses and too many children pulled out of school, and I say that enough is enough. I call on the government to make it happen and make it happen now.

The state of the economy and rising unemployment are having a shocking impact on our people in the north, especially young folk who are worried about their jobs or do not have a job. It is affecting them in so many ways. The mental health issues that have arisen are unprecedented—I would suggest not just in Mackay and the Whitsundays but across society in general. Having a job is not going to fix everything but it sure helps, and that is where governments can play a big role—providing the framework and the conditions so that we have investment, employment opportunities and affordable housing—so that everyday people can get out there, earn a decent living, provide for their families and loved ones and make a contribution they can be proud of.

In my first three years our achievements were many, if I may say so. It was the LNP government that built and opened the first government school in Mackay since the 1990s—in my electorate in fact, smack bang in the high-growth area that is the northern beaches, where early this year we also saw the opening of a new Catholic primary school, St Brendan's, also supported by the former LNP government. I mention that the Minister for Education was very gracious in her acknowledgement of my presence on that day. On top of that, let us look at what we achieved last year. We opened a new kindergarten at Calen. Where we might give a bouquet, let's give a brickbat, because in Calen the former Labor government let the old kindergarten wither on the vine.

In health we saw continued investment in the Mackay Base Hospital with the addition of a cardiac catheter laboratory and an oncology unit, meaning less travel for local patients to places like Brisbane and Townsville. On that note, as you would know, Mr Speaker, we doubled the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme, which went nowhere for years and years under the former government. Up in the Whitsundays, we doubled the Proserpine Hospital's dental capacity—another great outcome.

We saw money come through for various sporting clubs through Get in the Game, with Magpies Sporting Club at Glenella among the major recipients. We secured funding for road safety improvements, and I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Indooroopilly and his initiative and stewardship of the campaign for road safety whilst the minister responsible, and those benefits helping students—

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Whitsunday, one moment. Minister for Education, I would ask you to desist in making comments across the chamber. Otherwise you will be warned.

Mr COSTIGAN: As I was saying, the road safety benefits enhance road safety around schools such as Bucasia State School and Proserpine State School. I also look forward to seeing a good outcome at Glenella State School, which the Leader of Opposition Business would be taking a great personal interest in, I would have thought. It is maybe not front-page news, but if you go and ask the mums and dads you will find that it is a big deal in those communities.

Roads in the Whitsundays are better, too. When I was campaigning the first time around we had not one single overtaking lane on the Bruce Highway between Mount Ossa and the Burdekin, a distance of about 250 kilometres. But guess what? It has changed.

As someone who represents Airlie Beach, the heart of the reef and the heart of the Whitsundays, I understand the importance of tourism for our region and our state. That is why I am pleased to have seen an increase in the number of direct flights to the Whitsundays since I became the MP. It is something I vowed to fight for, and in three years we have seen a reduction in the number of empty shops in the main street of Airlie Beach, the opening of the new one-and-only Hayman Island resort and other significant tourism ventures coming online. And today there is a ray of hope that in the future the redevelopment of Lindeman Island resort will finally come to fruition. It is my dream to see a similar revival of Brampton Island, where my mother and sister once worked. I have the fondest of memories growing up, as do so many Mackay-ites, like the choo-choo train from the jetty to the resort. This is something I will be pursuing in my second term as I look to see the continued renaissance of the tourism sector that started under the member for Currumbin. The member for Currumbin should take a bow, because it is a sector that was neglected by the former government.

I maintain the view that one day in the future we will see an opportunity to develop a casino for the Whitsundays, either on the mainland or on an island, along with an international airport. I have spoken about that before. It would fill a huge geographical hole between Cairns in the far north and the south-east corner of our state. After all, it is the great city of Cairns and my beloved Whitsundays that are the two key departure points for our iconic Great Barrier Reef. The only difference, of course, is that in the Whitsundays we have those 100 magic miles with all the islands one could wish for. Members know them. So do many other people not only from Queensland but also from around the world. They rival the Greek islands and the Caribbean. I guess that is why I am a little annoyed, to say the least, that the tourism minister is yet to visit the Whitsundays. To borrow a line from an old advertising campaign, 'Where the bloody hell are you?'

Up north and indeed across the bush—Mr Speaker, you will be able to acknowledge this, I am sure—people will tell you how it is. They will tell you straight and they will tell you to your face. I must say: they want our politicians, especially those down south, to start listening. Furthermore, I speak for them when I say that we want our fair share. Let us not forget that we have our Queensland Plan, a plan for the future. It is a document that very clearly articulates an objective to decentralise our population. We need to populate the north. If we fail to do that, perhaps someone will do it for us. We need a better go for the north—a bigger slice of the pie so that we can contribute to make a stronger state and a stronger nation. If we do not, I know what will happen. There will be renewed calls—and we have heard them before—for the north to break away. It is a concept that is not new. I am a proud North Queenslander. When I travel around this nation I say that I am a North Queenslander, and I make no apology for that.

Before concluding, I must acknowledge the many people who stuck by me. Without them I would not be here today. I start with my rank-and-file LNP members and my supporters. My campaign team was put together at the last minute, and for good reason. They worked under enormous adversity beyond their control to deliver a top result.

Thank you to Greg Chappell, Len Fehlhaber, Les Durnsford, Bill and Margaret McLean, Shelley Argent, Charlie Camilleri, Cody Vella, Mark Radke and everyone else who contributed. We had many helpers indeed. I say a big thankyou especially to people such as Di Dobbins and her late husband, Jack; and Bob Ballantyne and his late wife, Jocelyn, who literally died the day before the election, just hours after handing out how-to-vote forms. As Bob said, she died doing something she loved. Rest in peace, Jocelyn. I also thank everyone else who helped: Pauline Ogilvie, Gloria Demartini, Bill and Eileen Deicke, Geof and Beth Acton, Jason and Tracey Newitt, Graeme and Wendy Cumming, Maxene and Trevor Bassett, Barry Humphries, Fred Reinke—and on it goes.

I mentioned it was a last-minute job, but that was thanks to the ridiculous situation we found ourselves in—preselected just five weeks prior to Christmas. But we got the job done, largely thanks to people like the late Jack Long. He would not have missed it for quids. He was a long-time LNP member and at the time was battling cancer. He was one of my greatest supporters. Thankfully, common sense prevailed and we were able to fight a tough election from a position of weakness. We were in South Australia, on our way to see family, when the election was called. The visit had to be called off. On that note I thank my family, especially my mum. God bless you, Mum.

I thank those LNP people who ensured we were the candidate—not just Jack Long, who passed away several weeks ago, but also the likes of Les Durnsford and Norma Wood, an amazing lady now into her nineties who knew Uncle Warren up at Eungella back in the 1950s, when they had neighbouring dairy farms. Norma made her way to Proserpine, like so many wonderful Mackay people who are long-time members of our party. Now that poor old Jack is gone, maybe Norma will make me some baked custard from time to time. From the bottom of my heart, I thank each and every one of them and I thank the then premier for backing me. I also thank the then member for Cairns for coming along to support me, along with my long-time political mentor Senator Ian Macdonald—a great advocate for North Queensland whose wise counsel and mateship I value enormously. I thank my staff, Kim Britton and Jacqui Spruce, for their professionalism, backed up by Theresa O'Regan.

I will never forget that collective show of support. Without it we would have gone up in smoke, but with it we won back to back in Whitsunday for the first time in 29 years. Finally, I wish to thank one person—Nicola Clark, who is in the gallery tonight. Here we have a truly remarkable and most wonderful lady whose sheer presence, love and support gave me the strength to fight on in tough times, to fight the good fight. Darling, despite what everyone said, we did it. In fact, I could not have done it without you.

In closing, despite all of the challenges we face as a community, I believe the future is extremely bright for the Whitsunday electorate. It is the place I love; the place I would walk over hot coals for and indeed North Queensland in general. I know we worked our guts out during our first three years in this job. In fact, since February last year my car has clocked up more than 105,000 kilometres, most of that travelling around the region and around the north. I can assure the good people of Whitsunday that I will continue to work hard for them, including those who did not vote for me, so that we can make our community an even better place. To me it has been an absolute privilege to continue to serve as the 'member for paradise'.

Debate, on motion of Mr Costigan, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.51 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

University of Queensland, Community Infrastructure Designation

 **Mr EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (10.51 pm): The University of Queensland at St Lucia is a wonderful asset to my local community. It is the most beautiful university campus in Australia. It provides not only educational, sporting and cultural facilities but also many employment opportunities and economic stimulus. Like many others in the area, I studied at UQ and even met my wife there while we were students. Having lived in the area for more than 30 years, I know how important it is that the university works cooperatively with the surrounding community and suburbs. Currently the university has proposed a new master plan, including an expansion of its formal boundaries, known as the Community Infrastructure Designation, or CID. This master plan has seen my office inundated with emails and calls raising concerns about the significant impact it would have on the local area. A public meeting about the master plan attracted more than 160 people. I congratulate the St Lucia Community Association for organising the meeting and recognising the depth of community concern about the UQ master plan. Those concerns cover many issues. They include traffic congestion and parking, with the university proposing a doubling of students living on campus but with a minimal increase of on-campus parking; established local businesses fear that a proposed shopping precinct would drive some to the wall as they try to compete with competitors backed by the resources of the university; the Toowong Rowing Club believes that its activities and facilities would be devastated by a proposed bridge across the river to West End; and existing campus colleges see a massive expansion of self-catered accommodation on campus as having an adverse impact.

But clearly of most concern is the expansion of UQ's CID. Under the CID, the university is not subject to Brisbane City Council building and development regulations that everyone else has to abide by. Within the CID the university can build whatever size it likes and for whatever purpose. Under its master plan, the university wants to expand its CID footprint further into the suburbs of St Lucia and Long Pocket and be free of any interference from council or any appeal rights from locals in that expanded area. The Brisbane City Council has rejected the planned expansion of the CID, but the decision rests with the state government. Approval of the expanded CID needs to be made by the state education minister, Kate Jones. I have asked the minister to meet with representatives of the St Lucia Community Association and she has kindly agreed. I would urge her to take on board its concerns and reject any expansion of UQ's boundaries and the CID.

University of Queensland, Community Infrastructure Designation; Member for Whitsunday; Wounded Heroes

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (10.54 pm): There are a couple of things I want to say. Firstly, I acknowledge the comments by the member for Indooroopilly. We had a discussion last night and I have undertaken that I will meet representatives from his community. It is also important to put on the public record the fact that the master plan for UQ was sent to the government in December—so it was sent to the previous minister—but I am happy to meet with his constituents. While the member for Whitsunday is in the House, I also want to put on the public record that in his speech he made two references—that I had never been to the electorate of Whitsunday but then he thanked me for my kindness for going to one of the schools in his electorate.

Mr COSTIGAN: I rise to a point of order. I know it is late, but I rise to a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Yes; what is your point of order, member for Whitsunday?

Mr COSTIGAN: I did not make any reference that the Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and whatever else is on the business card has not been to the electorate of Whitsunday. I said that the minister responsible for tourism in this state had not been to the Whitsundays. There is a difference, with great respect.

Ms JONES: With great respect, I am the Minister for Tourism and the Minister for Education and I have been to the member for Whitsunday's electorate and had the opportunity to meet with a number of tourism—

Mr COSTIGAN: I rise to a point of order. I am not going to let it slip; sorry, Mr Speaker. There is a big difference here.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Whitsunday—

Mr COSTIGAN: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Whitsunday, it is not a point of order. I call the minister.

Ms JONES: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr COSTIGAN: Mr Speaker—

Mr SPEAKER: It is not a point of order. I call the minister. If you would like to have a discussion with me later on, member for Whitsunday, I am happy to have a chat. I call the minister.

Ms JONES: I know what my portfolio responsibilities are. I rise to speak about Wounded Heroes, a charity that supports service men and women from the Gallipoli Barracks in my electorate. I recently had the honour of being asked to be patron of Wounded Heroes and I am proud to take on this position in my local community. Gallipoli Barracks is in the heart of my electorate. It is home to the 7th Brigade of the Australian Army. The brigade's history dates back to 1915 and most recently the brigade has been deployed to East Timor, the Solomon Islands, Iraq and Afghanistan. Ashgrove is a proud Defence community. When I head down to my local Woolies, it is common to see soldiers in their uniforms going about their business. They are often picking up coffee or grabbing some of our wonderful sushi for lunch and, more often than not, they are laughing and smiling. There is of course a more serious side to their work as they are called on to sacrifice so much for our nation.

Wounded Heroes was established in 2007 with the aim of supporting the service men and women based at Gallipoli Barracks and their families. I recently met with Martin Shaw and Jim Shapcott from Wounded Heroes to learn more about the valuable work that it does in my local community. It is working in partnership with 7th Brigade to provide funds to the centre and the Soldier Recovery Centre. It is also working to support families in need by providing financial assistance for those impacted by PTSD, physical injuries and trauma. This year up to 1,000 service men and women from Gallipoli Barracks will be deployed. I believe supporting our service men and women is not just the responsibility of Defence or Veterans' Affairs; it is the responsibility of our entire community. That is why I am proud to be a patron of Wounded Heroes and I look forward to working with it, 7th Brigade and the wider Ashgrove community to support service men and women and their families.

Paradise Point Progress Association

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (10.57 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House tonight to acknowledge and congratulate the members of the executive of the Paradise Point Progress Association. Last Tuesday evening at its AGM Fred Woodley, who had been president of the association for 20 years, decided to retire. I want to put on the record my great appreciation to Fred for the great work that he has done supporting this fantastic organisation in our local community. It was particularly important that it was National Volunteer Week—an opportunity for us to get together and acknowledge those who so freely give of their time to try to make our community a better place. I particularly want to acknowledge incoming President Mr Brendan Boyle who, I think as we would all agree, after 20 years of Fred's presidency has incredibly big shoes to fill. I know that Brendan will do so with renewed vigour and enthusiasm and will certainly bring something to the role. I also acknowledge Vice-President Colin Milne, Secretary Roger Gordon, Treasurer Tom Bradwell and members of the committee such as Maureen Ball. We could not quite get rid of Fred that easily, so Fred is staying involved by staying on the committee to ensure that Brendan is on the straight and narrow and has someone to turn to. I also acknowledge Liz Blundell-Thornton, who is newly elected to the committee and who wants to get involved in the local community.

As I said, after 20 years Fred has retired as president. The community in my electorate and right across the Gold Coast is incredibly indebted to Fred for the work that he has done not only with the Paradise Point Progress Association but with the many other community organisations that he supports in my local community. By way of example, Fred is involved with the amputee support group on the Gold Coast. He is also particularly involved in Neighbourhood Watch. I know that it is fantastic for the local councillor, Cameron Caldwell, who was there, and me to be able to acknowledge and pay tribute to people like Fred, who get out there each and every day to make sure that they are serving our community. Even though Fred is no longer the president of the association, I am sure that Cameron and I can expect regular phone calls and regular emails as he continues to be a very strong advocate for the Paradise Point and Coombabah communities—an area where he is so incredibly proud to live—to make sure that the community has a strong voice that is heard by both Cameron and me.

I would like to pay tribute to Fred. I am sure that all members of the House would join me in thanking him for the 20 years of service that he has given to that particular community organisation. I wish him all the best in his semiretirement from community service.

Mackay Electorate, Tourism

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (11.00 pm): I would like to share with the House an event that I had the pleasure to attend, the Mackay Tourism Awards. These awards celebrated the Mackay and Isaac region and were held in Clermont. The mayor, Councillor Ann Baker, emceed the awards, which were held on the local softball fields, which are nestled under majestic gum trees beside Wolfgang Creek. Mackay Tourism organised the event in a magnificent marquee. The emcee for the evening was the accomplished country and western singer Tania Kernaghan. Tania treated us to some music that she had composed. She is a very talented woman.

The awards showcased tourist operators who have demonstrated innovation, improved business planning, creativity and excellence. All of the entrants were worthy of winning an award. The awards highlighted the amazing range of accommodation available across the region, ranging from five-star luxury to budget motels, family caravan parks, cabins and camping grounds and, of course, people can still book into one of our country pubs.

The variety of tourist activities available in the combined regions is endless. I would like to share some of them with members. There is hang-gliding, diving with platypus, skydiving, cableskiing, charter fishing trips, visits to rainforests and the Great Barrier Reef, and visiting heritage centres and art galleries. So it is worthwhile visiting the regions.

The winners included the Sarina Sugar Shed. I urge members to call in and try some of their rum, sauces and chutneys. Mackay beach racing is a spectacular event in Mackay. All members should come to visit it. Once a year we have horseracing on the beach. There is also the Mackay Day spa; the Clermont Historical Centre; Mackay Transit Coaches; Rainforest Scuba, where people can get up close and personal to a platypus; 101 Things to Do in Mackay—and that is just the start of things to do; there are a lot more than 101 things to do; and the Mackay Blacks Beach Holiday Park. Tania Kernaghan was pleased to be able to present this award, because she shared with us that her brother, Lee, was conceived in one of Mackay's caravan parks while her parents were on tour. So she said that it is the place to go.

On a serious note, that night the tourism operators were really pleased and excited about the Palaszczuk Labor government's commitment of \$40 million over four years to the Tourism and Events budget to boost visitation events throughout Queensland. Our tourism operators need to have more people visiting them and they need to know that we are open for business. So please come and visit Mackay.

Urannah Dam

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (11.03 pm): The development of a significant water resource is the key to unlocking the economic potential of the north. The impending release of the northern white paper and infrastructure funding commitments in last week's federal budget means that the time is now ripe to deliver the Urannah Dam project.

The proposed Urannah Dam, situated on the Broken River south-west of Collinsville, will store around 1.5 million megalitres of water. This capacity compares with the storage capacity of 1,860,000 megalitres in the Burdekin Falls Dam. The Urannah Dam project was first identified and investigated 40 years ago and has been revisited many times due to its location, narrow valley, small inundations

area and relatively low capital cost per megalitre. Urannah Dam has been previously identified as a priority 1 Queensland dam project by the Queensland government and is widely recognised as the highest priority water project and environmentally feasible dam site in the entire Burdekin catchment.

The Urannah Dam project is the key to the future development of the region. It is the most viable solution to meeting the growing water supply demand resulting from proposed new mine developments, power generation proposals, industrial developments and the creation of an expanded irrigated horticulture/broadacre farming industry. Water from the dam could be utilised to develop the 30,000-hectare area to the south-west of Collinsville along the Bowen River as a major new irrigated agricultural area. An agro-economic assessment has identified this project as having the potential to generate \$323.2 million over 25 years from agriculture industry association, not taking into account industrial, mining and power generation benefits. As the proposed Urannah Dam sits at 240 metres elevation, it can gravity feed water to most areas in the Bowen and Galilee basins and the lower Burdekin catchment through either pipeline or riverine delivery mechanisms.

I am talking about extremely low levels of water diversion in the catchment for this dam. Urannah's catchment is developed to only four per cent of available water flows and after the construction of the dam this percentage will rise to only 18 per cent. It is a greenfield development in close proximity to existing industries. The proposed development is within 100 kilometres of the canefarming areas of the Burdekin and Proserpine and the horticultural industry at Bowen, which will result in a faster uptake of water by industry through expansion rather than having to commence new development from scratch.

The last dam to be built in North Queensland was the Burdekin Falls Dam, which was completed in 1987. In the 28 years since that date, Queensland's population has expanded from 2.7 million to 4.8 million people. Queensland needs this dam and it makes perfect sense to build it in northern Australia. We are about to become the food bowl of South-East Asia and the job opportunities and economic development that this project would bring to Queensland would be unprecedented. Let Urannah Dam be our legacy to the people of Queensland and let us make a commitment here today to move forward with this project.

Holloway, Mr D; Eldon, Mr P; Anzac Day

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (11.06 pm): Firstly, I would like to note the passing of two union colleagues: Mr Des Holloway, with whom I worked at the QPSU and Mr Peter Eldon of the AWU. I would like to offer my condolences to their families. I would also like to congratulate the Premier on passing the bill this evening. It is another great step on the journey back to integrity in this place.

Recently, I was honoured to represent the Premier at Anzac Nurses Candlelight Vigil. I was also pleased to attend Anzac services locally at the Greenslopes Private Hospital, the Holland Park-Mount Gravatt RSL Sub-Branch and the Coorparoo and Districts RSL. Each of these events was special and commemorated the day in a way that resonated with the local community.

Although each of these events was special and will stay with me, perhaps the event that made the greatest impression upon me was the Anzac commemoration at the Nursery Road State Special School, which is located at the base of Mount Gravatt and which was established a few years ago by combining services previously offered by the Mount Gravatt West Special School and the Xavier Children's Support Network, both fine organisations with a long history of working with children with disabilities. The Nursery Road State Special School is a school for students aged from six to 18 years with ASD, intellectual or multiple impairments.

I was invited to be a guest speaker at this event and I was met at the reception desk by a member of the recently established student council. All members of that council played a role in the school's Anzac commemoration. All the members of the student council displayed outstanding leadership qualities and made the other guest, Warrant Officer Second Class Peter Farmer, and me feel very welcome.

During my address I reflected on what motivates members of the military to take up arms in defence of our nation. I have never been in the military, nor have I experienced personally war or conflict, but I imagine that every single soldier, sailor and aviator at some point wonders, 'For what do we toil and for what do we sacrifice?' Hopefully, schools like the Nursery Road State Special School go some way to answering that question. We live in a society that values the transformative power of education and we ensure that it is available to all.

On Anzac Day each year two nations stop to remember the sacrifice and recognise how it has helped us all to live in a decent society. The decency of our society has been gained through the significant sacrifice of many men and women who have answered the call to defend our society and to defend our values.

I would like to extend my thanks to the student councillors, to all the students, to the school Principal, Shauna St George, and the dedicated staff, to the parents and to the P&C volunteers, particularly the president, Andrea Jost. I would like to acknowledge that the school community have reinforced for me that Anzac Day is an event that has meaning for all Australians and New Zealanders.

Purling Brook Falls Suspension Bridge

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (11.10 pm): I rise to update the House on a fantastic LNP achievement that will go a long way to boosting tourism and revitalising Springbrook National Park in my electorate of Mudgeeraba. On 10 March 2015 the Purling Brook Falls suspension bridge was opened in Springbrook National Park which completes the Purling Brook circuit for visitors and locals to explore and enjoy. This bridge delivers on a \$1 million commitment to tourism in my electorate and to boosting the economy of the Springbrook community. It is an outstanding piece of infrastructure which was fought for, funded and delivered by the Liberal National Party during the last term of government and I could not be more proud of this fantastic new addition to my national park.

As members are aware after my numerous speeches in this place, for too long the Springbrook community suffered under successive Labor governments. As a result of decisions made by the Labor Party, Springbrook was at a crossroads when we came to government. Businesses were struggling, tourism was declining and a fantastic mountain community was being closed down before our eyes. Under the LNP the Springbrook community finally saw real progress. In April 2014, I stood at the top of Purling Brook Falls with the then minister for national parks, recreation, sport and racing, the member for Buderim, to announce that the LNP government would deliver \$1 million in walking track upgrades and build a new suspension bridge at the base of Purling Brook Falls. This was the most significant infrastructure commitment the Springbrook community has seen in decades. It was a clear example of how we were restoring tourism in Springbrook and enhancing our national parks for all to enjoy.

A year later, the Purling Brook Falls suspension bridge stands as a symbol of Springbrook's renewal and of the LNP's commitment to unlocking this community for the benefit of local businesses and our national park. It was disappointing that as the local member I was not invited by the new Labor Minister for National Parks—who, by the way, was not even a member of this House when this project was designed, delivered or constructed—to join him in announcing its completion. I thank again the member for Buderim for his unwavering dedication to my very small community in delivering this commitment for residents of my electorate. I also thank the Springbrook Mountain Community Association, the Springbrook Chamber of Commerce and the countless locals and business owners who helped me deliver this fantastic new tourism drawcard for our local area.

This was a project that was fought for by the LNP, funded by the LNP, delivered by the LNP and announced by the ALP. While the new Labor government may attempt to take credit where credit is not due, history cannot be rewritten. It was the LNP that delivered this piece of infrastructure and provided this boost to the Springbrook community. I very much look forward to continuing to fight for the small Springbrook community ensuring that they get the representation that they deserve over the next three years.

Duman, Mr I; Samford Area Men's Shed

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (11.13 pm): On Saturday, 2 May I was fortunate to be invited to the official opening and third birthday of the Samford Area Men's Shed and to say a few words about men's sheds. The successful establishment of the shed was due to help from the Moreton Bay Regional Council, the Queensland state government and the local Samford community bank, Bendigo Bank. Like most openings of organisations, they are times to reflect on the journey and challenges at the start of a new era of a group. On this occasion I spoke of the importance of the amazing contribution men's sheds make throughout the country towards men's health. My initial exposure to men's sheds was through a senate inquiry into suicide in Australia as a prior member of the Senate Community Affairs Committee. One of the submitters providing expert evidence was the Australian Men's Shed Association. Men's sheds throughout the nation have grown from 350 as of 2010, since commencing in 1995, to around 1,000 presently. The evidence provided at the senate inquiry

explained that males account for 80 per cent of deaths by suicide resulting from social isolation, lack of sense of purpose and poor self-esteem. Men's sheds provide support mechanisms to build social and support networks. Men's sheds provide for an environment where men learn more about their health and wellbeing, which has been proven in high-risk groups who seek support from traditional providers. The SAMS web page tells you jovially 'The lads gather to drink coffee and tell lies each week at the shed on Showgrounds Road, Samford', but I can tell members that they do so much for men at that shed and in the community. They do meaningful activities such as woodworking, metalworking, computer training, photography and community based activities et cetera.

Sadly, at the opening President Jim Liddle informed the crowd of the passing of former treasurer Inal Duman. Inal was tragically taken in a terrible accident in the area on 30 April 2015. Inal leaves his loving wife Sue, daughter, step-daughter and grandchildren. Listening to the eulogies at the service, he truly was an amazing man. He was a teacher, an accountant and an executive finance manager of the Queensland Cancer Foundation. He also could turn his hand to anything from computer hardware, building, welding, painting, cementing, music and dancing to name a few. Typical of some migrants, he could not quite grasp Aussie jokes. When told, 'We've hit a snag', he questioned, 'Why are we discussing sausages?' When asked, 'How are you going?,' he said, 'I'll take the car.' He will be sadly missed by the community, all SAMS members and his family.

Inland Highway, Upgrade

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (11.16 pm): In the last 10 years the Bruce Highway has been cut off many times after cyclones and floods. During those times many politicians have parachuted in and promised to upgrade the inland highway. During Cyclone Larry it was Peter Beattie, during Cyclone Yasi it was Premier Bligh and after a minicyclone two years ago many Newman government ministers parachuted in and promised to upgrade the inland highway. At the time of these extreme weather events the Bruce Highway is cut off for a period of up to 10 days. Talking about upgrading the inland highway sounds good and relieves everyone's anger and frustration as trucks are being backed up for tens of kilometres.

We do have an inland route and there are areas that need to be upgraded. It has been a long drawn-out process for many years. Upgrading the Gregory Development Road leading from the Lynd Highway right through to Clermont would relieve traffic congestion on the coast and would create an inland route for tourism. It would breathe life into those country towns. Bridges, such as the one over the Cape River about 110 kilometres south of Charters Towers, need to be heightened. The bridge over Hann Creek, which is about 30 kilometres north of Charters Towers, needs to be heightened. Likewise the bridges over the Basalt River, the Clarke River, Snake Creek and Stockyard Creek, which is in the Ewan area. The old Jack McEwan Beef Road from Mount Garnet through to the Lynd Junction needs about 10 kilometres widened. These are small narrow roads. From 25 kilometres south of Greenvale there is about a 12-kilometre section that needs to be widened, and a 15- to 19-kilometre section from Bluff Downs to the Harvey's Range turn off also needs widening. By widening those sections and lifting the height of those bridges it would create that inland highway. It would relieve the traffic congestion on the coast.

We have support from all the communities, the councils, the Charters Towers Chamber of Commerce, the Greenvale Progress Association and the Bluewater Springs Progress Association. We keep hearing politicians promising to do it, but we are not seeing it. Hopefully we can get the support to upgrade that road.

Bellina, Ms T

 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (11.19 pm): Last month we lost a bright shining star in our local community, the beautiful Tania Bellina. She was the beloved wife of Frank and adored mother of Nathan and Matt. She was a best friend to all who met her, a passionate supporter of the Morningside Panthers, the first to give a hug whenever it was needed, the most fun at a music festival or a day on the green or a pig race at the club or anything that was going, the hardest worker, the most indefatigable volunteer and so many other things that made her special to every single person she met. And she was the proudest mother of her beautiful boys. There was nothing she would not do for those boys and her love for them was absolute.

When Tania passed away after a long and brave battle with cancer, the ripple across our local community and, I know, across the community that is the Morningside Football Club, was immense and no-one is quite sure how we will do without her. She had carried that battle with grace and dignity and refused to ever let it get on top of her. When you caught up with her it was always you she

wanted to talk about, never her. It was always others she saw as having bigger issues and always others she was helping. She was still working the week she passed away. In fact, I think she even sneaked into work one day without Frank knowing because she just had to get some work finished and she knew he would try to stop her if he knew. She did not want to let her work colleagues down.

On the day of Tania's funeral, there were so many who wanted to pay their respects to her and her family that St John's Anglican Church was full and overflowing. At the Morningside Football Club afterwards we gathered to celebrate her life—and it was a celebration because that is the way she would have wanted it. Tania's friend Jane says she loves how Tania would bring her friends from her old neighbourhood and her friends from the tax office to join in at functions at the footy club. She surrounded herself always with those she loved. Her friend Deb Robinson says she likes to think Tania left a little bit of her sparkle in all of us as she touched everyone she came into contact with in some beautiful way. Her other friend Deb McQueen says Tania enveloped you, she shared herself with everyone and she made everyone feel so special. But it was the poignant words of Nathan as he so beautifully delivered the eulogy at Tania's funeral with which I finish. On the day he helped us all to rejoice in Tania's life and then he left us with a message that he knew Tania would want us all to hear. He reminded us of the principles that Tania always followed: work hard, love your friends and family, live life to the fullest and 'Mum's favourite', he said: have a good time. We love you Tania. Thank you for the life you gave us all.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.21 pm.

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, Jones, Katter, Kelly, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Lauga, Leahy, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, McVeigh, Miles, Millar, Miller, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Power, Pyne, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Seeney, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Trad, Walker, Watts, Weir, Wellington, Whiting, Williams