



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT

Thursday, 4 June 2015

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THURSDAY, 4 JUNE 2015

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.



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

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Papua New Guinea, Parliamentary Delegation



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I acknowledge and welcome to the gallery today parliamentary officers from the national parliament of Papua New Guinea. The eight members of the delegation are visiting the Queensland parliament to learn about parliamentary administration relating to Hansard, security, ICT, chamber broadcasting and library research services.

Cystic Fibrosis



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, Cystic Fibrosis Queensland has invited members to show their support today for those affected by cystic fibrosis by wearing a rose on their lapel.

Former Members of Parliament, Use of Title



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I wish to update the House on the issue I raised on 20 May 2015 about former members of the House continuing to use the title member of parliament, MP or member for the electorate they formerly represented on websites and other publications.

Following a number of complaints from current members of parliament, Parliamentary Service officers undertook an audit of former members' websites and social media accounts in March 2015 to ascertain whether they included references to being a member of parliament, an MP or the member for the electorate they formerly represented. At that stage 30 out of the 45 former members of the 54th Parliament had websites or social media sites which made some reference to being a member of parliament.

Parliamentary Service officers contacted relevant former members by telephone and email during March, April and May 2015 to request that they remove all references to being a member of parliament from their website and social media sites. On 13 May 2015 the Clerk wrote to 16 former members to ask that they take immediate action to remove all references to being a member of parliament. In his letter the Clerk reminded former members that falsely holding oneself out to be a current member of parliament may constitute a contempt of parliament.

On 20 May 2015 I made my statement to the House on this matter. I also asked the Clerk to inform me before the end of this sitting week of any electronic or other publications that continued to falsely hold out that persons are members when they are not members. I stated that I would then consider whether to send this matter to the Ethics Committee for its consideration.

Following my statement the Clerk wrote to 11 former members enclosing a copy of my statement and identifying the websites and social media sites which still referred to the individuals as being a member of parliament. In his letter the Clerk asked former members to confirm that they had removed or made appropriate amendments to their websites or social media sites or, if this had not been possible, provided details of the steps they had taken to remove or amend the site. The Clerk requested a response by Wednesday, 3 June 2015.

The Clerk has informed me that, as of today, no former members have personal websites which refer to themselves as being a member of parliament. However, three former members still have a third-party social media site, such as Facebook or Twitter, which might give the impression that they remain a member of parliament. All three former members have indicated that they have taken steps to close or amend those social media sites including by contacting the third-party providers directly. In light of the steps taken by the remaining three former members to resolve the issue, I have decided not to refer these matters to the Ethics Committee for its consideration.

PETITIONS

The Clerk presented the following paper petition, sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(3)—

Gas Industry, Rebates

37 petitioners, requesting the House to make provision for increasing the rebate for reticulated AGL gas to match the current rebate for electricity [\[537\]](#).

The Clerk presented the following e-petition, sponsored by the honourable member indicated—

Maryborough Hospital, Pathology Unit

Mr Saunders, from 163 petitioners, requesting the House to restore the Pathology Department at the Maryborough Hospital to a functioning pathology unit [\[535\]](#).

The Clerk presented the following e-petition, sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(4)—

Moreton Bay region, Bulk Water Prices

202 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure that the State Government urgently adopts the recommendation to freeze Moreton Bay Region bulk water prices on 1 July 2015 [\[536\]](#).

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

MINISTERIAL PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy and Water Supply (Mr M Bailey)—

[538](#) Response from the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy and Water Supply (Mr Bailey) to an ePetition (2320-14) sponsored by Dr Flegg, the former member for Moggill, from 914 petitioners, requesting the House to enact legislation for the reversal of the burden of proof in collisions between motor vehicles and pedestrians or cyclists

[539](#) Response from the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy and Water Supply (Mr Bailey) to a paper petition (2379-15) presented by Mr McArdle, from 6,603 petitioners, requesting the House to maintain the exit from the Bruce Highway to Aussie World and neighbouring businesses/petrol station to ensure direct access for customers

[540](#) Response from the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy and Water Supply (Mr Bailey) to a paper petition (2380-15) presented by Mr Walker, from 358 petitioners, requesting the House to improve the safety for outbound vehicles turning right into Upfield Street and through traffic on Mt Cotton Road

[541](#) Response from the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety, Ports and Minister for Energy and Water Supply (Mr Bailey) to a paper petition (2382-15) presented by the Clerk under provision of Standing Order 119(3) from 412 petitioners, requesting the House upgrade and improve the Brisbane Valley Highway from the Geoff Fisher Bridge, Wivenhoe Pocket through the town of Fernvale to the Blacksoil Interchange

Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development (Ms J Trad)—

[542](#) Response from the Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development (Ms Trad) to a paper petition (2383-15) presented by the Clerk under provision of Standing Order 119(3) from 184 petitioners, requesting the House to redirect the school bus service routes 8026 and 8028 to follow the 554 bus route by using bus stop 92 in Strathmore Street, Kuraby

[543](#) Response from the Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade (Ms Trad) to a paper petition (2378-15) presented by Mr Millar, from 805 petitioners, requesting the House to de-amalgamate the Peak Downs Shire from the Central Highlands Regional Council

[544](#) Response from the Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade (Ms Trad) to a paper petition (2381-15) presented by Mr Saunders, from 8,653 petitioners, requesting the House to de-amalgamate the Maryborough Region from Fraser Coast Regional Council to Maryborough Regional Council and Hervey Bay Council

[545](#) Response from the Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade (Ms Trad) to an ePetition (2353-15) sponsored by Hon. Lynham, from 39 petitioners, requesting the House to limit construction works in residential areas to between the hours of 8.00 am and 6.30 pm Monday to Friday and not allow vehicles personal or delivery related to construction works to arrive on-site outside of these hours

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Ms Y D'Ath)—

[546](#) Response from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Ms D'Ath) to an ePetition (2327-14) sponsored by Ms D'Ath, from 215 petitioners, requesting the House to introduce Lemon Laws into Queensland to protect Australian consumers with the long-term plan to release this for national acceptance

[547](#) Response from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Ms D'Ath) to an ePetition (2315-14) sponsored by Mr Wellington, from 171 petitioners, requesting the House to implement measures to remove the claim limit that is currently set at the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal

Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games (Ms Jones)—

[548](#) Response from the Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games (Ms Jones) to an ePetition (2343-14) sponsored by Mr Watts, and a paper petition (2384-15), presented by Mr Watts, from 86 and 537 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to construct an Arts and Sports Hall at Toowoomba State High School, Wilsonton Campus

Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services (Mr C R Dick)—

[549](#) Health and Community Services Committee: Report No. 62—Auditor-General Reports: Private practice arrangements in Queensland public hospitals, government response

MINISTERIAL PAPER

Callide Creek Flood Review Report

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.36 am), by leave: I table the 2015 Callide Creek Flood Review Report—volume 1, report, and volume 2, appendices.

Tabled paper: Inspector-General Emergency Management: 2015 Callide Creek Flood Review, Volume 1: Report [\[533\]](#).

Tabled paper: Inspector-General Emergency Management: 2015 Callide Creek Flood Review, Volume 2: Appendices [\[534\]](#).

MOTION

Callide Creek Flood Review Report

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.37 am): I move—

That this House authorises the publication of the 2015 Callide Creek Flood Review Report, Volume 1: Report and Volume 2: Appendices.

My government is committed to ensuring the best possible disaster management arrangements are in place to protect all Queenslanders. As part of that commitment, in February the government tasked the Inspector-General Emergency Management to undertake a review of events relating to the flooding of Callide Creek in Central Queensland in the wake of ex-Tropical Cyclone Marcia. Many homes were damaged and flooded and there were widespread impacts to farms and businesses and emotional trauma to many, many families.

While speaking with residents and inspecting the damage to properties in the Callide Valley after the event, I was told by concerned residents that the operations of the Callide Dam may have exacerbated the flooding. We promised that we would leave no stone unturned in order to find answers to the community's questions, and that is what we have done.

In his review the Inspector-General looked at a number of matters including the impact of the flooding, how disaster management arrangements functioned, telecommunications issues and whether the operations of the Callide Dam meaningfully affected the extent of the flooding.

I can now advise the House that the review found that, regardless of how Callide Dam was operated during the rain event, the communities along the Callide Valley would still have experienced a major flood. Despite this, the Inspector-General also noted systemic difficulties in relation to warnings and education by SunWater and the local disaster management group. It is clear that the time taken to issue alerts in relation to the opening of the dam gates could have been considerably reduced.

Among other recommendations, the Inspector-General has recommended undertaking a joint study with SunWater to determine whether or not it is feasible to operate Callide Dam as a flood mitigation dam. He also recommends SunWater and Banana Shire Council jointly develop a multichannel common warning strategy with common language and consistent messaging. The review also includes an independent hydrological assessment and a commissioned telephone survey of 406 Banana shire residents focusing on impacts and knowledge of disaster management matters.

In undertaking this review, the Inspector-General has undertaken a comprehensive volume of work to get to the bottom of these issues. In coming to its conclusions, the Inspector-General referred to a number of matters which has resulted in the moving of this motion and the tabling of the review report. This is not the first occasion on which a motion of this nature has been moved and carried by this House. On 1 May 2003 then premier Peter Beattie tabled a report titled *Report of the board of inquiry into past handling of complaints of serial abuse in the Anglican Church Diocese of Brisbane*. The printing of that report by parliament, a report commissioned by the Anglican Church, allowed it to be released into the public domain. On 18 April 2013 the former attorney-general the member for

Kawana took similar action in relation to the Callinan-Aroney review of the Crime and Misconduct Commission.

Today's motion will allow precisely the same thing to occur. In this instance, as there was on the past two occasions, there is also a substantial and justified public interest in this report being made available to the public. The Inspector-General will host a public meeting at the Biloela Civic Centre at 6 pm tomorrow to provide details on the review findings and recommendations to the community and to answer public questions relating to the report. I want to assure the community that the review's findings will be fully considered by my government.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Member for Pumicestone

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.41 am): Yesterday allegations were raised in the media regarding the member for Pumicestone. Yesterday I urged anyone with any evidence to immediately refer it to police for their consideration. It has been reported in the media today that certain information has been forwarded to police. Given it is now the subject of police consideration, I have directed the Leader of the House to stand aside the member for Pumicestone from the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, pending the outcome of the police investigation. I promised Queenslanders I would stand for integrity and accountability—something that was sorely missed from the government for three years under those opposite—and that is exactly what I am doing today.

Abbott Government, Infrastructure Funding

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.41 am): Queensland is not only being ignored by the LNP government in Canberra; it is being punished. Tony Abbott is sitting on a \$5 billion special infrastructure encouragement fund which he doles out to reward states with lucrative incentive payments on the condition that they sell their assets. Labor has been explicit; we have been nothing less than clear: we will not sell our assets under any circumstances. Today I challenge the opposition to join us in not only lobbying Canberra to provide Queensland with its fair share but also sending a clear message to its colleagues in the Commonwealth that we will not be held to ransom and we will not be blackmailed into selling off assets in order to receive funding for critical infrastructure that we need throughout our state.

Tony Abbott has provided nothing for special infrastructure funding north of the Tweed. New South Wales has been the big winner in this regard along with Western Australia. Let us be very clear: if the Prime Minister and his Treasurer can provide additional funding to Western Australia, they can also provide it to Queensland. By giving Western Australia an additional nearly \$500 million, the Prime Minister has now established a convenient infrastructure funding precedent. Queenslanders and my government expect him to do the same. I challenge the LNP opposition to put that argument to the Prime Minister. I challenge those opposite to stand up for this state. I challenge them to stand up for Queenslanders. Sadly, not only are we being frozen out of badly needed extra infrastructure funds; billions of dollars of cuts to our hospitals and schools are coming too courtesy of Tony Abbott. Now is the time for the opposition to join with us, to stand up, to be united and make the determined call to fight Canberra's discriminatory approach currently applied to special infrastructure funding for Queensland.

As Premier I promised to consult widely and get a consensus opinion on major issues affecting my government and our great state. That commitment to Queenslanders means my government cannot sit by any longer and let an unfettered Prime Minister go unchecked—penalising each and every Queensland—denying us vital infrastructure funds, and I will not let him go unchecked. I intend to fight for every dollar at the upcoming Special Premiers' Conference in July and I will be fighting the Commonwealth for a states' funding model. The Prime Minister's current unyielding approach also strikes a blow at the very heart of our Federation. It makes a lie of his and his deputy's claims of any budget fairness. I cannot stress enough how their approach constitutes an attack aimed right at the heart of a federal-state funding model—a model that has been built up over a century and overall has served us well.

Once again by administering his special \$5 billion infrastructure funding pool in the manner in which he does, Mr Abbott is threatening to radically change the federal system in Australia. Well may they tour LNP marginal federal seats in Queensland, but he cannot hide forever, riding roughshod over vital infrastructure dollars that Queenslanders want and are rightfully entitled to. Queenslanders can see through their falsehoods and bullying tactics. I and my government will make sure of that—right up until the next federal election if we need.

Queensland Greats Awards

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.45 am): As we all know, Queenslanders tend to wear their home state pride on their maroon sleeves and during Queensland Week, which we are currently celebrating, it is time to reflect on how lucky we are to live in the greatest state in Australia and enjoy such a wonderful lifestyle. Queensland Week is a time to celebrate the state's culture, heritage, industry and people and during this week, which celebrates Queensland's official separation from New South Wales, one of my greatest privileges is announcing the Queensland Greats Awards which honour extraordinary individuals and organisations who have made a significant contribution to our great state.

For the first time, this year's Queensland Greats Awards, which were handed out last weekend, included a special posthumous category to celebrate the award's 15th anniversary. The inaugural award went to Steve Irwin for his life's achievements in wildlife conservation. Steve was a highly respected television personality who also founded one of Queensland's most iconic tourist destinations. It was a great loss to our state and country when Steve unexpectedly passed away in 2006 and it is appropriate that we recognised him for his exceptional impact on Queensland.

Our other acclaimed 2015 recipients are humanitarian scientist Professor James Dale, who specialises in plant and medical biotechnology research and whose work on genetic modification for disease resistance helps protect Queensland's crops as well as benefiting people in developing countries; philanthropist and entrepreneur Andrew Brice, co-founder and non-executive director of online tourism company Wotif.com, which has provided hundreds of jobs and helped build Queensland's tourism industry; artist and benefactor Robert MacPherson, who has had a pervasive influence on successive generations of Australian artists and has been a generous benefactor to art museums through his key works; equality advocate Pat Fennell, who is a staunch advocate for rural Queensland and a pioneering bush woman; broadcasting pioneer John Gleeson from Townsville, a pioneer in the broadcasting industry responsible for bringing commercial television to Townsville and in the 1980s launched satellite television across 18 major towns and many smaller populated areas in North Queensland; and the RSL Queensland branch, which supports current and ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Force and their families.

Since 2001, 75 individuals, 10 institutions and one other recipient have been honoured as Queensland Greats and have their names displayed on commemorative plaques at Brisbane's Roma Street Parkland. I congratulate each of them, along with the 2015 recipients, for doing Queensland proud.

Road and Transport Infrastructure

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade) (9.48 am): Infrastructure Australia's recently released infrastructure audit paints a stark picture of the consequences of inaction on infrastructure. The report shows that the cost of road congestion in South-East Queensland will rise from \$1.9 billion in 2011 to \$9 billion by 2031. Without investment in key transport infrastructure, projects that will help to reduce congestion, we will struggle to maintain the quality of life that our region presently enjoys. This should be a call to action for all governments to invest in transport infrastructure. In our urban areas we have to invest in infrastructure that will move large volumes of people quickly.

I raised the issue of public transport infrastructure at the recent Transport and Infrastructure Council with the Deputy Prime Minister and state and territory ministers and the chair of Infrastructure Australia, Mark Birrell. I also raised Commonwealth funding for Queensland infrastructure with the Prime Minister directly when we both attended the recent Paniyeri festival in South Brisbane. Despite the problems facing South-East Queensland and Australia being thrown into sharp focus by the audit, the federal government continues to have its head in the sand by refusing to provide funding for Queensland infrastructure, especially public transport infrastructure, unless Queensland sells assets.

Queenslanders have spoken strongly at two elections and said that they do not want their assets sold. Without access to federal funding for large scale infrastructure projects such as public transport projects, Queensland will not be getting its fair share. If the Abbott government's current position on infrastructure had prevailed between 2007 and 2013, projects such as the Moreton Bay Rail Link and Gold Coast Light Rail would never have been built.

The audit sets out clearly the infrastructure challenges in Australia today but, inexplicably, Queensland has not had a state infrastructure plan since 2011. That is more than three years without a coordinated approach to infrastructure investment in this state. We have committed to delivering an infrastructure plan within our first 12 months. The independent advice of Building Queensland will be instrumental in ensuring that we invest in the right infrastructure, with these priorities then reflected in our state infrastructure plan.

This government was elected on a platform of stronger growth for Queensland and we are committed to creating jobs to address record unemployment and to grow and diversify our economy. We can especially deliver on this commitment if governments work cooperatively to fund and deliver productivity-raising infrastructure for our growing cities and regions.

Jobs

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (9.51 am): This government is committed to job creation to lead Queensland to a more prosperous and inclusive future.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr PITT: He is off to a flyer, the dark horse over there.

A government member interjected.

Mr PITT: We thought it was just him, but it is obviously the member for Hinchinbrook as well. This government is committed to job creation to lead Queensland to a more prosperous and inclusive future. Our Working Queensland jobs plan will help boost the confidence of Queensland businesses to create jobs, increase the productivity of our labour force, foster emerging innovative industries and support investment in productive infrastructure. In line with our commitment to more consultative and inclusive government, we will seek the views of stakeholders at every opportunity to identify policies and programs to help get Queenslanders back into the workforce.

During the recent community cabinet in Rockhampton and Yeppoon, I was delighted to host an employment forum with local community and business leaders. This was a great opportunity to hear firsthand the issues that impact on employment in the Central Queensland region. Hearing their views and ideas helped me gain a greater appreciation and understanding of where the government's efforts can be best focused. I am well aware that our policy approach for employment cannot be one size fits all, because every region in Queensland has its own unique economic drivers and its own unique set of challenges. As the most decentralised state in Australia and the only state where more people live outside the capital than within it, we know that what works in George Street does not always work in Georgetown. That is why I am happy to be a Treasurer from regional Queensland.

So it was good to be in Rockhampton for our most recent community cabinet and to hear directly from locals about what issues were affecting them. Currently, the unemployment rate in Rockhampton is 5.9 per cent, down 0.2 percentage points from a year earlier. This compares to the unemployment rate of the rest of the state which, on average, rose from six per cent to 6.5 per cent over the same time period. However, that does not mean that we cannot do better.

In terms of the big picture, the government is already making good on its election promises by delivering the key elements of its Working Queensland plan. Skilling Queenslanders for Work, worth \$240 million over four years, will assist up to 32,000 jobseekers to get back into the workforce. The first round of Skilling Queenslanders for Work is open until 19 June and I would encourage local community based organisations, which know best what their communities need, to get involved in helping Queenslanders into new employment.

Earlier this week the parliament passed a 25 per cent payroll tax rebate for employers engaging an apprentice or trainee. This rebate will commence from 1 July. Other key elements of our Working Queensland jobs plan will be funded in the budget that I will deliver on 14 July, including the Business Development Fund and Advance Queensland fellowships. I have mentioned the payroll tax rebate itself.

This initiative alone can be worth more than \$600 per month to the employer who hires an apprentice, not \$600 per year, as the opposition members got so wrong claiming earlier this week. If fully subscribed, that rebate will provide \$45 million in savings to businesses over the next three years.

To grow the jobs of the future, the government is reinvigorating science and innovation through its \$50 million Advance Queensland program. It is also creating Jobs Queensland—an agency that is dedicated to engaging with industry and stakeholders on skills shortages and job opportunities across every region of our state. However, we also are very aware that there is more work to be done. I look forward to continuing to consult and listen to what business, industry and the community have to say and finding more ways to deliver on our commitments to create jobs for Queenslanders.

Although these initiatives represent a sizeable body of work for the government, we will be actively looking for further initiatives that can assist particular groups within the community finding meaningful and productive employment. That includes programs at a dedicated regional level or programs targeting a particular cohort of people such as the long-term unemployed, the young and unemployed, or mature-age workers. I look forward to continuing to consult and listen to what business and industry have to say, because we on this side of the House are about creating jobs.

Public Hospitals, Funding

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.55 am): On Saturday in Brisbane I spoke at the AMA national conference about the Abbott government's cuts to federal funding for public hospitals. I thank the AMA for its warm reception at that conference. Currently, my department is modelling the impact that those cuts will have on hospital services in Queensland and our future health workforce. During my presentation I was able to announce some preliminary findings. My department's analysis is based on figures that were released last year by the Commonwealth Treasury, which shows the nationwide impact of the Abbott government's cuts.

Although those opposite like to pretend that the cuts do not exist, it was Joe Hockey's own department that revealed that the changes will reduce federal funding for hospitals nationwide by \$57 billion from 2017-18 to 2024-25. In its figures the Commonwealth Treasury included the yearly impact, which gets worse and worse every year because of the nature of the changes. For the benefit of the House, I point out that it will be \$1 billion in 2017-18, \$2 billion in 2018-19, and then \$4 billion, \$6 billion, \$7 billion, \$10 billion, \$12 billion and then \$15 billion for each of the years up to and including 2024-25.

My department has estimated that Queensland's share of these funding cuts on a population basis will be \$11.8 billion over that period. These funding cuts will obviously have huge implications for Queensland's future health workforce. My department has modelled the number of health jobs in Queensland that would have been funded by the amount of spending being cut by the Abbott government. The department's modelling is based on the proportion of hospital and health service costs going to doctors, nurses and health practitioners in 2013-15, which was 16 per cent for doctors, 26.5 per cent for nurses and eight per cent for health practitioners. The impact in 2017-18 is 164 doctors, 580 nurses and 165 health practitioners. By 2024-25, the impact is around 1,500 doctors, around 5,300 nurses and around 1,500 health practitioners. The average annual impact over the period from 2017-18 to 2024-25 is 818 doctors, 2,800 nurses and 824 health professionals.

At the national conference on Saturday, I thanked the AMA for championing this cause on behalf of its members but, more importantly, Australians. As doctors, they understand more than anyone that these are not just numbers in a table or a spreadsheet; we are talking about vital funds that deliver hospital services that are accessed every day by thousands of Queenslanders. We saw what happened when the previous federal Labor government made a genuine commitment to improving health care for all Australians. Elective surgery and dental long waits tumbled. If the Abbott government's cuts go ahead, we will lose all of those gains.

True to form, in this year's federal budget the Abbott government made even further cuts. It slashed the funding to be provided under the National Partnership Agreement on Adult Public Dental Services. Under this national partnership, Queensland was to receive funding of \$178 million over three years from 2015-16 to 2017-18. However, the Abbott government has reduced that funding to just \$30 million in 2015-16 and claims that funding after this is 'subject to negotiations with the states'. This has become Tony Abbott's modus operandi for breaking election commitments and slashing health spending. Three years of certainty and \$178 million becomes just one year and \$30 million.

This is not good government. This is not the way to run federal-state relations. It is not way to run a federation and it is just further evidence that the Abbott government does not believe in a properly funded public health system.

Intensive Early Childhood Development Support Program

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (9.59 am): I rise to inform the House that the Palaszczuk government will invest more than \$2.5 million to give new intensive development support to vulnerable young children from newborns to five-year-olds. The new Intensive Early Childhood Development Support Program will help Queensland families most in need. The pilot program will fund six Queensland service providers in Townsville, Ipswich, Toowoomba, Cairns, Brisbane and Bundaberg. This new funding will support the learning, social and emotional development of children affected by complex issues such as domestic violence, abuse or neglect. These services will provide therapeutic early childhood education and care focusing on social or language development.

By funding these organisations we can support families on the ground, whether that be home visits that engage families in a familiar environment or intensive supported playgroups. This program is a joint effort between the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, and I thank the minister for her support. We know that working with families with young children early on to support them is the best way to give these children the best start in life.

Integrated Food and Energy Development

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (10.00 am): The Palaszczuk government delivers on its election commitments. Today I am fulfilling an election commitment of the Deputy Premier by releasing the LNP secret development protocol with Integrated Food and Energy Development, or IFED. As the Deputy Premier committed to do, I have rescinded this secret protocol and completed a memorandum of understanding with IFED which, unlike those opposite, I release in the interests of open and accountable government. I table these documents.

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Etheridge Integrated Agricultural Project Protocol' [\[550\]](#).

Tabled paper: Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Assessment Pathway for the Etheridge Integrated Agricultural Project between the Department of State Development and Integrated Food and Energy Development Pty Ltd [\[551\]](#).

Both of these documents relate to the \$1.98 billion Etheridge Integrated Agriculture Project in the Gilbert River catchment near Georgetown. The project involves sugar and guar cropping, meat processing and aquaculture activities. The differences in these documents are clear. In comparison with those opposite, the Palaszczuk government is laying out a transparent and comprehensive assessment pathway for the project. Our MOU provides strong further environmental safeguards beyond the usual EIS processes. Our MOU provides for an independent scientific assessment of the proposal to ensure that the proposed water offtake is sustainable with the catchment water available. It provides for measures to address impacts identified by the environmental impact statement and, further, it provides that the proponents pay commercial rates for the water.

Most importantly, we require an overall net benefit from the project. If this project proceeds the company believes it has the potential to create more than 1,700 jobs during construction and more than 1,000 jobs during operation. This government supports jobs, but projects must stack up financially, environmentally and in the public interest. Until IFED has completed the comprehensive EIS process, government is not in a position to release any unallocated water in the Gilbert River catchment. However, I can advise the House that tenders will be called in the fourth quarter of this year for more than a quarter of a million megalitres of water in the Flinders River catchment. The Palaszczuk government is committed to unlocking economic growth and jobs in the agricultural sector in Far North Queensland. This water has the potential to support up to 12,000 hectares of irrigated agriculture and establish more rural jobs in the Flinders catchment. I know, from meeting regional leaders in North Queensland, that the release of this water is much awaited and I look forward to a keen response from the tenders.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the Minister for Main Roads, I inform members that students from Robina State High School in the electorate of Mudgeeraba are in the public gallery.

Ethanol

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (10.03 am): Today the Palaszczuk government is releasing a discussion paper outlining our plans to establish an ethanol mandate to grow biofuels and biomanufacturing industries and create jobs across the industry here in Queensland. The economic and environmental benefits of ethanol as a renewable resource are recognised worldwide and we want Queensland to be part of this sustainable energy future. We will work closely with industry on the amount of the mandate so that it grows in line with local production capacity. Importantly, we want local industries to capture the market share to ensure that any ethanol sold in Queensland comes from Queensland and is produced by Queensland workers. There is also an opportunity to boost the use of biofuels, like biodiesel blends, to take advantage of the growing demand for diesel. There are several bioplants on the drawing board in Queensland, including two plants in development, with strong interest from the private sector to explore opportunities. This is backed by a joint Deloitte Access Economics-QUT study which predicts biorefining in all its forms could contribute more than \$1.8 billion in gross state product to Queensland and create over 6,000 jobs over the next 20 years in a fully developed industry.

The Palaszczuk government is holding regional forums across this state to encourage industry, key stakeholders and the community to have their say about the ethanol mandate. By working together we can all help shape the future of this exciting and growing industry across Queensland. Our consultation will explore consumer protections and consumer education about the benefits of E10. Importantly, regular unleaded petrol will still be available at petrol stations in Queensland. This means that if drivers do not want to use ethanol fuels they will not have to. A bill will be introduced into parliament to set the framework for the mandate and we will work closely with all members of this House to seek their support in passing this important legislation. Early feedback from the RACQ, Canegrowers and the Australian Sugar Milling Association has been encouraging and I look forward to working with industry, stakeholders and the community as we embark on what is shaping up to be an exciting era in biofuel technology. I table a copy of the discussion paper.

Tabled paper: Department of Energy and Water Supply: Towards a clean energy economy: achieving a biofuel mandate for Queensland, discussion paper, June 2015 [\[552\]](#).

Motor Vehicles, Consumer Protection

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (10.05 am): I am pleased to update the House about an issue that I know many in the community are interested in, and one that is certainly important to me, and that is protecting Queensland consumers from lemon vehicles. For most families the cost of a car is the second most expensive purchase in their lifetime after purchasing their home. Many women and men, who work hard, save their family money or take out a loan to provide a new car for their family's needs, deserve to be protected from being stuck with a dodgy car with ongoing sagas. Many car owners out there know that Queenslanders need protection from lemon vehicles.

I have been working with a number of people on this issue and I would like to thank everyone who has given their time to talk to me about proposed lemon laws. I would especially like to thank Ashton Wood for his unwavering and burning commitment to the lemon laws as a result of his experience with his very own lemon that can be seen through his Destroy my Jeep campaign. I also acknowledge Stuart and Connie who have been working very closely with him on this campaign. Mr Speaker, I also know that you are passionate about this matter and I thank you for your ongoing support in looking at the ways we can deal with these lemon vehicles.

I know this is not a joking matter. Many people know someone who has bought a lemon of a car. Families should not have to have the added pressure of their finances being bled dry after the purchase of a car with the cost of expensive repairs, hire cars, more mechanics and eventually being told that it is fixed only to find out the problem keeps occurring. This frustration can drive family finances down the toilet when all they want is to drive a new car without problems. After all, that is what they paid for. One of the questions asked of me is why they cannot just replace the car. That is why I want to put lemon laws on the agenda. No-one wants a new car to cost them their sanity or their savings. All they want to do is drive a new car, safe in the knowledge that it will get them from A to B without breaking down from mysterious failures that no-one can fix.

I am proud to be associated with those people who have fought for a fair deal. My promise to those people is that I will be putting this issue on the national agenda at the next Consumer Affairs Forum meeting this month and hope that this will be the beginning of the end of the lemon in the garage. I look forward to keeping the House informed of these developments.

Indigenous Leaders Forum

 **Hon. CJ O'ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland) (10.08 am): The Palaszczuk government is listening to Queensland's Indigenous leaders and delivering on our election commitment to meet with Indigenous leaders face-to-face and hear about the issues that matter to them the most. Last week during National Reconciliation Week I attended the Indigenous Leaders Forum on Palm Island along with Treasurer Pitt, Minister Enoch and mayors and representatives from Aboriginal shire councils across the state.

Economic development and jobs were among the key priorities for discussion at the round table. We heard the concerns of the Indigenous leaders loud and clear. It is great to have the Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Queensland's first Indigenous minister at forums like this. Between us we will go to cabinet and champion the priorities of Indigenous leaders and communities.

One issue that was raised was the impact of natural disasters on remote communities. I am pleased to announce that more than \$400,000 in additional funding has been allocated to Palm Island's Mount Bentley Road under Queensland's Betterment Fund. The Palm Island community relies on Mount Bentley Road to access the vital communications tower, the island's only contact with the mainland during a disaster. Not only will this project improve community resilience, but it will also keep local jobs on the island through the council.

At the forum we heard loudly and clearly that Indigenous communities in the north, from Palm Island to the cape, are excited about having a dedicated minister for North Queensland. I am pleased to say that in the coming months I will visit a number of Cape York communities and I look forward to more meaningful discussions with elders, councils and the community. Unlike those opposite, we are listening to the needs of our regional and remote Queenslanders, we are listening to our Indigenous leaders and we are securing long-term future growth for their regions.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Membership

 **Mr HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.10 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That this House notes a complaint made to the Queensland Police Service against the member for Pumicestone, Mr Rick Williams.

That, whilst that investigation is being undertaken and until this House otherwise orders, the member for Pumicestone be discharged from the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee and the member for Morayfield, Mr Mark Ryan, be appointed to the committee.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Suspension of Standing Orders; Estimates Hearings

 **Mr HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.11 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

1. Notwithstanding anything contained in Standing Orders, for the 2015 estimates committee process:
 - a) all standing orders in relation to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly's examination of the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill be suspended;
 - b) the Finance and Administration Committee will examine the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill with the examination being conducted in accordance with the procedures in part 6 of standing orders and:
 - i. the portfolio committee's area of responsibility applying to the Legislative Assembly;

- ii. the responsibility of a minister applying to the Speaker; and
 - iii. the responsibility of a director-general applying to the Clerk.
2. That in accordance with standing order 177(4), the dates for each portfolio committee's estimates hearing and the dates by which each committee is to report to the House as set out in the order circulated in my name be agreed to.
 3. Standing order 189(4) is suspended for the consideration in detail of the 2015 appropriation bills.

2015 ESTIMATES COMMITTEES—ORDER SETTING DATES FOR HEARING AND REPORTING

1. The dates for each portfolio committee's hearings and report dates are as follows—

Portfolio Committee	Speaker	Date of hearings	Date of Report
Finance and Administration Committee	Speaker	Tuesday 18 August 2015	Friday 11 September 2015
Finance and Administration Committee	Premier and Minister for the Arts Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships	Tuesday 18 August 2015	Friday 11 September 2015
Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee	Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines	Wednesday 19 August 2015	Friday 11 September 2015
Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee	Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services	Thursday 20 August 2015	Friday 11 September 2015
Agriculture and Environment Committee	Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef.	Friday 21 August 2015	Friday 11 September 2015
Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee	Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games	Tuesday 25 August 2015	Friday 11 September 2015
Health and Ambulance Services Committee	Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services	Wednesday 26 August 2015	Friday 11 September 2015
Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee	Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland	Thursday 27 August 2015	Friday 11 September 2015
Utilities, Science and Innovation Committee	Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy and Water Supply Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Science and Innovation	Friday 28 August 2015	Friday 11 September 2015

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

McLean, Mr B

 **Hon. JR MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (10.12 am): I rise to make a personal explanation. I have been the member for Bundamba for over 15 years and in that time I have offered my support to countless members of my community. That is my job. Yesterday was no different. Sometimes my care for people is so strong and overwhelming that I act to offer my support to them instinctively. As the local member, this was the right thing to do. On reflection, as police minister and understanding any issues of perception I would not have made that call. However, I stress that as police minister I never have and never will interfere in operational police matters. That is my duty and that is my word.

I have known Bruce McLean for many, many years. He is a long-term friend, a constituent, a member of our church, a man who is devoted to his service of God including through Bible studies, and he assists members of the community in times of need as a member of the Labor Party, as a father and as a grandfather. He is well known right across our community.

I called Bruce at about 9.06 am yesterday, as his local member and as his friend, to inquire after his welfare and to offer my support after seeing his photo in the *Courier-Mail*. I did this because I was concerned for his wellbeing. He said he was okay and he thanked me for calling. He went on to say that he includes me in his prayers every day. I thanked him for his prayers.

As I have done each and every day since I was elected, I will continue to be there to support all members in my community.

ETHICS COMMITTEE

Report

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (10.15 am): I lay upon the table of the House Ethics Committee report No. 155 titled *Matter of privilege referred by the Speaker on 20 May 2014 relating to an alleged inducement offered to a member and associated matters*. I commend the report and the committee's recommendations to the House.

Tabled paper: Ethics Committee: Report No. 155—Matter of privilege referred by the Speaker on 20 May 2014 relating to an alleged inducement offered to a member and associated matters [\[553\]](#).

NOTICE OF MOTION

Obstetric Services

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (10.15 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House:

1. Notes that mothers-to-be across Queensland should continue to have the choice to have their children delivered locally in low-risk pregnancies;
2. Commits to continue the rebuilding of antenatal and other key health services in regional and remote centres where it is safe to do so;
3. Notes that 'low-risk' pregnancies are those where the antenatal period is not complex and where the mother does not have a complex medical and obstetric history;
4. Notes the reopening of birthing services at Beaudesert and Cooktown and planned re-establishment of services at Ingham and Weipa this calendar year; and
5. Further calls on the Queensland government to commit to establishing four additional low-risk birthing services at Charters Towers, Yarrabah, Mossman and Cloncurry.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.16 am): This government continues to be defined by its own self-obsession. It continues to be defined by bungles, incompetence, inexperience and also the facts that it does not have a plan and it is not listening to the people of Queensland. Today we see another major bungle from another Labor government minister

in Queensland. Today we see the intrusion by the police minister into the process of a police investigation by phoning a witness. That should be of no surprise to anyone in this place, because if anyone looks back at the history of the member for Bundamba in her various iterations in this parliament they would see a long line of stumbles and incompetence from that particular member.

We need only go back a number of years to when she was the very proud apprentice to the then disgraced health minister, Gordon Nuttall. She proudly proclaimed him as her mentor. She was around at the time of the Patel scandal. She was around when the Health payroll bungle was being cooked up within the department, which immolated many jobs within the department and left 70 per cent of all Queensland Health staff either underpaid, overpaid or not paid at all. It was a \$6 million contract that grew into a \$1.253 billion debacle. Who can forget that the member for Bundamba welcomed our fake erstwhile friend the Tahitian prince, who wrote himself a cheque for \$16 million. We cannot forget that she came into this place and cleared her erstwhile friend, Gordon Nuttall, of criminality. That was an extraordinary thing for any parliament to do. She also voted to do away with making it a criminal offence to lie to the parliament or a committee.

Today we see another significant lapse of judgement from the member opposite: interference in a police investigation. I thought that the police minister would be aware that there are witness protection programs to protect witnesses from the criminally accused. One would not think that you would need a witness protection program to protect a witness from the police minister, but that is what we have seen—

Mrs MILLER: I rise to a point of order. I find the words in relation to me allegedly interfering in a police investigation personally offensive. It is untrue and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, the member finds those comments offensive and has asked that they be withdrawn.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I withdraw. The member for Bundamba just happened to coincidentally ring a witness in a police investigation as the police minister.

(Time expired)

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. Before we move on, I think that that withdrawal was somewhat qualified and I ask you to bring the Leader of the Opposition to order and ask him to comply with your instructions.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition, it is a requirement that the withdrawal be unconditional. Can you please make an unconditional withdrawal?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I withdraw.

Elective Surgery, Wait-Time Guarantee

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.20 am): It is very interesting to hear the Leader of the Opposition talk about witness protection programs. I remember clearly my first estimates hearing in 2009 when the Leader of the Opposition came into a committee of the parliament and named someone in a witness protection program. He named someone. Of course, he was only a 20-year veteran of the parliament then or, as someone once said about his experience, one year of parliament repeated 20 times. He came into a committee of the parliament and named someone in a witness protection program. That required the *Hansard* of this parliament to be redacted to remove the name of somebody. So far be it for the Leader of the Opposition to lecture anyone.

The clock is ticking. We are at day 3. We are back in this place waiting for the documents to be revealed. Everyone in this parliament knows that what we say in this place matters. What did the Leader of the Opposition say on 19 May? He said that the wait-time program was 'a \$500 million' program. He went on to say that the wait-time program was 'properly costed'. Not done with that, the member for Southern Downs said 'the money was there'. These claims are inconsistent with the advice I and my office have received from the Department of Health.

On 2 June I informed the House that I had written to the Leader of the Opposition seeking access to documents he took as Minister for Health, in accordance with the *Queensland Cabinet Handbook* and cabinet protocols, to the cabinet and cabinet committees. The *Queensland Cabinet Handbook* states—

Ministers should ensure there is no announcement of policy initiatives or expenditure commitments which have not been given Cabinet authority or, where appropriate, Governor in Council approval.

These documents are the only way the Leader of the Opposition can prove the truth of his statement. There is only one conclusion that can be drawn if he does not produce the documents? It is not complex. It is not hard. He writes to the cabinet secretary and says, 'I authorise the release of the cabinet documents.' It is very simple. The letter is not complex. He does not have the courage to come into this House and explain his conduct. He does not explain his statement. He does not excuse it. He says nothing. It is not good enough. It is about time he brought the evidence forward.

I can tell members what would be a scandal—he talks about scandals—is if someone authorised expenditure of \$500 million without cabinet approval. What would be scandalous is if someone came into this House and claimed that there was a \$500 million project, that the money was there, that it was properly costed, that there was no authorisation for that project and that the statement in the House was not correct. It is time for the Leader of the Opposition to come forth and disclose those documents.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.23 am): We are into the second 100 days of the Palaszczuk government. What do we have to show for it? We have 44 reviews, but it is only early today so we will probably have another one before the end of question time. We have a number of good old-fashioned scandals—first involving the member for Cook, then the member for Pumicestone and today the Minister for Police.

The Premier said on 17 February, 'None of my ministers will make irresponsible comments about the economy.' I do not know how she views the Treasurer's comments two weeks ago today that we are in a recession and of course his comments yesterday that we are no longer in a recession.

An opposition member: It's a miracle.

Mr LANGBROEK: It really is a miracle. We also have a Public Service paralysed as it waits for the permanent appointment of the directors-general who will guide the Public Service through implementing the ALP's plan, even though they will not be very busy because there is no plan. The only debt plan they have is to repay the debt they owe to the union bosses.

In their first 100 days they have been claiming LNP deliverables as their own. The other thing that has been happening in their first 100 days is that they have been consumed by their own internal issues, as we have seen with the scandals involving those three members.

In February the Premier promised a merit based selection process for directors-general rather than axing them in a night of the long knives. The process would adhere to one of her government's fundamental tenets—her commitment to integrity and accountability. We have heard about it again today. That was in February. It is now June. They have made two appointments: the DG of Premier and Cabinet, a former Bligh government employee; and the Under Treasurer, who used to work for former prime minister Kevin Rudd. But there is nothing on the other 17 appointments to head up government departments.

Just how long does an open and accountable recruitment process take? Exactly what has Labor been doing for the last four months? I think what we do have is Labor preparing to dump out the decision when there is no parliamentary scrutiny, just as they did with car registration increases two weeks ago.

In the next 10 weeks there is one opportunity to put the government to the test and that is in mid-July. That is when we are expecting the Treasurer to distract and dazzle us with all his budget brilliance. It is a perfect time to bury the appointments of the directors-general of the Public Service or the perfect time to bury the night of the long knives and watch the procession of senior officers as they are marched out of George Street.

We will be watching with interest to see what happens in terms of the promises that the Treasurer has made for the budget—no increase in debt, repaying debt, bringing down a surplus greater than the one we predicted and not increasing any taxes. One final word is to the directors-general. I remind them that they are covered by whistleblower legislation if they want to share any files on the way out the door.

Queensland Economy

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (10.26 am): Queensland Treasury this week took the unprecedented step of issuing a technical paper defending the integrity of their Queensland state accounts. I table that paper, particularly for the benefit of the member for Surfers Paradise.

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Queensland State Accounts: an overview of the methodology and data used to compile quarterly Queensland State Accounts' [[554](#)].

This technical paper should not have been required. Treasury have produced their Queensland state accounts with integrity and bipartisan support since 1993. The state accounts data dates back to 1985. The technical paper explains that gross state product is the 'aggregate measure which details the total economic production of a state's economy'. The member for Surfers Paradise made the outrageous and incorrect statement last sitting that GSP does not include exports. He wants to be the Treasurer. He then accused the independent Treasury of taking gross state product and deducting net exports to come up with some 'cleverly concocted figures'.

In the heat of a single question time I could possibly understand and excuse the mistake of the member for Surfers Paradise. But again yesterday he repeated the claims that gross state product and the Queensland state accounts were somehow my 'made up figures'. Common sense would suggest that the former treasurer, sitting next to him, would have explained the state accounts to him. But, sadly, what we saw from the member for Clayfield was the statement that gross state product contained 'theoretical figures'.

Treasury's technical paper thankfully dismisses his politicisation of this important data set. ABS state final demand figures, which were released yesterday, confirm that domestic spending in the economy fell in the second half of last year. This reinforces the Queensland Treasury's gross state product figures which showed the economy contracting over the second half of last year. Thankfully, the ABS figures released yesterday also show, if those opposite would listen, that under the Palaszczuk government—under our watch—seasonally adjusted state final demand figures have improved in the March quarter.

Unfortunately, it is not just the state LNP that needs an education about the state accounts. I have written to federal Treasurer, Joe Hockey, and provided him with information which corrects his belief that the QSA excludes export data for Queensland. This morning on radio the federal Treasurer again demonstrated his ignorance of our economic indicators by arguing Queensland state accounts did not include export data.

I met with Mr Hockey a fortnight ago and we discussed gross state product. Let me say to the LNP and Mr Hockey once again: Queensland's export income—our overseas trade in both goods and services—is included in gross state product. Also at that meeting I congratulated Mr Hockey on his 1.5 per cent tax rate cut for small business. I was pleased Bill Shorten went one better and raised it to five per cent. I think Mr Hockey has a bit of PR work to do today after his government accidentally voted against their own small business package yesterday.

In Queensland we have the LNP and Mr Hockey running a dishonest campaign about the accuracy of Queensland Treasury's figures to cover up their failure to deliver on jobs and growth. Those opposite have sought to politicise the independent Queensland Treasury. The Palaszczuk government is having none of that. We are very keen to get on and work with the Commonwealth to get us back to where we belong, and that is at the very top.

Subordinate Legislation

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (10.29 am): I rise to share with the House an unprecedented abuse of power. This House demands a response from the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection in relation to his attempt to circumnavigate the respected conventions of this parliament—a clear breach of the separation of powers and a breach of the minister's executive powers.

For the benefit of members, I refer to the clear requirement of government to table subordinate legislation. In indicating that the subordinate legislation will not be tabled, we have problems with this. We now have a government and a minister entering areas of precedence that we all should view with a huge amount of concern. It is clear the minister is taking advice from others, providing poor direction, and that has exposed his clear inexperience. We call on the minister to advise why this

legislation was not tabled as required. This, in effect, was intended to allow important legislation to go through unnoticed and in fact lapse and cease to exist. We spoke yesterday about the apparent abuse of executive powers in this place and we seek an immediate and appropriate remedy.

These are important regulations like the Environmental Protection (Water) Amendment Policy (No. 1) 2014, which is about environmental protection and water quality; the Environmental Offsets Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, which is about environmental protection; the Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2014, which is correcting an error in relation to declaring a nature refuge; and the Nature Conservation (Forest Reserves) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2014, which is about redescribing a forest reserve. Other regulations are to do with animal species, macropod harvest issues, coastal protection and management in relation to coastal mapping used in planning and development, and coastal protection and management in relation to integrated development assessment system.

When you consider the rhetoric from those opposite about being open and transparent and that this government is listening, Queenslanders should expect that this subordinate legislation be tabled immediately before 14 July and forwarded through to the committee process—something that we all talk about as important. This is important legislation that Queenslanders deserve to know and to prepare for the consequences of this government's actions.

When we in this place take liberties with our democratic processes we start to go down a very slippery slope. These attempts will affect small business owners, farmers, recreational activities and many more. We owe these affected stakeholders an opportunity to review and understand this government's intention in arbitrarily winding back this legislation without any notification or consultation. Does the minister understand what this will mean for Queensland and those who are now operating under this legislation, those who are making investments, those small businesses making important decisions? You cannot treat Queenslanders with such contempt. If this Labor government has a clear agenda, it owes it to Queenslanders to disclose its agenda, extreme or otherwise. This will cost jobs and many small businesses.

It is also disturbing that there are no reasons evident for these decisions and there are no issues in relation to the fundamental legislation principles detected after independent peer review. I acknowledge that this government has the right to instil its policies and ideological stamp on its anti-growth reform agenda, particularly when we have a new government with no clear agenda of political policy wind back. However, we should not and cannot accept unprecedented executive interference in the accepted principles of the parliament of Queensland.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Question time will conclude at 11.33 am.

Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (10.33 am): My question without notice is to the Premier. Will the Premier advise if she knew before question time yesterday that Labor's police minister had contacted a witness who had made a statutory declaration about possible criminal conduct perpetrated by the police minister's own friend and fellow Labor MP?

Ms PALASZCZUK: The answer is no.

Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services

Mr SPRINGBORG: My second question without notice is also to the Premier. I refer to the police minister's contacting of witnesses which is the latest in a long line of issues involving the member for Bundamba. Given this extraordinary and inappropriate interference, will the Premier now sack the police minister?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition very much for his question. Today the police minister has made a personal explanation. The Minister for Police made an error of judgement. The police minister made an error of judgement and it will not happen again. Let me be very clear: it will not happen again.

Let us turn the clock back a few years, shall we? Do you remember the former housing minister Bruce Flegg, the former member for Moggill? What did he do when he was minister? He rang up the LNP treasurer—what was his name? Barry O'Sullivan.

Ms Trad: Senator.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The senator, and got him to come in and have a look at the books at Goprint. We have the member for Kawana sitting here in this House who interfered in a tender contract. Here is the Leader of the Opposition. He is still sitting over there as the shadow minister, yet he interfered in a tender contract whilst he was the attorney-general of this state. We had the former premier who ordered a tunnel to be built between the new Executive Building and this parliament. I understand that the member for Callide might have been at that meeting. Maybe the former treasurer was at that meeting as well. They ordered a tunnel to be built. Jann Stuckey, the member for Currumbin, told everyone that they should holiday in Queensland and went to the Maldives. She was the tourism minister telling people to stay here in Queensland and she went off to the Maldives. Then of course we had the LNP review. It is all laid out there in public—the cold, hard facts—for everyone to see what happened over the last three years.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members! Please. Premier, you still have eight seconds on the clock. I remind you of standing order 118 and the importance of relevance. I call the Premier if you have anything further to add.

Sale of Public Assets

Ms DONALDSON: My question is to the Premier and Minister for the Arts. Will the Premier please outline the government's policies on asset sales and any alternative views that the Premier is aware of?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Bundaberg for her question. As I stated earlier in my ministerial statement, Queensland needs to access vital infrastructure funds so we can create the jobs that Queenslanders deserve in this state. We will stand up to Tony Abbott and the federal government to make sure that we get our fair share. What are those opposite saying? Are they going to stand up and fight the fight against Tony Abbott to make sure we get access to the funds? We are putting this case very firmly to the Prime Minister—

Honourable members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They do not want to hear it. What we have seen is that the federal government under Tony Abbott and Joe Hockey have been prepared to do a one-off deal with Western Australia. My argument is pure and simple: Queensland wants the same deal for us. We want to make sure that we access the vital infrastructure funds that we need to build the jobs of the future. In Townsville we want the stadium built. We have money there for the stadium to be built, but we need matching funds from the federal government. Why won't those opposite stand up and ensure that those jobs are created?

Today I have written to the Prime Minister calling on him to release funds for Queensland so we can access this vital infrastructure fund. I table that letter for the parliament.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 4 June 2015, from the Premier, Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk, to the Prime Minister, Hon. Tony Abbott, regarding the delivery of critical infrastructure [\[555\]](#).

It appears that we may have some support from those opposite. The member for Surfers Paradise, the shadow Treasurer, has said very publicly, 'Maybe they'—meaning the government—'can do a deal like Western Australia where funds have been allocated to Western Australia under a different format.' We have found a supporter from those opposite. It was also reported, 'For the first time today both Treasurer Curtis Pitt and shadow Treasurer John-Paul Langbroek have suggested the same alternative: a one-off payment from the feds similar to the deal given to Western Australia.' There we are, pure and simple. We have someone on the other side who is prepared to dissent and join us to fight the fight with the federal government. Will the Leader of the Opposition join him? Will the member for Clayfield join him? This is the test for those opposite today. Will they stand up and fight for Queensland or will they sit there and—

(Time expired)

Member for Pumicestone

Mr LANGBROEK: My question without notice is to the Premier. Yesterday the Premier confirmed a meeting had taken place between herself, the Deputy Premier and the member for Pumicestone, Rick Williams, and I ask: will the Premier detail what the member for Pumicestone said that secured his continued membership of the Labor Party in parliament?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I meet with members of my government on a regular basis, and yesterday—
Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: You asked the question. Do you want to hear the answer? The Deputy Premier and I spoke at length with the member for Pumicestone about allegations that were raised. We spoke to him and questioned him, and he gave a detailed explanation. Yesterday I asked if anyone had any evidence from the LNP dirt unit or the *Courier-Mail* to forward that evidence to police. Those matters have now been forwarded to the police and there is a police investigation underway. Because of that police investigation, I will not be making any further comment.

Regional Queensland

Mr MADDEN: My question is to the Premier and the Minister for the Arts. Will the Premier outline to the House the government's investment in regional Queensland and any interest in regional Queensland from other members?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Ipswich West for his question. As we stated earlier this week, the Minister for Tourism and I went to outback Queensland and spoke to people at length about encouraging people from cities to experience the bush and spend money out there to help drought impacted areas. Today I have been detailing at length about how we need to lobby the federal government to get the funds that we vitally need for regional infrastructure. If we get those funds we can build the roads, we can build the infrastructure and produce the jobs that these communities need, especially in regional Queensland. We would like to see the support of those opposite. We really would like to see support from them.

I understand that the Leader of the Opposition has been travelling extensively in regional Queensland recently. I am told that on the weekend of 23 and 24 May he attended the friendship dinner of the Naval Association of Australia, Stanthorpe and District. It is very good that he went to that. On 26 May he was in Warwick with the *Warwick Daily News* at the eight-mile intersection. On 27 May he appeared on the Kingaroy breakfast radio program with Inga and the member for Nanango. It is great to see the member for Nanango there with him as well. He is spending a lot of time in this region. He got to know the Maranoa locals in the Kingaroy pub with the member for Nanango watching the State of Origin. We all support our teams. Go Queenslander! I wondered why he was spending three or four days in these areas—Stanthorpe, Warwick and Kingaroy. It suddenly occurred to me that they are all in the federal seat of Maranoa.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr RICKUSS: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Most of these places are also in the seat of Southern Downs.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Lockyer. There is no point of order.

Ms PALASZCZUK: He spent a long time in Kingaroy. I know Kingaroy is a great area, and of course he was at the pub there with the locals. I wonder if there were any branch members out there in Kingaroy. He is getting ready for the preselection. The Leader of the Opposition is smiling. The Leader of the Opposition could stand up here today and say he is ruling out leaving the Queensland parliament. I say to the Leader of the Opposition: don't go. This government wants you to stay as the Leader of the Opposition. Don't go, I say.

Mr Springborg: It's fine; I want to be here with you, Annastacia. I couldn't leave Jo out on her own either because she is a special gift.

Ms PALASZCZUK: So he is denying it. Are you going or staying? We know what is afoot here. He is visiting those areas just in case.

Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services

Mr BLEIJIE: It is looking good for Jackie. My question is to the Minister for Police. I refer to the last sitting week of state parliament where the Minister for Police claimed—

I would like to place on record here today that my role as the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services is to never meddle in operational matters; never, ever.

I ask: by personally contacting what appears to be a credible witness to an alleged crime, has the minister abided by her own ministerial standard?

Mrs MILLER: I would like to thank the member for the question. I never have and I never will interfere in operational police matters.

Public Transport, Rail Services

Mr KELLY: My question is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Transport. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on the need for an inner-city rail solution?

Ms TRAD: I thank the honourable member for Greenslopes for his question. I know that he is a passionate advocate for congestion-busting public transport infrastructure projects for Brisbane particularly. I referred earlier in my ministerial statement to the recently released infrastructure audit which has made a number of observations in relation to Queensland. One of the observations is that the south-east corner will grow at more than the national average both by population and by economic growth over the next 20 years. So over the next 20 years the population and economic growth will be higher than the national average.

In order for the state and the region to capitalise on this, we need to deal with an infrastructure deficit. We need to deal with what we know to be significant congestion that is currently occurring that will continue to grow unless we deliver a mix of road and public transport infrastructure for our region and for our state.

The infrastructure audit released by Infrastructure Australia—and this is not new; they are recently released figures—has projected in terms of the urban transport network from Brisbane to the Gold Coast to the Sunshine Coast that delays in public transport infrastructure and road infrastructure will blow out to \$9 billion by 2031 if we do nothing. Let us look at what the previous LNP government did in relation to public transport infrastructure. They did nothing. They scrapped Cross River Rail. They came up with a Bus and Train tunnel and said that it had been approved, but my department advised me that it had not been approved. The final alignment was not endorsed, the necessary properties had not been acquired, the final approvals were not in place, no funding was allocated or committed for the construction and there were no contracts for the construction work—absolutely no contracts.

So what did they do? Nothing. What is the federal government doing about public transport infrastructure? Nothing. Why won't they do it? Because they do not believe in public transport infrastructure. What they are saying to us is that we need to sell our assets in order to access funding for public transport infrastructure or any other infrastructure, like the Townsville stadium. Let me tell the House what the Borbidge-Sheldon review said about asset sales and the impact it had on those opposite and where they find themselves these days. According to the Borbidge-Sheldon report, exit polling indicated that the plan to sell assets was the main reason given by 64 per cent of respondents for changing their votes. I say that if they want to have a campaign around asset sales then bring it on.

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the member for Mansfield, I need to tell the member for Chatsworth that your voice is very loud. I call the member for Mansfield.

Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services

Mr WALKER: The softly spoken member for Mansfield. My question is to the Attorney-General. Has the Attorney-General taken any action to look at the application of section 127 of the Criminal Code relating to influencing witnesses in view of the Minister for Police's error of judgement in directly contacting a witness to possible criminal acts by the member for Pumicestone, Rick Williams?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for the question. I have not sought legal advice directly in relation to that matter.

Infrastructure Projects, Funding

Mr HARPER: My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer outline the major infrastructure funding commitments of the federal government as they relate to Queensland?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Thuringowa, could you please repeat the question.

Mr HARPER: My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer outline the major infrastructure funding commitments of the federal government as they relate to Queensland?

Mr PITT: I thank the member for Thuringowa for his question. Last month we saw Joe Hockey deliver his budget which saw no new infrastructure funds for Queensland for significant projects. We also saw the Abbott government in an argument with itself over the Townsville stadium, which of course is in the member for Thuringowa's backyard. While the Prime Minister said on 16 May that the Townsville stadium was 'precisely the kind of thing that could potentially benefit' from their Northern Australia concessional loan fund, Joe Hockey contradicted him six days later saying that the federal government 'isn't in the business of paying for stadiums'. So they cannot make their minds up. It is very clear that they are at odds with themselves. The people of Townsville have every right to be concerned about what this means. They have every right to be confused about what these contradictory statements from the federal government mean. On the one hand they are saying that they will not fund key regional projects, while on the other hand they are championing their loans scheme as being the saviour for North Queensland.

Mr Hockey has not identified a North Queensland project that he would actually fund with this concessional loans scheme. Whilst there is recognition from Canberra that North Queensland can be the engine room of growth and it has all the right ingredients for that growth—and that is welcome—what we want to see is the colour of Joe Hockey's money. We want to see real money on the table. What we need is real funding. I will be writing to Treasurer Joe Hockey to outline some initial projects that could benefit from this scheme. I will ask the Commonwealth government to consider investment in infrastructure consistent with the approach that has been taken to Western Australia, where they got \$499.1 million for road funding outside of the GST pool—that was a sweetheart deal they were very happy to do with them.

Thankfully, we have the member for Surfers Paradise in our corner and we are looking forward to others joining him. We are really looking forward to that because we need to see not just the colour of the federal government's money but whether the state LNP members have the ticker to actually stand up to the federal government for the people of Queensland with our government. The federal government's lack of infrastructure funding in general and their refusal to fund significant new projects is wearing pretty thin with Queenslanders, but it is also wearing thin with their own MPs. Down on the Gold Coast, at the same time that LNP member for McPherson, Karen Andrews, was out there lobbying for funding for M1 upgrades and extensions to Gold Coast Light Rail, the LNP member for Fadden, Stuart Robert, was claiming there was not any new infrastructure funding for the Gold Coast because no-one lobbied for it. One hand does not know what the other hand is doing.

But they are not the only conservative government adept at shirking their responsibility. They have stiff competition from the likes of the former LNP government. The LNP government tried every trick in the book to look at what infrastructure funding they could get out of. They rejected over \$700 million in funding commitments from the federal government for Cross River Rail. Who turns down \$700 million when it is an absolutely essential and vital link for residents? They do because when it comes to politics they become the masters of doing the people of Queensland over.

Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, Director-General

Ms DAVIS: My question is to the Minister for Disability Services. Does the director-general of the department have the minister's full confidence and support?

Mrs O'ROURKE: I thank the member for Aspley for her question and the answer is very simple. Yes, he does have my full support.

Medicinal Cannabis Trial

Mr RYAN: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. Will the minister outline to the House any progress in the government's moves to trial medicinal cannabis?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Morayfield for his question. I know he has a very keen interest in the use of medicinal cannabis, as do a number of members on this side of the House. I was very pleased earlier in the year to join the Premier when the government announced that we would be linking with the New South Wales government to participate in a clinical trial of medicinal cannabis. New South Wales had already announced its intention to run a trial, and this government and the Premier had been approached by a number of individuals who had been rebuffed by the previous government, but we are a listening government and we agreed it would be a very useful and worthwhile thing to join in with New South Wales in those clinical trials.

There is a significant difference between regulated pharmaceutical products and using the crude product from the cannabis plant. While the enforcement of restrictions on medicinal cannabis remains with the states and territories, the Commonwealth through the Therapeutic Goods Administration decides on whether a substance is a medicine or a poison. I can advise the House that on 1 June medicinal cannabis was rescheduled by the Therapeutic Goods Administration from a schedule 9 poison to a schedule 4 medicine for therapeutic use only. That means that a medicinal product containing cannabis can now be considered by the TGA for listing on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods. It is a small but important step to enabling medicinal cannabis to be used in trials in Australia. It will make it easier for medical professionals to source medicinal cannabis through the Special Access Scheme in order for trials to begin. We hope this will encourage suppliers of medicinal cannabis to legally supply pharmaceutical standard products for trials, including the trials undertaken in conjunction with New South Wales.

What was the position of the previous government? What was the position of the current Leader of the Opposition who was the previous health minister? On 13 January, a spokesman for the health minister, Lawrence Springborg, said that the minister was not considering such a trial. On 27 June last year, a spokesman for the health minister, Lawrence Springborg, said that medical cannabis was not supported. A Channel 7 poll in August last year asked whether cannabis should be legalised for medical use, and the one-word answer was no. But there he was out in Warwick in the great electorate of Maranoa—and we know that he says different things out in Maranoa to when he is in Brisbane—and what did he say to the *Warwick Daily News*? ‘On October 10 last year I signed off with other health ministers on a bi-partisan agreement,’ and now he says, ‘This is an LNP plan being accepted by the Labor government.’ He says, ‘No, no, no, yes.’ What did he say before the election in January? ‘A spokesman for Queensland Health Minister Lawrence Springborg later told AAP there had been no change in the government’s position.’ So we have got our own Vicky from *Little Britain*: ‘Yeah, but no, but yeah, but no, but yeah.’ We cannot believe anything the Leader of the Opposition says. He will say one thing to one group and another thing to another group. That is his modus operandi. As it is with medical cannabis, so it is with so many things—he simply cannot be believed.

Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, Director-General

Mr BENNETT: My question without notice is to the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection. Does the director-general of the department have the minister’s full support and confidence?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Mr Speaker, I am seeking your guidance.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members. I will listen to the point of order in silence. I call the Leader of the House.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Callide. Thank you, members. I have called the Leader of the House.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: It is good to see you happy about something.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Callide and member for Hinchinbrook. I call the Leader of the House.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Mr Speaker, I seek your guidance. We have had one question today about this question of confidence which, as you ruled yesterday, was a matter of seeking an opinion. So I seek your guidance about potentially asking these members to rephrase their questions or you ruling them out of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Leader of the House. Members, I will allow the question. The question is in relation to an office holder who has a duty to the minister. The question is permissible. I call the minister.

Dr MILES: I am actually very happy to take the question and I thank the member for Burnett for giving me the chance to answer it. I have an excellent working relationship with both DGs of the agencies for which I am responsible, regardless of their background. They are both doing an excellent job implementing our agenda and we are working very well together. There is a process underway to appoint new directors-general. I understand that they have both applied, and I would very happily keep working with either one of them.

Education, Funding

Mrs GILBERT: My question is to the Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games. Will the minister update the House on the challenges confronting the Education budget and the importance of consultation with the federal government?

Ms JONES: I thank the member for Mackay for her question. I know how passionate she is about ensuring that all of the students in Mackay, no matter which school they attend, have access to excellent, quality education. I have had the privilege of being in the member's electorate to attend one of the wonderful Catholic schools up that way and I was also in the electorate of Whitsunday as well. I say to each of them that my focus as the Minister for Education is to ensure that we get the best deal for our students in Queensland. That is why I have been very vocal in criticising not only the decisions that were made by the former LNP government here in Queensland where we saw Treasury override the education department to do a capital front-loading of the PPP payments against the advice of the education department, but also what we saw with the federal budget. In that federal budget, we saw Christopher Pyne locking in \$6 billion worth of cuts for schools in Queensland going forward. When I talk about that, not only am I talking about state schools; I am talking about independent schools and Catholic schools as well. What we know is that if they withdraw \$6 billion from schools in Queensland this will affect—

An opposition member: It was never there.

Ms JONES: That is right because members opposite did not commit to Gonski. I take that interjection. That is right; they walked away from Gonski and, on top of that, we are now getting further cuts to Education.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Ms JONES: That is right, that is their record. Thank you, member for Lockyer. Their record was walking away from adequate and fair funding for all students in Queensland. What we have seen—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. We will have order. I call the minister.

Ms JONES: What this means is that programs will be cut. Into the future, if we do not get the success we need at the federal election to restore funding for our schools, we will see cuts to programs. What has Catholic Education said? They have said that they will have to increase fees. That is right: if Christopher Pyne's budget cuts go through, in the future we will see fees for schools go up and we will see programs cut. So I was very pleased to hear today that there was only one member of the opposition who was willing to stand up and say Queensland deserves a better deal.

Mr Dick: Who is it?

Ms JONES: That is the member for Surfers Paradise. It is all starting to click for me, because what did the Leader of the Opposition say? 'We should just accept the deal; we should take the cuts.' That is what he said. His best mate the member for Surfers Paradise has come out saying the right thing, 'Let's stand up for Queensland.'

Mr Mander: Did you get the matching funding on the table?

Ms JONES: I say thank you to the member for Everton. He feels a bit left out because a deal has been done: off to Maranoa, step up as Leader of the Opposition and poor member for Everton is left out of the whole deal altogether. And he came in here thinking, 'I've only got to get two more votes,' but the deal has been done. The candidate for Maranoa is already travelling around his electorate getting the support that he needs and they have given permission for the member for Surfers Paradise to step up and actually fight for Queensland nationally. Poor old member for Everton is left out.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the member for Dalrymple, I would like to inform honourable members that later today I will table a ruling in relation to questions of confidence.

Agriculture Industry, Financial Counsellors

Mr KNUTH: My question without notice is to the Minister for Agriculture. Farm financial counsellors provide much needed advice and support to rural farming families. Given that almost 80 per cent of Queensland is in drought, will the minister provide additional farm counsellors in all drought impacted regions of Queensland?

Mr BYRNE: I thank the member for the question. As he should be aware, we as a government have recently announced an extension to drought assistance across Queensland. Part of that rollout is additional positioning of financial assistance counsellors and extending that support. I am happy to talk the member through all of the detail about how that is being rolled out. We have put out announcements that are talking about the additional levels of support that are coming to rural areas of Queensland that are drought affected. We have raised the level to \$40,000 for the DRAS assistance that is out there. We have been out there repeatedly and I have attended community forums on the various measures that this government has committed to.

Honourable members should not forget that we took to the last election the fact that we would continue all present drought assistance measures through to 2018. We have done that. We are continuing to do it. The continuation of the financial counsellors is in place. I am very proud of the record that this government has in terms of sending the right level of support and messages to rural communities that are under so much stress. It is unfortunate that some of the measures that had been in place previously, particularly the support that we are receiving federally from the federal agriculture minister, Barnaby Joyce, have been withdrawn. I draw the member's attention to the emergency water infrastructure rebate. That was very much appreciated in rural areas. I have found it, as have many producers, extraordinary that that 25 per cent additional support for that investment that is so warmly received in the bush has been withdrawn. I have written repeatedly to the federal minister on these sorts of matters and there has been no reasonable explanation as to why that well targeted, responsible and reasonable assistance has been withdrawn by the federal government.

What I can tell the member is that we have continued the support that we said from the start we would give; we have increased it; we have increased the thresholds based on the third year of drought and the third year of missed wet seasons. We wait with bated breath to find out from the federal arena exactly what their announcements that came in the last federal budget mean on the ground. To this day this government in Queensland—no-one else in Queensland—has the slightest idea of what those measures announced in the federal budget actually translate to on the ground.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Nanango, other members are listening in silence. I would ask you to do so as well.

Mr BYRNE: Just to conclude, we are continuing the program and those financial counsellors are in place.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

Miss BOYD: My question is to the Minister for Disability Services. With the commencement of the National Disability Insurance Scheme just 12 months away, will the minister please inform the House of Queensland's preparedness for the rollout?

Mrs O'ROURKE: I thank the member for the question. I know how committed the member for Pine Rivers is to people with disabilities and their families in her electorate. As the largest reform any of us in this House will ever be involved in, the NDIS will not only transform the lives of those people with disability but also change the social and economic make-up of our community. With just over 12 months until the NDIS rollout begins, my department has been working hard to assist people with disability, their families, carers and the disability sector to get ready through numerous activities around the state.

My department has provided \$6.1 million to nine organisations across Queensland for participant readiness initiatives. Our aim is to support people to have confidence and knowledge about what the NDIS will mean for them. Unfortunately, there is only so much we can do alone and I am disappointed to report that, like their colleagues opposite who cut millions of dollars from the Disability Services budget, the Commonwealth government does not seem to have the same sense of importance or urgency of getting Queensland prepared for the NDIS.

After hearing from the Prime Minister at COAG that he was open to considering full and fair access to the Medicare levy and funding towards the launch, the Premier wrote to thank the Prime Minister and asked for a commitment. I am disappointed to report that the Prime Minister has not responded to the Premier's letter. The bilateral agreement is a crucial aspect of the NDIS process because it is the document that will outline how the NDIS will be rolled out in Queensland over three years including locations, timing and funding. The certainty that the bilateral agreement and lessons from an early launch will provide will ensure Queensland is prepared for the NDIS. The federal government should be ashamed of itself for stalling the process for political gain.

While everyone knows that the NDIS will result in huge social reform, we must not forget that it will also result in landmark economic reform. It is estimated that total investment on the NDIS in Queensland over the 10 years from rollout will be almost \$49 billion. Members on this side of the House know that people with disability are a priority for the Palaszczuk government, and we will be relentless in listening to their needs and advocating for their rights to ensure a smooth and effective transition to the NDIS.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the member for Glass House, I inform honourable members that the principal and year 12 coordinator and school student leaders of Faith Lutheran College at Plainlands in the seat of Lockyer are in the public gallery.

Government Owned Corporations

Mr POWELL: My question without notice is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer rule out transferring shares in any individual government owned corporation to third parties, including Queensland Investment Corporation or Queensland Treasury Corporation?

Mr PITT: I thank the honourable member for the question. I certainly do not know where the member is coming from with this particular question today, which is a little bit out of left field. I can say to the member that we went to the election with a very clear plan on what we would be doing with government owned corporations. Those opposite know what they wanted to do with them: they wanted to sell them off. But of course the plan on this side of the House was to keep them in public hands; that is the contrast. We are talking about the ownership of these businesses and what happens with them in terms of who the shareholders are. In terms of shareholding ministers—hang on, that is me—I am happy to be a shareholding minister, thankfully, for those businesses. But of course we have other shareholding ministers: the Deputy Premier for QR; the Minister for Energy looking at things like SunWater and electricity businesses—

An opposition member interjected.

Mr PITT: You might learn something if you listen. At the end of the election period we very clearly saw a situation where Queenslanders made the call and they said, 'We want these to remain in public hands.' I am not sure what the purpose or intent of the question is, but you mentioned QIC. I sat down recently with the board of QIC and heard about the sorts of things that they are doing in terms of ensuring that Queensland is a great investment destination and what they are doing to ensure that we get the best bang for buck from that organisation. They are two of the most well organised and well run groups that I can attest to. I had a great opportunity to talk to the chair, Damien Frawley—

Mr POWELL: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I rise with regard to standing order 118 and relevance. It is wonderful to hear a discourse on the QIC and the Treasurer's meeting with them, but the question was very clear: is the Treasurer planning on transferring shares to any other third party, specifically CIQ and CTC? Will he rule that out: yes or no?

Mr SPEAKER: I call the Treasurer.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order. That point of order was effectively frivolous and vexatious because the Treasurer was certainly addressing the issues that were raised in the member's question, and I think it is disrupting the member and disrupting question time.

Mr SPEAKER: I call the Treasurer.

Mr PITT: I am happy to address the matters that the member is talking about today. We are talking about the ownership of these businesses, and it is very clear that they will remain in public ownership. There is no question about that. That is the message that we sent to Queenslanders. We told them that our plan was to ensure—

Ms Palaszczuk: They wanted to sell them!

Mr PITT: I will take the interjection from the Premier; she is absolutely right. They wanted to sell them. We have heard all sorts of frivolous arguments put forward about what would happen with those businesses—

Mr POWELL: I rise to a point of order. Again it is relevance under standing order 118. Will the Treasurer rule out a transfer of shares? It is simple: yes or no?

Mr SPEAKER: I call the minister.

Mr PITT: Unlike those opposite, I recall very clearly that the former lord mayor—who has now become the former premier—transferred a bunch of their assets into QIC and then transferred them out again so he could reduce and try to erase the debt legacy from his council days. We are not trying to cover up some kind of political trickery that was done by the former premier: that is not our style.

Federal Budget, Skills and Training

Mr KING: My question is to the Attorney-General in her role as the Minister for Training and Skills. Will the minister inform the House of any developments regarding the future of skills and training in Queensland as a result of the federal budget?

Mrs D'ATH: Unfortunately, while we are talking about jobs in this state the federal government is doing everything possible to cut opportunities for Queenslanders and young Queenslanders by cutting funding to training in this state. What we do know is that the federal government will cut \$4.5 million nationally via the national skills and workforce development specific purpose payments. What we do know is that the international education support budget is being reduced by \$17 million nationally. International education is the largest service export in our country and yet they are cutting funding in this area.

Another area where the Abbott government is making cuts is in relation to group training organisations. The Australian and Queensland governments have jointly funded group training organisations since 1980, but from 30 June we will see joint group training program funding cease. That funding in 2014-15 resulted in over \$5 million going to group training organisations and half of that, over \$2.5 million, was funded by the federal government and matched dollar for dollar by the Queensland government. Unfortunately, that 2014-15 figure was already a 20 per cent reduction in funding from previous years. From 1 July this year we will see no more funding by the federal government under the joint group training program.

We know that group training organisations are extremely important for this state and that they play a very important role. In fact, they collectively employ 9.5 per cent of all apprentices and 3.9 per cent of trainees that are in training across Queensland. We know that they step in and ensure that training is able to be continued in those areas where we see fluctuations in industries like construction, where the work comes and goes and we have peaks and troughs, and make sure that those apprentices can move around different workplaces to finish their training.

We see the federal government refusing to provide dollars to this state for infrastructure projects. We see the federal government refusing to invest in jobs in Queensland. We now see the federal government refusing to invest in training in this state. The federal government has walked away from the Queensland community—not investing in infrastructure, not investing in jobs and not investing in training. We know that they want to cut health and education as well. It is about time the Commonwealth started listening to the people of Queensland.

Union Encouragement Policy

Mr WEIR: My question is to the Minister for Industrial Relations. Earlier this week you gave a commitment to clarify whether the government's union encouragement policy applies to the employees of statutory bodies and government owned corporations, and I ask: will you now answer this question?

Mr SPEAKER: Member, it is not appropriate to use the word 'you'. I would ask you to rephrase the question and replace the word 'you' with the words 'the minister'.

Mr WEIR: Earlier this week a commitment was made to clarify whether the government's union encouragement policy applies to the employees of statutory bodies and government owned corporations, and I ask: will the minister now answer the question?

Mr PITT: I thank the member for his question. Yes, he is quite correct: I did say that we would provide that clarification. I make another point of clarification. In answer to the question asked by the member for Glass House, I accidentally referred to the chair of QIC as being Damien Frawley. I certainly did not mean that; Don Luke is the CEO.

What we are talking about here is the union encouragement process. For several weeks now, those opposite have tried to demonise people who want to join unions and the process we have undertaken. Further discussions will occur today when we debate the bill before the House. I will be happy to provide a more fulsome answer at that stage.

We need to get to the nub of why we have this policy. It is about ensuring that people in the public sector workforce are able to have protections and have the option of having a union at their disposal. This is about returning to an old policy—a policy that existed for a couple of decades in this state. There is no question whatsoever that that policy must continue for people, who will not always have a government like us—a government that will look after its workforce in Queensland, a government that will look after their conditions and ensure there is a fair and balanced approach to the way this is done.

I am certainly very pleased to see that those opposite now have such an interest in workers. They had very little interest in workers in Queensland for three years. They treated them with absolute disdain right up and down the Queensland coast—24,000 public sector workers. When they were in government they decided this was not something they had any interest in. Now they want to be the friend of the worker and suggest that we should not be undertaking these processes.

I do not understand at all why those opposite continue to say the things they say, because every time they attack unions they are attacking workers. That is who makes up the union. If those opposite do not understand that fact then they clearly do not know what they are talking about. They clearly do not understand that if they are attacking unions they are attacking workers. When we get down to it, this has been a lead-in to the debate we will have this afternoon. We are looking forward to that debate, because it was a key election promise of the Labor government to restore fairness and integrity to our industrial relations system for public sector workers in this state.

Schools, Road Safety

Mr de BRENNI: My question is to the Minister for Main Roads and Road Safety. Much has been said in recent times about the importance of road safety, particularly after the alarming spike in the state's road toll over the Easter holiday period. Given that road safety is important all year round, will the minister advise what steps are being taken to enhance safety for school students travelling to and from school?

Mr BAILEY: I thank the honourable member for his question and for his strong advocacy on road safety issues over the past three months. I am pleased to advise that in the Springwood electorate flashing lights are being installed at two primary schools: Slacks Creek State School on Azalea Avenue and Springwood Central State School in Dennis Road. They will soon have flashing light school zone signs to enhance safety for students and the school community.

We will be rolling out flashing lights at a number of schools across Queensland over the coming months. These bright orange flashing signs play an important role in reminding motorists to slow down. The Palaszczuk government is installing flashing lights at the most at-risk school zones in Queensland. Not only are these flashing lights making it safe for students heading to and from school; they are also supporting jobs at a time when jobs and job security are more important than ever in this state.

Let us talk about roadworks and jobs. Let us talk also about the former minister for transport and main roads' charter letter. The letter, written by then premier Campbell Newman, states—

Dear minister,

...

Congratulations on your success ...

It goes on to state—

... work towards our goal of achieving 4% unemployment in six years.

What did the former minister for transport and main roads do? The *Brisbane Times* was on his case. On 31 July 2012 it reported—

It could take months for employees at the Department of Transport and Main Roads to know whether they are staying or going, minister Scott Emerson has conceded.

Mr RICKUSS: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. In terms of relevance, the question was specifically about the safety of school students. This has nothing to do with the safety of school students.

Mr SPEAKER: Resume your seat.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Nanango, I do not need your assistance.

Mr BAILEY: I am talking about the capacity of this government to deliver road safety to this state and to the schoolchildren at primary schools in the Springwood electorate. Clearly, capacity under the previous government was impaired by the sacking of so many staff—nearly 2,000 jobs. The *Brisbane Times* further states—

Mr Emerson this morning announced 2000 jobs would go from the department ... as part of sweeping budget cuts.

It was a 22 per cent cut.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members! I understand the question. I call the minister to respond to the question.

Mr BAILEY: The fact that I am the first road safety minister in this state shows that this government prioritises road safety in Queensland. We will not be taking the knife to the department of main roads, as the previous government did. It gutted RoadTek. It sacked nearly 2,000 staff members and reduced the capacity to deliver road safety in this state. This government will continue—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BAILEY: They do not like to hear it. They do not like to hear the truth.

(Time expired)

Budget

Mr CRAMP: My question without notice is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer publish an individual table in the upcoming budget papers showing the full fiscal impact of Labor's election commitments?

Honourable members interjected.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members! Minister for Education, order!

Ms Jones: I withdraw.

Mr PITT: I thank the honourable member for the question. I can report that the budget papers will be prepared in line with the uniform presentation framework.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I do not need your assistance, member for Nanango. Your voice is very loud, member for Nanango. You may get a ruling soon.

Community Organisations, Funding

Mr FURNER: It is a pleasure to be in the chamber today asking this question of the Minister for Communities. There have been some recent discussions with ACOSS about the damaging effect of the federal government's cuts on vulnerable Queensland families. Will the minister please outline to the chamber the impact on these families in Queensland?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for Ferny Grove for the question because I know he has a keen interest in protecting vulnerable families in his community. As a result of the federal government, we have seen valued community services across Queensland under threat or closing for good thanks to Mr Abbott and Mr Hockey. Unfortunately, we still have not seen or heard anything from those opposite

standing up for the community sector. My department funds hundreds of community organisations and NGOs that provide jobs and front-line services to Queensland, especially those who are most vulnerable, and the sector is one of the largest employers. In fact, it is now five times larger than the mining industry and its workforce is predicted to grow by 15 per cent over the next few years. This is why we need a clear, targeted approach to meet this workforce demand to ensure that we have the jobs of the future in Queensland. I have already requested my department to work in partnership with the sector to ensure that we have the jobs of tomorrow in Queensland, and I intend to ensure that we continue to deliver diverse and viable services in partnership with the sector—unlike the federal government, which is slashing and burning our community services sector.

Working in partnership with the community services sector is in stark contrast to those opposite. In the judgement of their own election review—the Borbidge-Sheldon review—it was found that they ‘alienated almost every key interest group across the state’. It is no wonder one of the recommendations was to address the lack of community organisation support. The same could be said of the federal government and Tony Abbott, and still those opposite remain silent. The Palaszczuk government will be doing a great deal of work to determine the job requirements and mapping of job pathways in Queensland so that we have the workforce we need for the future and our kids in high school can see a future job for themselves in the community services sector. I will be focusing on building capacity of organisations in regional Queensland to be able to deliver services locally and provide much needed jobs to our smaller communities. Just last week I announced government funding for Family and Child Connect, which will create over 200 jobs across our regions, and recently announced domestic violence funding is expected to create up to 95 jobs. At the federal level \$270 million has been cut from community grant programs across-the-board and this is on top of funding cuts to Australian legal services and cuts to shelters and emergency accommodation.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The time for question time has expired.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Abbott Government, Infrastructure Funding

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade) (11.32 am), by leave: I give notice that I will move—

That this House—

Notes that Queensland has rejected assets sales at the last two elections;

Notes that Commonwealth funding assistance for state based infrastructure is tied to the sale of state based assets;

Notes the position put by both sides of politics including recently from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, that the Abbott government should allow Queensland access to the \$5 billion Commonwealth infrastructure fund without the requirement to sell assets—with Queensland’s fair share on a population basis being \$1 billion;

Calls on the Abbott government to make available infrastructure funding to Queensland without the requirement to sell assets.

MOTION

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders

 **Mr HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.33 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, notwithstanding anything contained in the standing and sessional orders—

- (1) All business shall be suspended in order to permit the Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade at 12.30 pm to move the motion which the minister has provided notice of this morning.
- (2) Debate on the motion and any amendment moved shall last for a maximum of 30 minutes, with six members being able to speak for up to five minutes each.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (PLANNING FOR PROSPERITY) BILL

Introduction

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (11.34 am): I present a bill for an act to facilitate Queensland's prosperity by providing for an efficient, effective, transparent, integrated and accountable system of land use planning and development assessment. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Planning and Development (Planning for Prosperity) Bill 2015 [\[556\]](#).

Tabled paper: Planning and Development (Planning for Prosperity) Bill 2015, explanatory notes [\[557\]](#).

It gives me great pleasure to stand here today to present this bill to the House. A great deal of work has gone into the bill and the two other bills which I will be presenting shortly. At the outset, I want to acknowledge the work done by the member for Callide, his former ministerial office and his former department—a power of work done by all involved in modernising Queensland's planning system. This is a significant bill that was three years in the making. Consultation on reviewing the Sustainable Planning Act began in 2012. What did that extensive consultation show? That reform was needed; that the Sustainable Planning Act is long, complex and unresponsive, resulting in an overregulated and burdensome planning system that stifles instead of facilitates development.

These were some of the concerns identified by stakeholders: that it is difficult to understand and navigate the more than 700 pages of current legislation and multiple related instruments; that planning schemes prepared under the current legislation are difficult to understand and apply; that there are inconsistencies between the strategic intent of schemes and the provisions applying to development assessment which create the potential for process dysfunction; that it takes too long for planning schemes to be made and amended; that the system overregulates particular activities—for example, in some schemes low-risk activities such as constructing a driveway or landscaping require a development application; that it can be difficult to determine when, where and how to make a development application; that a development application can take an unnecessarily long time to proceed through the system, even when the proposal is delivering on the intent of the planning system; that the quality of the decisions made in the assessment process is variable; and that provisions of the act are difficult to apply in court proceedings. As members can see, there are a variety of problems and issues that had never been dealt with by the former government.

When all areas for reform were considered together, it was evident that the most efficient and constructive way of adopting changes was through the development of a new streamlined act, and that is why in June 2013 the LNP government announced that it would prepare new legislation to replace the Sustainable Planning Act. What followed was a significant process of engagement with key stakeholders. The government and department went out there and consulted widely with the people who would be impacted by the proposed changes to the planning scheme. An early working version of the ideas for discussion was released in April 2014 to a targeted but large group of recipients comprising the Annual Planning Forum member organisations, focus group members and a range of other stakeholders engaged in developing the bill. Feedback was invited and, along with further scrutiny by fora and focus groups, informed the bill. A consultation draft bill was released for open consultation on 1 August 2014 for an eight-week period to 26 September 2014. The draft bill was forwarded to every council in Queensland as well as to all attendees at the Annual Planning Forum 2014, all identified stakeholder groups including the memberships of the forum, focus groups and others, and the bill was also available during that period on the department's website. I table the *Draft planning bills 2014 submission overview*, which serves to illustrate the widespread consultation undertaken prior to the introduction of the three bills that I will table today.

Tabled paper: Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning: Draft Planning Bills 2014—Submission overview, December 2014 [\[558\]](#).

Of course in November 2014 the member for Callide introduced a bill which subsequently lapsed. Today's bill largely mirrors that bill, with a few minor amendments which I will discuss later. As I said, this bill is the culmination of three years of work by a large number of people. It is the culmination of some significant work undertaken to improve Queensland's planning system. In government the LNP pledged to make property and construction one of the pillars of our economy. That is why we took efforts to relieve the tax burden on homebuyers and stimulate new housing construction activity through our \$15,000 Great Start Grant.

We also established a single state planning policy to simplify and clarify matters of state interest in land use planning and development. We launched SARA to streamline development applications, providing a one-stop shop for development approval applications. We also established Economic Development Queensland as a streamlined business unit for urban development. We appointed a property cabinet subcommittee to deal with and unblock the logjams that people were experiencing under the former government. We also proceeded to reintroduce the principal place of residence concession, bringing back something that Labor had taken away in its last term in office owing to its financial mismanagement. This legislation continues the good work that has been started—the good work that has been recognised as recently as today by the Property Council of Australia in its 2015 development assessment scorecard. This bill is something that the previous government consulted widely on. It is something that industry wants and it is something that will help foster economic prosperity and jobs in Queensland.

The bill proposes to repeal the Sustainable Planning Act and the associated regulation, replacing them with a new act and regulation. Only a small number of the Sustainable Planning Act provisions that are required to transition some older arrangements will transfer across to the proposed legislation. The objectives of the bill are to deliver Australia's best land use planning and development assessment system by providing simplified plan-making arrangements by reducing the complexity of state instruments and establishing more suitable processes for plan making and improving infrastructure designation; a streamlined development assessment system by simplifying the categories of development in decision rules and an act that is navigable and easy to use; and removing procedural and prescriptive detail and obsolete and redundant provisions of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009.

The bill's purpose is to facilitate the prosperity of Queensland, pursuing ecologically sustainable development balancing economic growth, environmental protection and community wellbeing. To achieve this, the bill provides for an efficient, effective, transparent, integrated and accountable system for planning and development assessment. Consistent with the intention to remove the barriers to efficient and effective plan making and development assessment practices, it is proposed that the legislation's purpose be focused on the characteristics of the system that it establishes and not the outcomes that the system is intended to achieve at any given time. The outcomes to which the system is directed are clearly expressed through the state planning policy, regional plans and planning schemes.

This clear distinction between the system and its outcomes means that the legislation is much simpler and concentrates on the central and salient features of the system. This provides for more navigable and effective legislation. The features of this system include state planning policy that is a comprehensive expression of the state's interest in the planning and development of Queensland; regional plans that direct the way in which state planning policy applies to particular parts of the state; planning schemes with clear, purposeful, strategic intent given appropriate effect through complementary and facilitative land use policies and development requirements; development assessment provisions and processes that provide for the expeditious determination of development proposals; dispute resolution procedures that are fair, accessible and affordable; the basis for using temporary instruments, both state and local, to address an urgent concern about a potential planning or development outcome; the ability for the state to determine proposals for facilities or utilities that are a necessary part of a functional community; arrangements for determining and applying charges for essential trunk infrastructure; and the means by which the state is able to ensure that the system is operating effectively.

To achieve this policy, the bill reduces the current number of mechanisms for expressing the state's interest in plan making from four instruments to two instruments by removing state planning regulatory provisions and standard planning scheme provisions. Regulatory matters in these current instruments that need to continue will be and can be carried forward in a regulation. This improves significantly the current complex hierarchy and range of instruments and potentially conflicting policy positions. It improves the mechanism to support the provision of community infrastructure by removing the need for separate or additional referrals. Local governments will no longer be able to designate infrastructure as they will have alternative mechanisms available to achieve the same outcome. It refines the current framework for making and amending local planning schemes to build in more flexibility to negotiate a process that is fit for purpose for a particular local government and confirming state interests early in planned development.

This scalable process is intended to deliver shorter processes, less complexity and greater opportunity for the early consideration of state interests. It changes the development assessment system to encourage a more deliberate assessment of risk by local governments as a basis for pushing more development out of the system where appropriate and, where it remains appropriate, to regulate certain types of development, to manage it more effectively and quickly.

The combination of fewer, more clearly defined categories of development, more straightforward decision rules and fit-for-purpose processes are intended to give confidence to local government to focus on higher risk development balanced with the interests of the community. The dispute resolution process is also refined by recognising its breadth of jurisdiction and establishing the Planning and Environment Court in its own act and, in the bill, expressing appeal rights more clearly and adopting efficiencies in the development tribunals.

To achieve the policy intent, the level of regulatory prescription is reduced, with an emphasis on making more non-mandatory guidance material available to assist and support practice and implementation. Process and detail is generally removed from the act and where process still needs to be regulated it is placed in a regulation or other instrument where it is appropriate to do so. It is not and should not be intended that a more concise act would be delivered by simply moving prescription to an expanded suite of statutory instruments.

Overall, the state will continue to have an integrated planning and development assessment system dealing with state, regional and local matters. Sound plan making, development assessment and dispute resolution processes are fundamental. The more effective parts of the current framework will continue, with adjustments to enable operational improvements and behavioural change. The legislative requirements are simplified through the bill, incorporating key changes that improve arrangements and processes and provide a more navigable, effective act and system.

A rather significant change in the legislative arrangements is the removal of the Planning and Environment Court's establishment to its own specialist act. This is achieved through the accompanying Planning and Development (Planning Court) Bill 2015. The Planning and Development (Planning Court) Bill, which I will be introducing shortly, complements the Planning and Development (Planning for Prosperity) Bill 2015. Together, both bills will govern the development assessment dispute resolution system in Queensland, which comprise the Planning and Environment Court, which hears more complex, high-risk matters generally started by applicants and submitters; an alternative dispute resolution registrar who, as an officer of the Planning and Environment Court, conducts mediations, without prejudice conferences, case management conferences and has the power to hear and decide certain low-risk proceedings started by applicants and submitters at a low cost unless otherwise determined by the court; and the development tribunals, which were formerly the building and development dispute resolution committees, which hear certain low-risk, technical disputes started by applicants only established under the Planning and Development (Planning for Prosperity) Bill 2015.

Similarly, the Planning and Development (Planning for Prosperity—Consequential Amendments) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 makes the consequential amendments required for the proposed enactment of the Planning and Development Bill and the Planning Court Bill and the repeal of the Sustainable Planning Act. The Planning and Development (Planning for Prosperity—Consequential Amendments) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, which I will also introduce shortly, makes the amendments required as a result of the reform of the planning legislation, including updating Sustainable Planning Act terminology and references in other acts and reflecting the consolidation of planning functions within the Planning portfolio. The practical implementation of the new framework has been a key consideration in shaping the bill. Considerable efforts have been dedicated to understanding how ideas will work on the ground and assisting the smooth transition of councils, practitioners and industry to the new framework.

I would now like to turn my attention to some of the amendments that we have made to the original Planning and Development Bill 2014 as presented in November last year. We have removed the provisions that allowed for development applications to be accepted by the assessment manager without the owner's consent. In deciding to make this change, I had consultation with a number of key industry groups and others. It is fair to say that they were understanding of this relatively straightforward change. Fundamentally, it means that a person is not able to put in a development application over a piece of land you own unless they have your consent.

We have also removed clause 176 of the original bill, which describes when a fine is payable to a local government. Although this is not the most desirable outcome, it is, of course, necessitated by the operation of the Constitution of Queensland, the Parliament of Queensland Act, in dealing with revenue to the Consolidated Fund or otherwise away from the Consolidated Fund. I should also say that the LNP is open to further amendments to the bill should they be required and desired after consultation and full operation of the committee system.

This is an important bill. It is a bill that will have impacts across the state. We are willing to listen to stakeholders and third parties about amendments they would like to see as part of the committee process. It was important to introduce this bill today. The LNP has been working hard and engaging with industry groups since the election to be ready to reintroduce this legislation. I know the reintroduction of these planning reforms were key requests of industry groups like the Property Council and the UDIA to both the opposition and the new Labor government. One only has to look at the Property Council's development assessment report card released today to know that this is what industry wants.

I quote the Executive Director of the Queensland Division of the Property Council of Australia, Mr Chris Mountford—

Over the past three years

that is, under the LNP—

Queensland has implemented a number of reforms which have seen the State's score increase to 6.8. This makes Queensland the biggest improver over the period.

He continues—

Importantly the report also shows that the efforts made by state and local government to improve the system in recent years have been noticed and welcomed by industry.

Off the back of this work, Queensland is now well positioned to achieve the aim of having the best planning and development assessment system in the country in the coming years.

But the job is not done yet. There is a need to maintain the momentum that has been established if planning reform is truly going to be a tool to drive economic growth and address housing affordability in Queensland.

By introducing these laws today, the LNP is ensuring we maintain momentum. We are delighted to be able to deliver on these important commitments because fundamentally the LNP is committed to building a more prosperous economy and that is what this legislation will deliver.

In the last week we have seen various statements from the Deputy Premier about her commitment to planning reform. We saw the release of a discussion paper, which largely reflects the work undertaken when the LNP was in government, and we saw a commitment to introduce legislation at some stage. This again highlights the concern the business community has with this government. It wants to delay fundamental reforms for as long as it can. It is obvious that the legislation I am introducing today is the result of a comprehensive consultation process that will get the process moving again in Queensland.

Again I quote from the Property Council's development assessment report—

There is a positive energy that has been generated by the open and frank discussions regarding the new legislative framework, with substantial industry engagement.

That consultation can continue through the committee process as well, but it is important that we get moving in this area. Growth in housing construction has been providing important economic activity here in Queensland. As the investment in resources projects at Gladstone continues to wind down, housing construction will play an even bigger role as the Queensland economy transitions away from the resources boom.

We have seen some fantastic growth as a result of the LNP's reforms in this space. Seasonally adjusted building approvals are now almost 60 per cent higher than they were in March 2012 when the LNP came to power. Yesterday's state final demand figures show growth in dwelling investment of 15.7 per cent over the year, with investment in new dwellings going up by 26 per cent. This legislation facilitates that housing activity. This legislation keeps the momentum that the industry wants to see. This legislation strengthens housing and construction as one of the main pillars of the Queensland economy. This legislation reforms and simplifies planning and this will have a positive economic impact and a positive impact for jobs in Queensland and it is important we get on with the job.

If this government is truly committed to growing the economy and creating jobs it will work constructively with the LNP through the committee process to ensure we can deliver Australia's most efficient planning system right here in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (11.53 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (PLANNING COURT) BILL

Introduction

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (11.54 am): I present a bill for an act about the Planning and Environment Court. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Planning and Development (Planning Court) Bill 2015 [\[559\]](#).

Tabled paper: Planning and Development (Planning Court) Bill 2015, explanatory notes [\[560\]](#).

I am pleased to also introduce, as part of the package of bills I am talking about today, the Planning and Development (Planning Court) Bill 2015. Again I acknowledge the work of the previous deputy premier, the member for Callide, and his department and departmental officers. Many of these reforms have been previously announced and explained in the House. I also refer to the comments made in the introductory speech of the Planning and Development (Planning for Prosperity) Bill 2015 a moment ago and I expressly in this introductory speech refer to my comments in that introductory speech.

The Planning and Development (Planning Court) Bill complements the Planning and Development (Planning for Prosperity) Bill 2015. Together, both bills will govern the development assessment dispute resolution system in Queensland, which comprises of the following: the Planning and Environment Court, which hears more complex, high-risk matters generally started by applicants and submitters; an alternative dispute resolution registrar who, as an officer of the Planning and Environment Court, conducts mediations, without prejudice conferences, case management conferences and has the power to hear and decide certain low-risk proceedings started by applicants and submitters at a low cost, unless otherwise determined by the Court; and the development tribunals, formerly the building and development dispute resolution committees, which hear certain low-risk, technical disputes started by applicants only established under the Planning and Development (Planning for Prosperity) Bill 2015.

It is clear that Queensland's dispute resolution system is well regarded, but it can be improved and that is what this bill provides. The Planning and Environment Court is presently established under provisions of the Sustainable Planning Act. These provisions are located in SPA primarily due to the historical establishment of the court in local government and planning legislation over time. As a separate and stand-alone act, the bill recognises the Planning and Environment Court as a specialist court whose jurisdiction extends well past the scope of the current Sustainable Planning Act. Given the wide jurisdiction of the Planning and Environment Court, it is considered appropriate for the provisions establishing the jurisdiction and powers of the court to be transferred out of the state's planning legislation and into its own specialised, stand-alone bill. Having a separate bill for the Planning and Environment Court will enhance the role and visibility of the court as a distinct,

specialised and accountable court to hear planning and environment disputes. A stand-alone bill will also ensure its assignment to the most appropriate minister under the administrative arrangements and assure its efficacy.

The Planning and Environment Court currently has jurisdiction from approximately 28 different acts. This bill continues the establishment and function of the court, along with its jurisdiction and powers. While many of the reforms are of a technical nature, one of the more significant reforms focuses on providing an overriding philosophy for the Planning and Environment Court. That overriding philosophy is currently found in the Planning and Environment Court Rules and not the principal legislation. It is considered that the philosophy and principles for exercising the court's jurisdiction is better embedded in the bill. The philosophy provides that in conducting a Planning and Environment Court proceeding and applying the rules, the Planning and Environment Court must facilitate the just and expeditious resolution of the issues and avoid undue delay, expense and technicality. There are a myriad of other reforms, including the introduction of security for costs to remove doubt about whether it can apply to the court; the refinement of the rules, orders and directions powers of the court; and expanding the court's excusatory powers to prevent development being defeated by legal technicality.

Many of the reforms have been made in response to stakeholder feedback and extensive consultation has been undertaken in relation to these reforms. This bill, as well as the Planning and Development Bill and the Planning and Development (Planning for Prosperity—Consequential Amendments) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, aims to deliver the best planning system in Australia that stimulates positive development and provides opportunities for all Queenslanders now and into the future. Again the LNP looks forward to open consultation and engagement as part of the committee process. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (11.58 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (PLANNING FOR PROSPERITY— CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (11.58 am): I present a bill for an act to make consequential amendments to the legislation stated in this act for the purpose of the Planning and Development (Planning for Prosperity) Act 2015, and to amend other legislation stated in this act for particular purposes. I table the bill, explanatory notes and an erratum to the explanatory notes and I nominate the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Planning and Development (Planning for Prosperity—Consequential Amendments) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 [\[561\]](#).

Tabled paper: Planning and Development (Planning for Prosperity—Consequential Amendments) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes [\[562\]](#).

Tabled paper: Planning and Development (Planning for Prosperity—Consequential Amendments) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, erratum to explanatory notes [\[563\]](#).

The Planning and Development (Planning for Prosperity—Consequential Amendments) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 is the final plank of the package of bills I am presenting to the House today. I refer to my previous comments made in the introductory speech for the Planning and Development (Planning for Prosperity) Bill 2015 and I expressly incorporate those comments in this introductory speech as well. The bill amends 66 acts to reflect the proposed enactment of the planning and development bill and the planning court bill. In the interests of brevity, I will not go through the amendments as they relate to all 66 acts.

However, I will touch on some of the more major amendments. The bill includes amendments to: update references to the Sustainable Planning Act with references to the planning and development act or planning court act; replace terminology contained in the Sustainable Planning Act with new terminology used in the new act; omit referral and assessment triggers for other state agencies that are redundant as a result of the establishment of the State Assessment and Referral Agency; and remove duplication in other acts of planning processes or requirements that are more appropriately dealt with under the planning legislation.

This bill and the other bills I have introduced aim to deliver the best planning scheme in Australia that will stimulate positive development and provide opportunities for all Queenslanders now and into the future. It is a sign that this LNP opposition is indeed active and engaged in implementing reforms that will have positive economic benefits for the state. I have already mentioned some of the positive planning reforms undertaken by the LNP in government. These are further positive reforms and this is what the industry is crying out for.

As I have mentioned already, extensive consultation has been undertaken in the drafting of these bills, led by the former deputy premier, his office and departmental staff. I particularly thank the departmental officers for their work during the preparation of these bills, because I understand the amount of work they put into this package of bills and it is important that they be acknowledged. It is my pleasure to deliver these bills today, but I acknowledge all the work that has gone into them by everyone involved.

I also look forward to engaging once again with stakeholders and third parties as part of the committee process. As I have mentioned previously, we are open to change and we are willing to engage with the committee to make sure we get the best outcome for all Queenslanders, because ultimately that is what these bills are all about. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (12.01 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (12.02 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136, the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee report to the House on the Planning and Development (Planning for Prosperity) Bill, the Planning and Development (Planning Court) Bill and the Planning and Development (Planning for Prosperity—Consequential Amendments) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 13 October 2015.

In nominating 13 October, while I am cognisant of the size of the bills I am also cognisant of the very extensive work that has gone into preparing these bills. There has been over 18 months worth of consultation in the preparation of these bills. As I indicated in my explanatory speech, work first started

on these bills in June 2013. Full consultation with all affected groups has been undertaken, including through property forums, planning group forums and direct consultation with interested groups. Indeed, for the benefit of the House I tabled a results-of-consultation document published in December 2014 that outlines not only the comments that were made by people but also the responses that were put forward by the department, including the very substantial number of changes and agreements that were made to make changes to parts of the legislation.

There can be no doubt that the planning industry and those with an interest in this legislation have had every opportunity to be consulted and to provide their input into what is undeniably a complex piece of legislation. It is the case that by the time the exposure draft was released many of the changes had been resolved. Of course, there was a two-month period where the exposure draft legislation had been provided to interest groups, again as I detailed in my explanatory notes. There can be no question that those involved know, in the main, the contents of that legislation. In fact, as we have seen, they have supported the thrust of the amendments made by the previous government, whether that was around the single assessment and referral agency or the state planning scheme. In fact, after a period of consultation, they have supported the move to a new piece of planning legislation. This legislation has 258 pages, which may seem a lot but is somewhat less than the 700 pages that would otherwise be the case in what is a complex area.

A number of other very extensive reports on consultation have occurred. I refer to the document titled *A conversation about planning reform* dated 5 December 2014, which was widely available on the government website and provides a wealth of information and detail about these purposes. I have also spoken to industry groups, including the Local Government Association, the Property Council, Master Builders and others who have all indicated to me their desire to see this process continue, as I indicated in my speech.

This is a golden opportunity for this parliament to act in the best interests of Queenslanders. This is a golden opportunity to advance the cause of the property and construction industry for the benefit of not only the property and construction industry itself but also all Queenslanders, by providing a simplified, streamlined, effective and affordable process. On that basis, I believe that this motion should be agreed to. I believe that an almost five-month committee process, bearing in mind the budget and other issues, is an entirely appropriate process. I urge members to support the report-back date.

 **Mr HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (12.06 pm): I rise to advise the House that the government will support the report-back date proposed by the member for Clayfield. In doing so, I acknowledge that our absolute preference, as stated during a similar debate yesterday, is to see matters in relation to private members' bills considered and dealt with by the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. However, I acknowledge that the member for Clayfield has demonstrated consideration in this regard. His date, which provides for five months rather than five weeks, as we saw yesterday from the member for Kawana, provides an opportunity for the committee to look at these matters appropriately.

I also take into account the fact that the Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning has established and extended the government's own process via the directions paper *Better Planning for Queensland*, which continues the engagement and discussion around these issues and highlights the importance of reform in this area, which I certainly understand and appreciate. I see the member for Mansfield smiling and nodding; I know that he appreciates it, too. These areas need and should be dealt with appropriately and with good consultation and engagement across a range of stakeholders—not just those in the industry, but all stakeholders across the length and breadth of Queensland, including communities and local authorities. I am sure that will be undertaken by the Deputy Premier and her team, working with all key stakeholders. I suggest that the committee, having had these private member's bills referred to it, will consider and understand the importance of the government's directions paper and the pathway towards legislation that has been flagged by the government for more than a week now. I encourage the committee to consider that in its deliberations. I urge the House to support the motion of the member for Clayfield.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (RESTORING FAIRNESS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 7 May (see p. 513).

Second Reading

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (12.09 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I thank the Finance and Administration Committee for their report on the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill that they tabled on 1 June 2015. I am pleased to table the government's response to the committee report.

Tabled paper: Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 4—Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, government response [\[564\]](#).

I would also like to thank those who made submissions to the committee about the bill and those who appeared as witnesses as part of the committee's inquiry. I especially want to thank the Acting Privacy Commissioner for making herself available to the committee at short notice and for her advice and guidance on this bill.

We appreciate the advice received from the Office of the Information Commissioner and the Acting Privacy Commissioner that they do not consider that the amending bill will impact on the objects of the Information Privacy Act 2009. Despite the hysterical scare tactics seen from the LNP over this issue, the Acting Privacy Commissioner confirmed what we already knew—that is, there is no issue. Of course, public servants already knew this too. Public servants are smart enough to see through the LNP's scare tactics. That is why they voted them out. We trust the information from the Acting Privacy Commissioner lays to rest any misdirected concern the LNP has about the privacy of public servants. We on this side of the House know that the only attacks public servants are actually concerned about are the LNP attacks on their hard-won working conditions that they so sadly had stripped away.

I got so carried away during question time with reminding the House about the attacks and mass sackings by those opposite that I actually did not get time to respond properly to the member for Condamine's question. I apologise to the member for that. I got a little carried away. I get a bit emotional when I start thinking about all of those people who suffered so badly under the previous government. I did not get to the nub of his question.

I inform the member that the union encouragement policy which we released in May applies to all government workers. It includes the employees of departments, Public Service offices, declared Public Service offices, government entities and government owned corporations. While the policy does not explicitly exclude any entities from its application, cohorts such as the Parliamentary Service staff and judicial officers clearly fall outside the control of the government.

I again apologise to the member for Condamine for not getting to the heart of his question. I should have done so. As I say, I got carried away reminding Queenslanders about the difficult circumstances public sector workers found themselves in during the last three years.

This bill restores the rights, conditions and entitlements of state and government workers that were attacked by the arrogant Newman government. We on this side of the House are committed to a fair framework for government workers so that they can negotiate fair and mutually beneficial outcomes now and into the future.

The LNP's wrecking ball changes to Queensland's industrial relations framework decimated an industrial relations system that worked for Queensland employers and employees. This is why this bill is urgently needed. This government has worked quickly to repair the excesses of the LNP's changes.

On 7 May 2015 I introduced the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 to make urgent amendments to the IR Act to meet the government's election commitment of restoring fairness for government workers and for industrial relations reform. The bill restores those conditions for government workers that were removed by the Public Service and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2012 and the Industrial Relations (Transparency and Accountability of Industrial Organisations) and Other Acts Amendment Act 2013. It removes prohibitions and qualification

on certain content in modern industrial instruments introduced by the former government through the Industrial Relations (Fair Work Harmonisation No. 2) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013.

The bill will re-establish the independence of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission by repealing those provisions that tilted the balance in favour of the state government and employers in wage decisions by compelling the commission to give special consideration to the financial position and fiscal strategy of the state government, a relevant public sector entity or the employer. The bill also returns the legal representational arrangements for parties appearing before the commission to as they were prior to 2012, ensuring that employers and employees operate on a level playing field, as it should be in a layperson's tribunal, and restores the ability of industrial organisations and their authorised industrial officers to freely organise and access members to represent and protect their industrial interests. The bill reflects this government's commitment for Queensland's industrial relations system to be fair and for the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission to be independent and accessible to workers and employers.

Members of this House are aware of my intention to move amendments to the bill to repeal those provisions that mandate individual employment contracts for senior medical officers and preclude those officers from award coverage, collective bargaining and access to unfair dismissal protections under the act. I foreshadowed these further amendments when I introduced the bill.

The government is committed to restoring the rights of senior medical officers to collectively bargain and to remove the draconian individual employment contracts that the Newman government forced onto our Queensland doctors—contracts that stripped away key employment rights, including the right for doctors to have a say in their collective wages and conditions.

The LNP's purely ideological changes have been a disaster for Queensland's health system. Trust between doctors and their employer has been broken. Their ideological changes have demoralised staff, causing dedicated and experienced staff to leave the public health system. High-income guarantee contracts have been applied to over 4,200 senior doctors employed by Queensland Health and chief executives and senior officers of some local governments and in TAFE Queensland.

The amendments I will be moving will: repeal all high-income guarantee contract provisions from the Industrial Relations Act 1999 and the Health and Hospital Boards Act 2011; restore rights and entitlements that were removed from employees who were placed on high-income guarantee contracts, in particular the rights of SMOs to bargain collectively and access unfair dismissal; and provide appropriate arrangements to transition the senior medical officers from individual employment contracts to an employment framework built upon the Queensland Employment Standards, a modern award for medical officers and a new medical officers certified agreement.

The current employment arrangements for VMOs, chief executives and senior officers in local government and TAFE Queensland under a high-income guarantee contract will continue as common law employment arrangements as those officers are not subject to the terms and conditions of an industrial instrument. We have consulted with Queensland Health and the relevant unions, Together and ASMOFQ, in respect to these amendments. We thank those stakeholders for their valuable input during this process.

An additional minor amendment is required to the bill to clarify that redundancy provisions superior to the QES can be included in a modern industrial instrument and for the operation of a certified agreement. With this bill we are delivering on our election commitment to restore fairness for government workers. I thank the committee for their detailed consideration of the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (12.16 pm): The opposition will be opposing this bill but suggesting some amendments during consideration in detail. I thank the committee which examined this legislation for its great work in preparing the report which it provided to the House. Can I particularly thank them for granting me leave to sit with the committee during the public hearing. I thank the chairman, the member for Bulimba, for her courtesy and cooperation in that regard.

As members of the House will see, the committee was unable to recommend to the House that this legislation be passed. There were significant points made on both sides of the debate which are contained in the committee report that are important for the House to take note of. We will come to those no doubt during the course of the debate.

Before I move to the bill itself and the actual detail of the provisions, it is probably important to put in context the whole debate. There have been comments made this morning by the Treasurer that he expected to hear this side of the House union bashing, criticise workers and debate issues that go against the interests of unions and workers. The first point I want to make is that that is not the case.

The criticism from this side of the House is not directed at unions or workers. The criticism from this side of the House is directed at the government and its relationship with those unions. It is hardly surprising that unions might want to make hay while the sun shines—and good on them if they do. The criticism of those on this side of the House is that it is the responsibility of those on the other side of the House to resist, where appropriate, the claims of special interest groups and to govern on behalf of the whole community. Our criticism is not directed at unions or workers; it is directed at the government.

The other point that I want to make in case it is not clearly acknowledged is that this side of the House of course recognises the important part that unions play within our industrial system. There is absolutely no doubt about that. They have played such a part for a long time. They have gained significant concessions for workers, and that certainly needs to be acknowledged, as does the proud connection of the Australian Labor Party with the union movement. None of that is under criticism. What is under criticism is where we have got to today as a result of that not being a healthy and balanced relationship. Why is that? The reason I suppose is pretty clear. When those of us on this side of the House look over to those on the other side of the House, firstly, we see 42 unionists sitting there, minus one.

Government members interjected.

Mr WALKER: It is great to hear those rallying cries, the sorts of cries you generally hear when union members are being chaired shoulder high into commissions of inquiry. They are always great rallying cries to hear as well. I note that there is one member of the government, as I understand it, who is not a member of a union, who on the advice of the Integrity Commissioner has wisely taken a decision in that regard. But that is the first point in which we look at the culture in which these decisions are being made.

The second point is that we have heard from the chief of the Electrical Trades Union that that union gave \$2 million to the government as part of its election campaign. We will see the full result of that when the returns are lodged. It is hardly surprising that they want some return for their investment.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Order! Member for Mansfield, I ask you to resume your seat. Can I have order in the House, please. Member for Mansfield, I am listening very closely to what you are saying. Although relevance is an issue I think in relation to this bill, I am listening very carefully because we are dealing with the legislation before the House. I am more than happy to give a little leeway, but I draw your attention to relevance.

Mr WALKER: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for drawing my attention to that. Perhaps I should make it clear that the reason for these issues being relevant is the union encouragement provisions in the legislation, and they in my view can only be properly understood if these matters are fully canvassed.

We have members of the union forming the government. We have money going from the unions to the government. We also have now the intriguing political machinations that come from the fact that the next leader of those on the other side of the House will be elected not by their members in this House but by a third of their votes, a third of the members of the Australian Labor Party and one-third of union delegates. That in turn adds a dimension to the culture that gives us some idea as to why the sorts of provisions that we are looking at—and we are looking at union encouragement within this legislation—might be being brought into effect. So the context of what I am saying is not a criticism of the unions and not a criticism of the workers but a criticism of the way in which this government is handling that relationship. I will make the point later in my speech that I am sure all Queenslanders are well aware of the unhealthy control. They are seeing a picture form of the unions controlling this government and they do not like what they see.

The issues that I will canvass during my speech in relation to this legislation go to a number of provisions in the bill. During the hearing we had the benefit of a number of organisations affected by the bill giving their case as to why the legislation should or should not be supported. The issues that have come to the opposition as a result of those hearings and the ones that we want to take up in the debate on this bill are as follows. The first will be the taking away of the ability of the commission to consider the state's or the local governments', as the case may be, fiscal strategy and the ability to

present that in the consideration of a wage determination. I interpose that of course we have to remember here that, because of the arrangements made with industrial relations legislation in this state, we are effectively only talking about the employees of the state government and the employees of local governments when we are looking at these provisions. But the ability of the commission to take into account the fiscal situation, and particularly the fiscal strategy of the state government or the local government, is a key element in our opposition to this bill.

The provisions that are being brought forward by this bill will significantly reduce the government's and the local governments' ability to contract out services, and in our view that is an adverse consequence of this bill. There are the privacy concerns of individuals that have already been flagged numerous times in this House before this debate and again by the Treasurer this morning. There is also the issue of local governments who have had their rights trampled in relation to this process, many with certified agreements which will be overridden by this legislation—certified agreements already in place—and in our view those agreements in place should not be affected retrospectively by this legislation. There will be the issue of consultation—the consultation given to the employer group, which is in this case the state government and the various local governments, as against other interest groups including local government employers, the Queensland Law Society, the Bar Association and others who have an interest in this issue.

There is the issue of legal representation and the ability of people to be represented within the commission. There is the effect on the economy. The Local Government Association of Queensland predicts a loss of 1,500 jobs should this legislation proceed, and that warning needs to be taken seriously by this House. There is the reintroduction of the union encouragement provisions generally and the unfettered right-of-entry provisions which are out of step with Julia Gillard's Fair Work Act. The question has to be asked as to why those are being reintroduced in this form.

The first question I would like to look at is the issue of consultation. Once again, we have seen a bill which has been rushed through the committee stage in order to get it into the House by this week. Some concerning situations arose when we heard from those who wanted to put their point before the committee and who wanted to be consulted about this legislation but who were not. I remind the House of this government's promise to be one of consensus and consultation. The explanatory notes to the bill—and I draw those to the attention of members of the House—have a veritable laundry list of union bosses who were consulted as part of the preparation of this bill. Some 13, helpfully read out by the member for Coomera in his role as deputy chair of that committee, were specifically listed and consulted, as opposed to the Local Government Association and some government departments on the employer side of the balance.

The Local Government Association of Queensland mentioned in their appearance before the public hearing that they were consulted some time before the legislation was introduced but they were told that the consultation was in confidence and that they were not to share the results of the consultation with the individual councils—77 of them—who were in fact going to be affected as employers by this legislation. The Local Government Association, to its credit, stayed fast to its undertaking not to do that. It meant that, in the end, some councils only found out about this legislation on Facebook. The Torres Strait Island Regional Council in its evidence to the committee, on page 9 of the committee report, said that they first became aware of the legislation in early May and had confirmed it in none other than Facebook.

On the one hand the QCU, the umbrella organisation, and the various individual unions are consulted, yet the 77 individual local governments were not consulted at all. It is not that they were consulted in a hurry or consulted at short notice; they were not consulted at all. That is an unacceptable transgression of this government's commitment to be one of consensus and consultation in a highly significant area for those local governments which represent of course every elector in Queensland.

Mr Costigan: Typical Labor—they have done it before; they will do it again.

Mr WALKER: I take the member for Whitsunday's interjection. We will see, I am sure, more ramming through of legislation in the same way as this and others have been rammed through.

In circumstances where significant legal rights of people are going to be affected by this bill, the Queensland Law Society was consulted at 4.30 pm on the day before the introduction of this legislation. When talking about consultation in its submission, the Queensland Law Society states that it does not accept that this is an exhaustive list of stakeholders in the Queensland industrial relations system. In the society's view, a closed-shop approach has been taken to the development of the

legislation and it is appropriate for broader consultation to take place given that the Queensland industrial relations system is of importance to all Queenslanders. The government's consultation process for this bill has been nothing short of shambolic, and it has been exacerbated by the short time frame between the introduction and the consideration of this bill by the parliament.

Debate, on motion of Mr Walker, adjourned.

MOTION

Abbott Government, Infrastructure Funding



Hon. JA TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade) (12.30 pm): I move—

That this House—

Notes that Queensland has rejected assets sales at the last two elections;

Notes that Commonwealth funding assistance for state based infrastructure is tied to the sale of state based assets;

Notes the position put by both sides of politics including recently from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, that the Abbott government should allow Queensland access to the \$5 billion Commonwealth infrastructure fund without the requirement to sell assets—with Queensland's fair share on a population basis being \$1 billion;

Calls on the Abbott government to make available infrastructure funding to Queensland without the requirement to sell assets.

If any further proof were needed that the Abbott government is short-changing Queenslanders, we need look no further than the recently released *Infrastructure Australia Audit*. The Abbott government continues to have its head in the sand by refusing to provide critical funding for Queensland infrastructure, especially public transport infrastructure.

On ABC Radio this morning the federal Treasurer, Joe Hockey, was asked to respond to claims that the federal government could take advantage of record low interest rates to borrow to spend on new infrastructure and to increase the productivity of the economy. The federal Treasurer claims that some states like Queensland have been pulling back on infrastructure. The real truth is that the Abbott government has been refusing to step up and work with state and local governments to fund vital infrastructure projects unless we sell assets.

The Abbott government is trying to blackmail the Queensland government by saying 'unless you sell assets we won't fund infrastructure'. This is a disgrace. The Palaszczuk government will not be backed into a corner by the federal government. Queenslanders have spoken strongly at two elections, and they have said that they support their assets remaining in public hands. The Palaszczuk Labor government has heard this message loud and clear. The Abbott government has a fundamental responsibility to Queenslanders, and it is very simple. But, once again, I will make it clear: they cannot walk away from their responsibility to Australia's cities and regions by failing to fund infrastructure that will drive economic activity and jobs growth. Without access to federal funding for critical, large scale infrastructure projects like the second river crossing for SEQ, stage 2 of the Gold Coast Light Rail and the duplication of the Sunshine Coast rail line, these projects will not happen.

Why are those opposite so silent on the issue of federal funding for infrastructure—well, silent apart from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition? I call on those opposite to stand with the Queensland government and those members of the crossbench—whoever in this chamber is prepared to support this motion—to call on the federal Abbott government to release funds from the infrastructure fund for Queensland—funds that Queenslanders should rightfully expect. Queensland needs funding for infrastructure from the Commonwealth that is not conditional on the sale of public assets.

As I said earlier today, according to Joan Sheldon and Rob Borbidge, LNP elders, as detailed in the LNP review of the last state election, asset sales was the most important issue in the election campaign. The campaign review states—

External polling during the election indicated that the privatisation of major assets was not a strong negative with any groups other than those strongly committed to voting Labor, and non-greens minor party voters. Exit polling however, indicated that the plan to sell/lease the state's asset was the main reason given by 64 per cent of respondents for their protest vote.

Asset sales is a vote changer. If the Commonwealth wants to fight the next federal election on whether Queensland should sell assets, it is welcome to try because we will fight them every step of the way and we will point out to Queenslanders that the LNP has not learnt the lessons of 2012 or 2015

and is still trying to sell assets. Not only is it trying to sell assets; the federal Abbott government has walked away from supporting Queensland and funding the infrastructure that we need to keep growing economically and to accommodate the population growth that has been outlined over the next two decades particularly.

I call on those opposite to join with the government to support this motion and join with us in lobbying the Abbott government to give Queensland our fair share of the \$5 billion Commonwealth infrastructure fund without the requirement to sell assets. I note that the amendment circulated by the Leader of the Opposition seeks to omit the last two paragraphs of the motion that I am speaking to. Can I point out that this amendment, which seeks to omit the last two paragraphs—

Mr NICHOLLS: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. The Deputy Premier is anticipating debate on a motion that has not been moved yet. She cannot debate it; it is not before the House.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Thank you, member for Clayfield. Minister, I ask you to keep your comments to the motion before the House and not a proposed amendment.

Ms TRAD: Of course, Mr Speaker. Let me say quite clearly that the Palaszczuk Labor government calls on those opposite—every single one of them, not just the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—to stand with us to fight for what is fair for Queensland.

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (12.35 pm): I move the following amendment—

That the last two paragraphs of the motion be omitted and the following paragraph be inserted:

'and calls on the Palaszczuk government to develop and submit infrastructure projects to the Commonwealth government's \$5 billion Northern Australian Infrastructure Facility.'

This amendment simply calls for the last two paragraphs of the motion to be omitted and for a paragraph to be inserted which calls on the Palaszczuk government to develop and submit infrastructure projects to the Commonwealth government's \$5 billion Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility.

What we saw again from the Deputy Premier was more inexperience and more shrill scaremongering. This government is desperately trying to create a smokescreen. In the 10 full days that this parliament has sat post the ceremonial processes we have seen bungles and stumbles. This is a government without a clue. We saw it again today.

It is no coincidence that we now have this motion, which is a smokescreen. The Treasurer is probably wanting something desperately because if he had any credibility in the last couple of weeks it has very quickly evaporated. The other thing they are trying to cover up is that they do not have a plan. They are trying to blame someone else for the fact that they have no money, and they had no plan at the last state election for infrastructure whatsoever.

There is a false pretence in this motion, because it seeks to assert that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said that money should be made available from the infrastructure recycling fund, which is not true. He says and maintains, as the opposition does: if this government will get itself half motivated and talk to the federal government, as the Western Australian government did, and is able to come up with a bilateral arrangement for infrastructure or other funding, then of course we accept that. But, as everyone knows, when it comes to due and proper process, funding is made available by the Commonwealth contingent upon the sale, leasing or recycling of assets. If you say that you are not going to do it, if you are not going to recycle those assets, you cannot expect money to be made available from that fund. If you want to have a separate arrangement, that is fine. The Commonwealth is obviously open to that, as it was with Western Australia—something which Bill Shorten himself backed, \$300 million. Bill Shorten has not backed anything for Queensland. Where is Bill on this? He is nowhere to be seen. Again, those opposite do not even have the federal leader of the Labor Party supporting them.

Another area where we have an opportunity for Queensland is the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility—\$5 billion which the Commonwealth government has put on the table for Northern Australia, of which Queensland, by virtue of its population and opportunity, makes up the bulk. What did the Treasurer say the day after? He said that he was not interested in it. But a couple of days later he said that he might look at it. This is \$5 billion.

The other great thing about this is that it is also an opportunity for the state government to work with the Commonwealth and for businesses out there like IFED and major corporate proponents to put forward major infrastructure developments which can advance Northern Queensland and Northern Australia—well, anything north of Rockhampton in actual fact. That particular project is worth hundreds of millions of dollars, if not billions, in direct economic input and also jobs and prosperity for Queensland. If the Queensland government was not so pig-headed with regard to Trinity Inlet dredging—and we have members of the government with different positions, with the member for Barron River saying, ‘Maybe they should dredge it,’ and the member for Cairns and the member for Mulgrave saying no—that would be a perfect opportunity to partner with the private sector in order to access that money to lay down that major project.

There are many opportunities for the Queensland government, but they cannot come in here making an ambit claim over a fund where the guidelines, frankly, do not even allow it to come from that fund. If it comes from somewhere else then that is fine and we have no problem with that. If it is from the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility, we are fine. If it is from bilateral arrangements, we are fine. But it is a bit rich for a party that pretends to be interested in process and sticking to the guidelines to then say, ‘We’ve got this fund. We don’t want to sell infrastructure but we know that is the major part of being able to access the funds. So because we don’t want to do it, you should give us the money.’ We accept the verdict of the people of Queensland and we would not have been eligible to access this, but do not try to—

Mr PITT: Mr Speaker!

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Treasurer, what is your point of order?

Mr PITT: No. I just want to tell you that time has expired for the member.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (12.41 pm): Last month we saw the Hockey budget deliver no new infrastructure funds for Queensland for any of our significant projects. When it comes to federal infrastructure funding for Queensland, the figures say it all. When natural disaster payments are subtracted, the level of Commonwealth infrastructure payments to Queensland has more than halved over the last three years of the LNP compared to the previous three years of a Labor government. While Labor governments, state and federal, partner to build infrastructure, the LNP in Queensland cuts infrastructure spend at a state level and goes weak at the knees in capitulation to Canberra.

Let us look at the figures. Between 2009-10 and 2011-12 under Labor, the federal government spent \$8.03 billion in Queensland on infrastructure—an average of \$2.68 billion per year. Between 2012-13 and 2014-15, largely under LNP governments, the Commonwealth spent just \$3.17 billion in Queensland on infrastructure—an average of \$1.05 billion per year. Queensland has been duded by LNP governments, at both a state and federal level. Queenslanders know that Tony Abbott and Joe Hockey have abandoned them, just like the Newman-Nicholls government did, and their cornerstone infrastructure funding policy—asset recycling—is a sham. Joe Hockey refuses to listen to the will of the people and rewrite—or, better yet, scrap entirely—the asset recycling initiative.

The world has changed a lot since Joe Hockey first announced his ill-thought-out policy in March 2014. Back then, Barry O’Farrell was premier of New South Wales, Denis Napthine was premier of Victoria and Campbell Newman was premier of Queensland—good news comes, doesn’t it! It beggars belief that you can cook up a deal with state governments then claim the deal stands when none of the same premiers are even standing. Of course, in the cases of Victoria and Queensland, the same parties are not even in power anymore. Not only is the asset recycling initiative bad politics; it is also bad policy as it currently stands. As Professor John Quiggin told a federal Senate inquiry on the policy—

The implication is that that (a) privatisation decision must be marginal. Obviously, if we were in a situation where state government had an asset which it held as a substantial premium product it would not need the subsidy program to make that decision.

He went on to say—

So, what we are seeing, as with most subsidies, is bad decisions. In this case, bad privatisation decisions are being encouraged by the presence of the subsidy. The fact that you cannot get it for a privatisation that makes such strong economic sense and for which you do not need the subsidy is an indication of exactly how things are being distorted on both sides of the decision. Regarding both the assets originally for sale and secondary investments, this program distorts both of those decisions.

Those opposite bang on about how privatisation is letting the market determine a fair price. Well, this is actually nothing of the sort. This policy essentially distorts economically sound decision-making in favour of privatisation. Even the Productivity Commission has taken a swipe at this policy. It said—

Privatisation has been raised by participants in this inquiry mainly in the context of 'capital recycling'—that is, selling existing infrastructure assets and using the proceeds to finance new infrastructure projects. The Commission's view is that privatisation should only occur when it is in the community's interests in its own right, as a tool to improve efficiency. What is done with the proceeds is essentially a separate issue. Linking the two issues through capital recycling may help to build community support for privatisation, but there are also risks.

When you are a conservative government being criticised by the Productivity Commission for essentially distorting the market, you know you are doing something wrong. When Labor governments of different levels work together, we get projects built—projects like the Gateway Motorway, the Moreton Bay Rail Link and the Gold Coast Rapid Transit. When Liberal governments come together, you get cuts, buck-passing and magic pudding policies. Regarding the amendment to the motion, I happily table a letter to the federal Treasurer.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 4 June 2015, from the Treasurer, Hon. Curtis Pitt, to the federal Treasurer, Hon. Joe Hockey, regarding infrastructure funding for Queensland [565].

We are happy to put projects forward, but the key point I would make is that we need to see the details. Project suitability for support under the fund can only be determined when the fund's arrangements are known. I sat in my office here at Parliament House with the federal Treasurer and he was still figuring out the details at that time. I think it is very important that he comes up with the answers and tells us exactly how we can tap into this funding.

I reiterate my previous comments that the Palaszczuk government believes the people of North Queensland deserve real, new Commonwealth funding for infrastructure projects, rather than concessional loans that may have a range of unknown and potentially restrictive conditions attached to them. However, in the interest of prioritising jobs and economic growth in regional Queensland, the Queensland government stands willing to work with the Commonwealth to seek to establish appropriate arrangements for the fund so that North Queensland can access its fair share of these concessional loans. I say again that those opposite are still in love with asset sales. Everything they do with their funding from the previous government is linked to asset sales, and I think Queenslanders have made their decision. Let us see if Mr Hockey can do the same.

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.46 pm): I rise to oppose the government's motion and support the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. It is interesting to note this diversion that has again been moved by those opposite, as we are seeing the disasters that are befalling the Palaszczuk government in their second 100 days in government—with the issues that have affected the member for Cook, the member for Pumicestone and the member for Bundamba. Not only that, this is a motion that is riddled with errors. Our amendment seeks to omit the last two paragraphs of the motion and insert another paragraph, but even the government's second paragraph states—

... notes that Commonwealth funding assistance for state based infrastructure is tied to the sale of state based assets well, that is not correct. That was a boost that was announced by the Commonwealth government.

This just shows again that this is a Labor government that cannot get it right when they move a motion on the run, as they try to bring something into the parliament that is a distraction from their hopeless administration. It just shows how they really—

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Thank you, Treasurer. You have had your chance to speak. It is the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's time to speak.

Mr LANGBROEK: Then there is the third paragraph where they have inveigled me, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, into their motion, and the Deputy Premier could not even get it right when she tried to speak to the amendment before it had even been introduced. The third paragraph relates to my supposed position—and I reject it entirely—at a press conference I gave at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre. The paragraph states that I had said—

... that the Abbott Government should allow Queensland access to the \$5 billion Commonwealth Infrastructure fund without the requirement to sell assets ...

Mr Speaker, I put it very clearly at that press conference, and I am getting the transcript of that sent to your office and I look forward to having this investigated and to receiving an apology from those opposite. I said that those opposite went into that with their eyes open. When asked about whether Queensland should be given an extra allocation—as Western Australia had subsequently—I made the point that I would always be happy for our Treasurer and our government, on behalf of the Queensland people, to get their fair share. I certainly did not make that point about the \$5 billion that had been announced by the federal government, as it says in the third paragraph, and I reject it entirely. I look forward to the Deputy Premier being able to prove that is the case, because I said that they went in with their eyes open so I reject that entirely and I look forward to it being ruled out when we come to this issue.

Of course, we should not forget that this government has already received an extra \$500 million in GST funding. When we look at the 2015-16 budget we see that they are heading for a 32 per cent, or \$6.7 billion, increase over the next five years. The other issue, of course, is—

Ms Trad: Try to wriggle out of it, JP. If it doesn't suit you, try to wriggle out of it.

Mr LANGBROEK: I am very clear about—

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I am unsure if you are raising a point of order in relation to the issue of the authenticity of the words that you have referred to. If you—

Mr LANGBROEK: You asked me to address this. I am addressing the issue.

Mr SPEAKER: What I am asking is: do you want me to rule on the issue of the accuracy of those comments referring to you?

Mr LANGBROEK: Yes, I do, Mr Speaker. I am happy to have that and I thought you had indicated to me that you would do that at the conclusion of the amendment being put and the subsequent motion, should the amendment be lost.

Mr SPEAKER: The clock is paused. One moment, please. Members, in light of the comments that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has made, I call on the Deputy Premier to authenticate the accuracy of those comments that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition takes issue with. If the Deputy Premier is not able to authenticate the words that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition takes issue with, it is my proposal under the standing orders to delete those words from the motion. Deputy Premier, I am happy to allow you time to consider the issue and then produce what is required before the vote is taken.

Ms Trad: I might do it now.

Mr SPEAKER: Okay. Would you like to table it?

Ms TRAD: For the benefit of the House, I table the news article from Friday, 22 May 2015 in relation to funding deals with the Commonwealth in which the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is quoted at length.

Tabled paper: Article from ABC Online, dated 22 May 2015, titled 'Infrastructure audit "raises red flag" on economic cost to Queensland from road congestion, RACQ says' [\[566\]](#).

Mr LANGBROEK: I rise to a point of order. I am happy for the Clerk or someone else to consider that whilst we continue the debate. I would have thought that if it is a direct quote or a quote from a news story, there could potentially be a significant variation between that and the soundtrack of the interview. That is my only point. You cannot do it based on the—

Ms Trad: You asked me to authenticate. I did authenticate.

Mr LANGBROEK: You have not authenticated anything.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, the clock is paused. The Clerk and I are considering this issue at the moment. I call the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to continue while we consider it.

Mr LANGBROEK: It is obvious, though, that even when it came to accessing any aspect of the \$5 billion, whether it is for Northern Australia or the asset infrastructure fund that the federal government announced, this government is not ready to do anything anyway. Its members have announced Building Queensland, and they finally announced the make-up of that just a couple of days ago. The point was that, even on the day of that press conference, they went into the election with their eyes open knowing what the federal government was proposing.

Mr Pitt: How many projects come to Northern Australia?

Mr LANGBROEK: When advised about the \$5 billion Northern Infrastructure Fund, the Treasurer, whom I hear interjecting, rejected it out of hand and then said the next day he was interested in getting some more information. It just shows that they have no idea. They are making it up as they go along. They are actually putting words in other people's mouths that are not true. In that case, it is obvious that this is a government that is more focused on the internal issues it is having with its own members of parliament, with ministers being included in that. It is obvious that this is a government, with just a few weeks to go until it presents its budget, that has no idea about paying down debt apart from, as I said this morning, paying down the debt that it owes to its union bosses, claiming the credit for LNP deliverables and focusing on its own internal issues.

When it comes to the matter of that history, tomorrow it will be six years since we sat in this House and looked at Labor's track record on asset sales, which was at the end of the budget week. I note that the current members for Woodridge—and back then it was Greenslopes—Bulimba, Brisbane Central, Stafford—now Sandgate—Ashgrove, Bundamba, Inala, Morayfield and Mulgrave were all here on that great night for the debate on the Infrastructure Investment (Asset Restructuring and Disposal) Bill 2009 after they had gone to the election and had not told people they were going to do it. That is when the polls came out. It was 59-41. That is why we had the result we did at the 2012 election.



Mr STEWART (Townsville—ALP) (12.54 pm): I move the following amendment—

That the amendment be amended by deleting the words 'and calls on' in the amendment and inserting before the remaining words in the amendment the following words—

'Notes the position put by both sides of politics including recently from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, that the Abbott government should allow Queensland access to the \$5 billion Commonwealth Infrastructure fund without the requirement to sell assets—with Queensland's fair share on a population basis being \$1 billion;

Calls on the Abbott government to make available infrastructure funding to Queensland without the requirement to sell assets.

And calls on the Abbott government to release information and criteria that would allow'

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, the amendment to the amendment is clearly the same issue that you and the Clerk of the Parliament are currently debating in relation to the claims in the motion about the comments of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. It is a false amendment and should not be allowed.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Mermaid Beach. One moment and I will consider the matter with the Clerk. Honourable members, considering the time, I propose that the House will resume at 2.30 pm and I will come back with a ruling on this matter.

Sitting suspended from 12.55 pm to 2.30 pm.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Authentication of Motion Words and Other Procedural Matters



Mr SPEAKER: These are the issues that I need to rule upon: (1) the authentication of words in the original motion; (2) whether the amendment to the amendment is in order; and (3) my suspending the House for lunch five minutes early to consider the matter.

On the issue of authentication, one long established rule for a notice of motion is that members must be able to authenticate the facts stated in the notice of motion. On 27 October 2010 at page 3,869 of the *Record of Proceedings*, Speaker Mickel ruled out of order a notice of motion where no official statement by a minister or from any official source was provided to authenticate the facts.

Normally there is significant notice of a motion given so as to enable examination by members and disputes as to the contents before the motion is moved. In this case there was little notice provided, and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition came to see me to dispute facts in the notice of motion just before the debate. It was then ruled as a point of order in the debate.

I am generally not prepared to let stand a motion that contains disputed statements of fact without authentication of those facts. The Deputy Premier tabled a news report to authenticate the facts in the motion. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition provided my office with a recording of the press conference where the statements in the news report were allegedly made.

After the Leader of the House, the Deputy Premier, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the Clerk and I listened to the tape, there was agreement that the words in the motion should be altered so as to better reflect the statement made at the press conference. In accordance with standing order 70 I amend the words in the third paragraph of the motion which will now read—

Notes the position put by both sides of politics including recently from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, that the Abbott government should fund Queensland's infrastructure without the requirement to sell assets.

I note that the paragraph at issue is also contained in the amendment to the amendment, and I make the same alteration in the amendment to the amendment.

The next question for consideration is whether the amendment to the amendment is in order. The Leader of the Opposition took objection to the amendment to the amendment on the basis that it contained, amongst other things, the disputed words in the motion. The disputed words have now been addressed and so the particular issue is now also resolved.

For the record, I also observe that normally putting words into an amendment to an amendment that have been removed by the amendment will be contrary to the rules against direct negatives; however, in this instance the amendment to the amendment has added qualitative words that should be considered an alternative proposition.

The final issue for consideration is suspending the House early for lunch. I note that the original motion suspending standing orders for the debate did not state that the debate would conclude at 1 pm, but that debate on the motion would be for a maximum of 30 minutes. The order was not transgressed. Furthermore, time is always the privilege of the chair, and the chair is at liberty to take matters under advisement and suspend the proceedings if necessary to consider matters of order. I now call the member for Townsville to resume his contribution.

MOTION

Abbott Government Infrastructure Funding

Resumed from p. 1150.

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (2.34 pm), continuing: Mr Speaker, I thank you for the time that you took to amend the amendment. It sounded like *Who's on first, What's on second and I Don't Know's on third*.

I rise to speak on the motion before the House as amended and supported by the Palaszczuk government. A decentralised state like Queensland needs infrastructure. The recently released infrastructure audit produced by Infrastructure Australia demonstrates the challenges faced by Queensland and other states over the next 15 years when it comes to delivering infrastructure that will help grow the economy.

Queensland's population is expected to grow by almost two million people, or 44 per cent, to 6.45 million people in 2031. Regional Queensland will continue to grow as well. More than three million people will live outside South-East Queensland by 2031. In 2011 the direct economic contribution made by Queensland's infrastructure was \$19 billion, which represents 19 per cent of the national figure. We all know that the regions and cities like Townsville help drive economic activity, and that is why it is important that governments have a statewide plan for infrastructure.

The LNP did not have any infrastructure plan. 2011 was the last year that Queensland had a state infrastructure plan. For a state this size, whose infrastructure needs are great that is a tragedy, but it is not uncommon for conservative governments not to have a real plan for infrastructure. We hear a lot about how the federal government wants to develop Northern Australia, but they have not put any real cash on the table; only scarce detail about concessional loan schemes. We all want to see growth and development in the north, but without real support instead of talk from the Commonwealth it will not happen.

Sadly, the recent federal budget did not include any major funds for major infrastructure in Queensland. It is a bit like the Brisbane Line is being reintroduced yet again. The Commonwealth is now trying to hold Queensland to ransom by demanding that we sell assets in order to access the Commonwealth's \$5 billion Commonwealth Infrastructure Fund. Queenslanders have already made their views on asset sales known. They have spoken loudly at two elections in a row and said that they do not support asset sales. This position could not be simpler or clearer. Even the state LNP seems to have finally woken up and realised that Queenslanders do not want their assets sold. Why is

the Commonwealth holding out and trying to force asset sales on Queensland? Queensland needs its fair share of Commonwealth infrastructure funding to build the roads, rail and other projects that we need to drive economic activity and jobs growth.

I am proud to be part of a government that will deliver on infrastructure for this state. We have promised \$100 million for the stadium in Townsville. That is a project that the Commonwealth can get behind and show us their support. When this government was in opposition it had a very clear vision, and before the election was announced we stated that we would fund the stadium to the tune of \$100 million over four years. The reason for this was simple: we could see that this stadium project would create jobs; encourage development and investment opportunities; restore confidence back into the city; and more importantly, it would kick-start the economy in a city that is dying. We made the announcement before the former LNP government could commit to this. How were they going to do that? It was simple: the port of Townsville—up for sale; the rail line—up for sale; Ergon—up for sale. How are we going to deliver? We are going to deliver without selling assets.

Now we are working to develop a new infrastructure plan for the state. The state infrastructure plan will provide a coordinated and integrated approach to infrastructure planning, prioritisation, funding and delivery. Queensland's statewide infrastructure priorities will provide a pipeline of projects and programs in the short and medium-to-long term that industry can plan around. The Palaszczuk government is continuing to take up the fight to the Commonwealth so that we can get our fair share, and I call on those opposite to do the same.

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (2.39 pm): What a shameless, hopeless excuse for a government we have across the aisle from us here. They get elected with no plan and no plans for paying for their no plans, and now they want someone else to solve their problem for them.

What we have here is a costing document from the Treasurer. Where in his costing document does he say, 'Oh, but we want \$5 billion from the Commonwealth'? When did he say that during the election campaign? He said, 'We reject the Commonwealth's asset recycling scheme.' He does not want a part of it. He did not want a part of it back in November, December and January, and now, as the budget comes closer, as the tidal wave of his own financial ineptitude looks like sweeping him away, he wants to tie himself to the rock of proper financial and prudent government by the Liberal Party and the coalition in Canberra by tapping into their \$5 billion. He says, 'This is our money. We are entitled to a part of it.' But he knew that the \$5 billion was an asset recycling initiative.

The decision of the people of Queensland has been made. We accept that decision. But the Treasurer does not want to accept the fact that the proposition he put to the people of Queensland means the government does not get the money. You cannot say, 'Oh, we won't do this but we want the asset recycling money,' and then put your hand up for it. Do those opposite know where the asset recycling money comes from? It comes from the dividends of the businesses that were sold that would lead to the Commonwealth getting the tax revenue. It comes from the revenues that the Commonwealth would receive. The Treasurer does not even understand the program behind it.

What has the Commonwealth funded? Let us go through it: the Bruce Highway upgrade, \$6.7 billion; the Gateway upgrade north, \$1 billion; the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing, \$1.3 billion; the Warrego Highway, \$508 million; and the Cape York regional package, \$208 million. And it continues to fund the Moreton Bay rail project.

Let us look at what this government is talking about doing in terms of funding. Let us look at what it has actually put on paper in its savings measures. In terms of reprioritisation of capital grants over the four years, they want to save themselves \$178.2 million. For those who do not know, capital grants are the moneys that go into public housing, roads and state development. That is where the capital spending cut is coming from. It is not coming from anything the Commonwealth is not delivering, because the Commonwealth is delivering.

This government's and this Treasurer's financial ineptitude has been on display for the whole world to see over the past six weeks. First we were in recession; then we were not. First we were pulling money out from behind people's ears; now we want to go and pull it out from Canberra. That is what the financial management of this government is all about.

If you were the Commonwealth, would you give this mob any money? Let us have a look at their record: a \$1.2 billion failed Health payroll scheme; \$600 million wasted on the Traveston Dam; \$1.2 billion wasted on the Tugun desalination plant; \$2.6 billion wasted on the western corridor recycled water scheme; and \$350 million wasted on the Wyaralong Dam, which failed to connect to the

south-east water grid. Dams without pipes, pipes without dams, trains without seats, trains that do not fit through tunnels. Why would you give this lot a brass razoo? They cannot even spend it properly. Of course, let us not forget that old favourite: 'Let's hand over \$16 million to a fake Tahitian prince.' But at least he did not go and buy fake Louis Vuitton!

There is no good purpose to this motion. This government was elected, so they say, with a plan to pay down debt, to not raise taxes and to fund infrastructure. A budget is due in six weeks. The Treasurer does not know how to do it. He is hoist on his own petard and now he is looking to the Commonwealth to bail him out. It is a false proposition that should not be supported.

Mr SPEAKER: The question is that the motion be agreed to, since which it has been proposed that the question be amended by omitting the last two paragraphs and inserting the words contained in the Leader of the Opposition's amendment, since which it has been proposed that the amendment be amended by omitting all words after 'and calls on' and inserting the words contained in the member for Townsville's amendment. The question now is that the member for Townsville's amendment to the Leader of the Opposition's amendment be agreed to.

Division: Question put—That the amendment to the amendment be agreed to.

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.

Mr SPEAKER: For all further divisions on this matter, the bells will ring for one minute.

Division: Question put—That the amendment, as amended, be agreed to.

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:

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Resolved in the affirmative.

Division: Question put—That the motion, as amended, be agreed to.

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.

Motion, as agreed—

That this House—

Notes that Queensland has rejected assets sales at the last two elections;

Notes that Commonwealth funding assistance for state based infrastructure is tied to the sale of state based assets;

Notes the position put by both sides of politics including recently from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, that the Abbott government should fund Queensland's infrastructure without the requirement to sell assets;

Calls on the Abbott government to make available infrastructure funding to Queensland without the requirement to sell assets;

And calls on the Abbott government to release information and criteria that would allow the Palaszczuk Government to develop and submit infrastructure projects to the Commonwealth Government's \$5 billion Northern Australian Infrastructure Facility.'

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Newman Government, Olive Vale Pastoral

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade) (2.55 pm), by leave: On 5 May this year I instructed my department to investigate serious claims published by the ABC regarding a vegetation clearing permit issued by the Newman government during the caretaker period. This permit was granted on 20 January 2015 to allow the clearing of approximately 32,000 hectares of land at Olive Vale-Fairview Station. The clearing was approved for the purpose of high-value agriculture and included a crop, upland rice, which is not currently grown commercially in Queensland. As part of this review, my acting director-general sought independent advice on three specific matters. First, advice was sought from Crown Law about the application of the conventions of caretaker government. This advice confirms that the caretaker conventions were not contravened. Second, advice was sought from Greg Vann, a Life Fellow of the Planning Institute of Australia, about the decision-making process associated with the development approval, taking into account the requirements of the Sustainable Planning Act and associated policies and guidelines. Mr Vann concluded that the application was processed and decided in accordance with the relevant procedural requirements.

Finally, my department sought advice from Mr Bill Thompson of Land Resource and Assessment Management Pty Ltd about the decision-making process associated with the determination that the proposed clearing was for a relevant purpose—in this case, high-value agriculture under section 22A of the Vegetation Management Act. This determination is an essential prerequisite or gateway before the State Assessment and Referral Agency can consider any development application for high-value agriculture clearing. Mr Thompson, who has appeared as an expert witness on numerous occasions before the Planning and Environment Court, has advised that the application failed to meet the required criteria for high-value agriculture. I now table a copy of Mr Thompson's report for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Land Resource Assessment and Management—Independent Review: Olive Vale Fairview Station Natural Resource Review, prepared by W.P (Bill) Thompson for the Department of State Development, 31 May 2015 [\[567\]](#).

This report finds that the application for high-value agriculture status under section 22A of the VMA fails to meet the land suitability and financial criteria. He found deficiencies in the assessment of land suitability, with the applicant failing to supply correct technical information. He also found errors in the assessment of financial viability, with the applicant's report including very optimistic indicators of the project's financial viability which could not be justified. As a result, the proposed clearing cannot be justified as being for the purposes of high-value agriculture. Mr Thompson has advised that the correct decision from the assessment process should have been that the purpose of the clearing could not have been high-value agriculture. He finds that the proposal fails under section 22A and the associated guidelines when assessed on the basis of the information supplied by the applicant. Mr Thompson has also concluded that both section 22A and its associated guidelines need to be reviewed as they are currently drafted in a way that could misinform or misdirect both applications and assessing officers as to the level of scrutiny required in assessment.

Problems are also identified in the way conditions may be applied to high-value agriculture projects. In particular, the current framework does not even require a proponent to undertake the high-value agriculture following the clearing. A cleared site could be used for another purpose such as grazing, which the VMA would not have otherwise allowed the clearing for. Accordingly,

Mr Thompson has advised that this loophole should be addressed. This is a damning assessment of the failed policies of the Newman government which have allowed protected vegetation to be cleared for spurious and illegitimate reasons and right now—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms TRAD: These are your laws. These are a contravention of your laws.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition! Member for Clayfield!

Ms TRAD: Just to clarify, these are contraventions of the laws implemented by those opposite. Right now, the bulldozers are already clear-felling at Olive Vale, destroying habitat and vegetation that should be preserved.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Hinchinbrook!

Ms TRAD: The LNP members should hang their heads in shame that they presided over—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Hinchinbrook, I was on my feet. I warn you under standing order 253A. If you continue, I will be asking you to leave the chamber.

Ms TRAD: The LNP members should hang their heads in shame. They presided over this shambles of poor decision-making and bad policy. Unfortunately, under the Sustainable Planning Act, there is no head of power for the minister, the director-general or any other government entity to revoke, suspend or reassess the clearing permit at this time.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members, we will take as long as we need so that I can hear the minister. We do not need the interjections.

Ms TRAD: Now that the LNP has approved it, there is limited opportunity for the government to stop it. For that reason, today I have written to the federal environment minister, Greg Hunt, under section 69 of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act referring the clearing at Olive Vale to determine whether it should constitute a controlled action. Officers of the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection will also assist the Commonwealth in the investigation, including through the provision of aerial and on-land surveying. If Mr Hunt determines that the clearing now underway is a controlled action, then the Commonwealth has the power to seek a Federal Court injunction to stop the bulldozers.

We must also ensure that a decision such as this one does not happen again. Therefore, I can advise the House that the Minister for Natural Resources and I are working together to bring forward changes to the Vegetation Management Act, including in relation to the high-value agriculture framework. In addition, the directors-general of both the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and the Department of Natural Resources and Mines are reviewing delegations to ensure that appropriate levels of decision-making—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, Minister. Member for Nanango, if you persist you will be warned under standing order 253A.

Ms TRAD: In addition, the directors-general of the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and the Department of Natural Resources and Mines are reviewing delegations to ensure appropriate levels of decision-making on future HVA applications. Further measures will also be considered and the government will make further comment on these in due course.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Nanango, I now warn you under standing order 253A. If you persist, you will leave the chamber for up to one hour. I am taking advice from the Clerk. We will now move on to private members' statements and they will conclude at 3.32 pm.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Gold Coast Cruise Ship Terminal

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (3.03 pm): It certainly seems to be my day. I want to raise a matter of ongoing concern in relation to the proposal by the ASF Consortium in relation to what, in a policy decision of the former government, should have been a cruise ship terminal on the Gold Coast. Over the past three months there have been events unfolding, including, of course, the suspension of this project by the Labor government, creating angst and confusion for those on the Gold Coast, those involved in the consortium and those looking for jobs on the Gold Coast. Of course, it should be no surprise to anyone that an ALP government would cause angst for anyone wanting to see this state advance in any way, shape or form.

The original proposal put forward in relation to the Gold Coast was that a cruise ship terminal would be built at the Gold Coast—not a casino, not a resort, but a cruise ship terminal. The LNP government in good faith, working with the mayor of the Gold Coast, said, 'We will help facilitate that by going through the proper environmental impact statement process, the proper assessment process, and we will work with you to facilitate a cruise ship terminal on the Gold Coast to take advantage of the burgeoning cruise ship industry.' So for a period of 18 months to two years we worked with the consortium. I would have to say that there were occasions when we were at odds with the consortium about what needed to happen. They did not get it all their own way, but we were progressing very solidly I think, particularly in the last six months of 2014, to a situation where a very solid proposal may well have been able to be put forward to the government. That was taking into account the concerns of local residents. Local state members were obviously given an opportunity to have a say. In that respect, I particularly note the member for Broadwater. A proper consideration was put in place with all the proper probity around it as well.

Now what do we see? We see a Labor government elected and, in an immediate act of kowtowing to its deals with the World Wildlife Fund, Greenpeace and all of their other greenie mates, it immediately suspended the development. Now, what is the Labor government talking about? On Wednesday morning we heard the weasel words of the Minister for Infrastructure, who talked about an integrated resort development. It was never going to be an integrated resort development with a casino. That was never the policy proposal; it was a cruise ship terminal to deliver benefits. The minister talked about trying to identify another site on the Gold Coast at the Southport Spit. He said that he is going to offer it to the ASF Consortium to develop an integrated resort and a casino, but he does not say what the probity obligations are there.

How can the self-confessed 'king of probity', the member for Stafford, stand there and say that he is just going to transfer a completely different proposal to the ASF Consortium without properly investigating the other alternatives? We have here a selling out of the Gold Coast by the member for Stafford.

Ms Grace: You would know all about selling out.

Mr NICHOLLS: I rise to a point of order. I take offence at the comment and the interjection by the member for Brisbane Central and I ask that she withdraw.

Ms GRACE: I withdraw.

Gladstone, Health Services

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (3.06 pm): I rise to speak on behalf of the people of my electorate of Gladstone who for many years have been calling for better hospital and healthcare facilities. The people of the Gladstone electorate deserve health services that are equal to the services offered in other regional cities and towns. They deserve to feel confident in seeking treatment at their local hospital, knowing that they can be assured that they will be offered a standard of care that is equal to that offered in a similar region.

The recent federal budget has done nothing at all for the health needs of the Gladstone region. In fact, my understanding is that, compliments of the ill-thought-through decisions made by our federal government, hospital and health facilities in Central Queensland will be \$570 million worse off over seven years—

A government member: 574.

Mr BUTCHER: I take that interjection—\$574 million. According to the Office of Economic and Statistical Research—the OESR—in 2012-13, Gladstone's growth was 4.1 per cent. In 2013-14, the figure was 3.9 per cent and the projected growth is 2.9 per cent each year for the next 20 years, which is faster than the state's average. Consequently, cutting funding to health systems in Central Queensland can be equated to short-sighted theft.

This \$574 million cut from the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service network is part of the federal government's intention to proceed with its proposed cuts in the May budget. That means \$57 billion less for the states to administer health systems over seven years from 2018. That might seem a few years away, but my region is growing quickly and its population is ageing. So this reduction in funding will make long-term planning very difficult.

I want to see security for my people of Gladstone as they age and as they may potentially require more medical care. I want people relocating to Gladstone to be able to relocate confident in the knowledge that, should they require medical services, there will be services on offer in Gladstone that are of the same standard as those offered in areas of similar population to the Gladstone area.

The Gladstone Hospital needs urgent attention, including the reinstatement of front-line services that have declined over the years. The electorate of Gladstone has had to manage the impact of the LNG industry coming to town, and the population boom that that has caused, without a corresponding increase in infrastructure and staffing levels in health services and health care. With projected growth higher than the state average over the next 20 years, it is time to increase funding to Gladstone, not rip the heart out of our health system.

Pit Pony Project

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (3.10 pm): I rise to inform the House of the magnificent Pit Pony Project in Collinsville. Here is a town that is on its knees, yet through the sheer determination and hard work of Collinsville Connect coordinator, Sue Clark, and Jenn Honnery, a communications and information designer based in Bowen, \$150,000 has been raised in just 60 days for this project. The Collinsville Pit Pony Project will centre on the construction of one life-size pit pony. Moulded from cast bronze, the pit pony will be a long-lasting, child-friendly monument displaying the strong community spirit in Collinsville.

In addition to the pit pony sculpture, three selfie walls will be constructed about the town. Located to encourage a tourist trail through the town, the walls will detail scenes of the pit ponies and miners at work and will be designed to allow tourists to take photos of themselves in situ. The trail will finish at the No. 1 State Tunnel model where visitors can learn about the Collinsville mine disaster and proceed to visit the coal face.

The Pit Pony Project 2015 represents 25 years since the last pit ponies, Warrior and Mr Ed, retired in Australia. The story of the miners of Collinsville and their pit ponies remains fresh in the memory of locals and as the town struggles with the slowing coal industry the question is now being asked does this rich history hold the key to the future in reigniting community spirit and offering up new hopes in terms of tourism.

The partnership between miner and pit pony began with the commencement of coal mining in Collinsville in 1921. Horses were used below ground to haul coal to the surface and on the long journey above ground to deliver the coal to port. Despite their name, the Collinsville pit ponies were typically Clydesdale horses renowned for their strength and being able to work efficiently in the larger mine tunnels. During their working life these pit ponies formed strong bonds with their handlers and other miners around them. Their even temperament made them suitable for the never-ending darkness and loud noises, while their superior intelligence ensured they never endured a heavy load and always found unguarded cribs to munch on.

By 1987 machinery underground had assumed many of the pit ponies' tasks and mine management in Collinsville was eager to retire the ponies. In 1990, however, it became clear to miners and management that the era of the pit pony had passed and the final two ponies were retired, living out their final days on a nearby grazing property in the care of previous handler, Bill Hoffman. Twenty-five years on, and as Collinsville looks to the future, the Pit Pony Project celebrates the end of that era and the memory of the mateship between miner and horse and will also establish Collinsville as a significant North Queensland tourist destination, an historic town brimming with rich stories of the past. In short, Collinsville wants to become famous as the pit pony capital of Australia.

World Skills Australia

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (3.12 pm): It was my pleasure last Tuesday to launch the 2015 World Skills Australia round of regional competitions at Toowoomba TAFE on behalf of the Minister for Training and Skills, Yvette D'Ath. World Skills is an international not-for-profit organisation created to expose young people to the wide range of skilled careers available and encourage them to explore the opportunities available to them through vocational education and training.

It is a really exciting journey for these young competitors. They could find themselves representing Queensland at the national competition in 2016, or even representing Australia at the 2017 international competition in Abu Dhabi. It allows young people to dream, to demonstrate their skills on a wide stage, make new friends, expand their professional horizons and learn skills outside of their trade.

Last week I met Jed Sparks. He is a Toowoomba local who completed his trade in construction steelwork at the Toowoomba TAFE. Jed was the winner of the regional competition in 2014 and he went on to win gold at the Queensland and then Australian competition and he is now heading off to the UK to represent Australia at the World Skills International show. This award has provided Jed with an opportunity to test his skills and to mentor other young apprentices at his own workplace, at TAFE campuses and as a guest speaker and judge in other competitions.

I am proud that the Queensland government supports World Skills Australia Queensland. In the past 11 years we have provided more than \$6.4 million in funding support. I am really pleased that the Palaszczuk government has committed a further \$1.5 million over the next three years for World Skills Australia Queensland. Our government knows that we have a critical role to play in the provision of quality training opportunities for Queenslanders and we aim to reinvigorate the state's vocational education and training sector, unlike the current federal government, which has a track record of cutting funding to training in this state. True to form, the federal government is cutting funding to the national skills and workforce development specific purpose payments. It has also cut the international education support budget by \$17 million nationally. International education is the largest service export in our country but the government is cutting funding in this area. The federal government is also ceasing funding to group training education programs, an initiative funded by both Australian and Queensland governments since 1980. They employed 9.5 per cent of all apprentices. Our government knows that today a trade qualification is as important and valuable as a university degree. We need to ensure that there are pathways and opportunities for all people. The Palaszczuk government values skills and training, unlike our current federal government which is refusing to invest in health, education and training in this state.

Racing Queensland

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (3.15 pm): Allegations made on the *Four Corners* program on 16 February this year about widespread overbreeding, euthanasia and live baiting in Queensland's greyhound industry were abhorrent, sickening and shocking news to Queenslanders. The MacSporran report handed down earlier this week recommended a complete overhaul of the industry and tough accountability measures and found that self-regulation failed the safeguarding of animal welfare and integrity within the industry. Also of concern are actions by this government, particularly since the MacSporran report was handed down with 15 recommendations. Instantly the Palaszczuk government dismissed all racing boards in Queensland, not just the Greyhound Racing Board, and issued a show cause notice to Racing Queensland CEO Darren Condon. While the Premier stated that the 15 recommendations were under consideration, the government could not wait to terminate positions of all racing board members who were appointed by the LNP.

As I mentioned on 612 ABC Brisbane yesterday morning on the Steve Austin program, board members were effectively sacked by voicemail messages. Some were lucky enough to receive a phone call from the minister's staff, but there was not a word from the Minister for Sport and Racing himself. This minister, the member for Rockhampton, has been the invisible man for the racing industry in Queensland, barely meeting with anyone in the industry, and lacks the basic respect and courtesy to bother to speak to the board members his government sacked. It is an appalling way to treat people and the minister should hang his head in shame. If these board members were part of a union I am sure it would be a different story. Union bosses would be on the phone making calls to their mates.

Further to these claims, Mr Kevin Dixon, the chair of Racing Queensland, gave an interview to 612 ABC Brisbane this morning and made some startling remarks. Yesterday the Premier said she would be immediately referring the parlous financial state of Racing Queensland to the Auditor-General, but Mr Dixon said that as the Auditor-General sits on the finance committee which meets quarterly he already knows about their finances and that claims by the Premier about a \$21 million black hole in the current first draft of Racing Queensland's budget are fictitious. Considering the first meeting to discuss the budget was scheduled for next week and departmental heads have not yet forwarded their budgets to Racing Queensland, the Premier's comments indicate she has either done this budget herself or is being loose with the truth.

I call on the Premier to table in this House today the evidence that she used to justify statements made in the House yesterday about the financial state of Racing Queensland. The last thing the racing industry in Queensland needs right now is a Premier, a minister and a government trying to score cheap political points on the back of a damning report about animal welfare and integrity concerns in the greyhound industry.

This Saturday is the AAMI Stradbroke Day, one of the most prestigious days of racing in Australia, the grand final of the Channel 7 Brisbane Racing Carnival, and it is a cause for celebration. Instead we have a government more focused on trashing the reputations of decent individuals and making spurious claims that it has failed to show evidence to back up.

Federal Budget

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (3.18 pm): Like many people in the electorate of Greenslopes I was nervous as I awaited the recent federal budget. We all saw the 'Hockey Horror Picture Show' that was the 2014 budget which seemed to reveal, onion-like, layer upon layer of unfairness. Given the damage done in 2014, many in my electorate wondered if this year's efforts would start to reverse the changes and the carnage. As one constituent put it to me, perhaps if the public outcry against the manic unfairness of last year's budget was not enough to shift the Treasurer, then perhaps the sharpening effect of an impending date with the electorate might cause him to inject some fairness back into the budget.

Alas, this is not the case, particularly in the area of Health and Education funding. Constituents repeatedly raise with me their concerns regarding the future of our public health system. Like me, they know that a functioning universal health system is a key part of our society and our economy. In fact, they know that a good education and access to a decent healthcare system will set most citizens up for a lifetime of contributing productively to their community. They also recognise that we must care for those in our society who, no matter for what reason, cannot care for themselves. I assure the House that there are many such people and I am glad that we have so many dedicated health workers who go above and beyond the call of duty to provide care to all Queenslanders.

This budget has done nothing to address the spectre of cuts that are heading our way: \$11.8 billion worth of cuts for our state. A sum of \$2.6 billion is to be ripped out of the hospital and health services that the constituents of my electorate rely on. Cuts to health care are not something that I speak of as a distant observer. I will leave to others the petty semantic arguments about front-line staff. I suggest that all health workers with whom I have worked found those arguments to be insulting and completely and utterly irrelevant.

No, I am not a dispassionate observer. I was there when those opposite took the hatchet to Queensland Health. I was there when beleaguered middle managers had to come around asking tired staff to do double shifts. I was there when my job became harder because my clinic facilitator, like every single other clinic facilitator at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, was made redundant. Like most people, I watched appalled as jobs were slashed with no thought for how the services they delivered would be delivered after the cuts. There was no management plan and no strategic thinking, just a kill sheet with a number on it.

The constituents of Greenslopes are very concerned about the federal government's cuts to health care and I am proud to be part of the Palaszczuk government that will be advocating strongly on their behalf for a properly funded universal healthcare system.

Southport Electorate

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (3.21 pm): I rise to update the House on some of the wonderful things happening in my electorate of Southport and to provide a brief update on my activities since being asked to take on the role of shadow minister for housing and public works. I am

particularly proud of all that is happening within my electorate. Since the LNP government's declaration of Southport as a priority development area, the focus on Southport has been sensational, resulting in almost \$2 billion of new commercial projects and development approvals. But that is not all.

The Commonwealth Games early works at Parklands are well underway and we are just weeks away from the completion of upgrades to Smith Street and Olsen Avenue, including the new interchange of flyovers and additional lanes adjacent to Griffith University and the new Gold Coast University Hospital. Just this week, we saw the opening of another 1,150 car-parking spaces at Griffith University.

I am also delighted to see Chinatown developing within the Southport CDB. It has been such a pleasure to work with council and our local business community on its evolution. While the precinct still has a long way to go, it sends a very clear welcome message to our very many Asian visitors and delegations. It is also great to see so many people turning out for the new Chinatown street food market, which will be on again this Saturday.

Southport is a wonderful part of the Gold Coast and I am so proud of the many community groups that work together to help others.

Mr Crandon: It's not the best part, though.

Mr MOLHOEK: I thank the member for his interjection. Recently, to mark Domestic Violence Prevention Month in May, I joined Manuela and Zoe from Assist A Sista at a fundraising lunch to talk about strategies to tackle this all-too-prevalent social issue. Next week in my electorate I will be joined by shadow Attorney-General Ian Walker, the honourable member for Mansfield, for a fundraising breakfast in support of the Gold Coast Community Legal Centre & Advice Bureau. That organisation, capably run by director Victoria Shield and her team of volunteer solicitors, has been assisting the Gold Coast community for over 30 years. Now more than ever, they are in need of solicitors who can give their time to help our most vulnerable community members. Next week our goal is to raise as much money as possible to support their service and recruit as many volunteers as we can. Next month I will be pleased to host a lunch, with support from Luke Altschwager from Parkwood International Golf Club, to raise money for the Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence. That is an incredible organisation that will celebrate 25 years of working in our community. Everybody on the Gold Coast knows what a great job Di Macleod does.

Over the past three months I have been travelling around Queensland to meet with housing providers and industry groups to better understand the challenges facing our many wonderful non-government service agencies. It has been a pleasure to visit places such as Cairns, Palm Island, Rockhampton and Emu Park and even spend some time at Airlie Beach. What I am hearing is how disappointed many of those housing providers are that the incoming government is not committed to the development of more public and social housing. They are holding up the stock transfers and funding programs our government developed to increase the capacity of housing providers across Queensland and they are failing to help meet the huge demand and maintenance backlogs we inherited in 2012.

Australian Institute of Marine Science

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (3.24 pm): I would like to extend my adjournment speech from the other night when I spoke about the visit that the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland, the member for Thuringowa, Minister Miles and I made to the Australian Institute of Marine Science, or AIMS. I want to explain to the House the work that is done and the investment that has happened at AIMS.

AIMS has what they call the SeaSim, the sea simulator, which cost \$35 million to establish. That investment allows for continuous research, simulating the ocean at any particular time and with a number of variants incorporated into the experiments. For example, they can control the temperature of the water or simultaneously determine the level of turbidity. The amount of sediment that is continuously suspended in the water can be varied and adjusted. Prior to having the SeaSim, the experiments had to be done by hand. In other words, they used to warm up the water, tip it into the live coral container and take the measurements while the temperature of that water decreased. The SeaSim allows them to continuously run various experiments over an extended period to determine the biggest impact on coral.

The unfortunate thing is that, while the Palaszczuk government is committed to the Great Barrier Reef—and members have heard us talk about that at length this week and we have all heard about the announcement by UNESCO—the federal government is not backing it to the same extent. At the last budget announced by the federal government, we noticed a \$7.8 million cut in funding to the AIMS research institute. That is a huge shame, not only for the Great Barrier Reef but also for Queenslanders. We all know that annually the Barrier Reef brings in \$6.5 billion in reef tourism alone. That is a huge injection into our economy. A \$7.8 million cut in funding from the federal government will have a huge impact on our economy.

Research has discovered that over the past 27 years the crown-of-thorns starfish has attributed to 42 per cent of coral decline, which has a huge impact on our reef. At this stage, the only way that they are being managed is through manual removal or the injection of toxins into the animals.

Stewart, Mr S

 **Mr DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (3.27 pm): There was recent media coverage of a double jeopardy ruling that involved one of my constituents, Sam Stewart. I would like to read a statement written by Sam's parents, Barry and Cathy Stewart. It states—

Our Son was an innocent victim of a serious unprovoked assault in the early hours of 27th January 2014 whilst walking to a taxi rank with two female friends. There were multiple eyewitness accounts and graphic footage taken of the assault from a mobile phone.

We rushed to our Son's hospital bed where his face was distorted, swollen and bruised due to a fractured skull and slight bleeding on the brain. These injuries were sustained from a punch to the head when Sam was literally sent reeling to the ground then suffered a callous, gutless kick to his head.

These injuries resulted in a week in Nambour Hospital. So the evidence for us as his parents was absolutely shocking and traumatic to view.

The offender was charged with Public Nuisance on the night then subsequently charged with Assault Occasioning Bodily Injury. The subsequent evidence and admission of guilt by the offender, after being interviewed by police, was never in question.

Our question to you, as members of the Queensland Parliament, is this—How was this offender allowed to walk free with just a \$300 fine and no recorded conviction?

The offender pleaded guilty in writing within a month after the assault, and was found guilty on the lesser offence of Public Nuisance.

When the assault charge was to be heard, his defence was, after months of drawn out court hearings, riddled with multiple postponements and adjournments at the taxpayer's expense, enabling the defendant to get off on an ancient common law legal principle known as double jeopardy.

The judgement conclusion states the respondent cannot be punished a second time for those acts already punished. Does this assault deserve the punishment of that handed out, a slap on the wrist? This equates to less than a speeding offence!

So may we ask you ... Where does this leave our son Sam, who has ongoing medical issues such as compromised sense of smell and memory loss, sustained through the trauma to his frontal lobe?

He is hesitant to pursue further and is valiantly moving on with his life, but we as his parents cannot rest until there is sustainable reform to this outdated and absurd technical law which is a serious roadblock to justice and the police.

The finality and absoluteness to this case is now apparently done. All in favour of the perpetrator! This makes a mockery of "The one punch can kill Campaign" and subsequent community awareness programs slamming random violent attacks.

They are all in vain when victims like our Son are further wronged by a legal system out of touch with reality and public opinion.

If we may quote former Prime Minister John Howard speaking about double jeopardy rulings. "I'm very much in favour of changing things that don't work and this rule doesn't work." We believe this is a good starting point for meaningful reform and rebalancing the scales of justice towards the victim.

We implore you, as Members of Parliament, elected to represent and protect the people like our son Sam ...

PLEASE TAKE NOTE AND TAKE ACTION!

I ask the Attorney-General to please take this on board. This needs to be revisited.

Federal Budget

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (3.30 pm): I rise in this House to voice my concern about another horror budget brought down by the federal Treasurer, Joe Hockey, and the Abbott government. In fact, it is the second horror budget in 12 months. Once again, the federal government has utterly failed the people of Queensland.

The federal budget has failed Queenslanders on health, education, infrastructure and jobs, leaving us to face a multibillion dollar funding shortfall. Long-term investment in infrastructure, education and jobs is largely missing from the Abbott government's second budget. Many of the worst elements of last year's budget remain: the \$80 billion cut from hospitals and schools; \$100,000 university degrees remain in place; and the cuts to family payments.

There are more cuts to health in this year's budget, including confirming the government is committed to a four-year freeze on Medicare rebates which will rip \$1.3 billion out of general practice over the next four years. There are also cuts of \$125.6 million to child dental benefits and a \$252.2 billion cut to PBS listed drugs. These measures will have a detrimental impact on both young and old people across our community.

In particular, I refer to an article on 20 May 2015 in the *Australian* newspaper entitled 'Victims at risk in legal aid overhaul'. What the federal government is doing here is preventing ordinary Australians from accessing legal advice when they are at their most vulnerable. In many cases, legal advice is needed urgently to prevent matters that would escalate the case at hand. It is needed to provide accurate information and vital support, and it is an essential part of our legal system.

These cuts will impact on the community legal centres which are at the coalface helping victims of domestic violence who have been placed in vulnerable situations by violent partners. In these situations, plans need to be put in place urgently to adequately protect victims and their children. Legal aid was designed for this purpose—to be the first port of call for people seeking urgent legal advice and help. Checking someone's bank balance should not be the focus.

Community legal centres are best placed to put victims in touch with the appropriate services. This quick response is essential to arrange the necessary protection to prevent loss of life and serious injury.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (RESTORING FAIRNESS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 1145, on motion of Mr Pitt—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (3.33 pm), continuing: Members will recall that before the debate was adjourned I had just spoken about the significant lack of consultation prior to this bill being brought before the House. None of the 77 employer groups which are affected by the legislation—the local governments—were involved in any prior consultation whatsoever. On the other side, a significant number of unions affected by the legislation were given full access to consultation.

I will move on to the substantive provisions of the bill and the reasons the opposition will oppose it. As I indicated earlier in my speech, the first is the taking away of the ability of the commission to look at the nexus between the ability of the states to pay or the ability of the local government to pay and the award that is being made. The CCIQ made the point in its submission to the committee that Queensland's business community contributes 65 per cent of revenue to the Queensland budget each year and that in the 2014-15 year 44 per cent of the state's operating expenses are apportioned to employee expenses or superannuation expenses.

It is fairly clear from that that the relationship between wage pressures and what in turn the taxation impact on business might be is quite strong. Any major fluctuation in employee expenses can impact on business taxation and in turn on the strength of the economy. The CCIQ was of the strong belief that the QIRC should give consideration to the financial position and fiscal strategy of the state or the local government in determining appropriate pay rates.

Queensland business wants better economic and fiscal management than they have seen in the past from Labor. We have to, once again, get our budget into a sustainable position. The previous government had made significant strides in doing that and in attempting to restore the state's much heralded AAA credit rating. That is something yet to be achieved.

In the decade leading to 2011-12, during the time Labor was in power, the average growth rate of employee expenditure in the Queensland budget was 8.6 per cent. That is an unsustainable figure. The Premier dismisses all the concerns about business by saying that her door is open and yet of course does not agree with what she hears back from business in terms of the degree of confidence business has in this government to manage the economy.

The concerns are not only spelt out by groups like CCIQ, but organisations like the Torres Strait Island Regional Council. It had this to say to the committee—

The statutory requirement that the Commission have regard to the 'financial position considerations' is of central importance and should continue to be enshrined in the Act. The QIRC may inform itself of entities' financial position whilst remaining independent. Financial position considerations can affect outcomes, and the Commission can only make a balanced assessment of fair and relevant conditions in context.

The committee report states—

The LGAQ expressed the view that they find it difficult to understand how the removal of the capacity for the QIRC to consider the financial position and fiscal strategy of the public sector when determining minimum Award rates or upon making a binding determination pursuant to the Act, has any relevance to, or bearing upon the independence of the QIRC.

It is a simple and obvious requirement for the commission to take into account. Not only does it impact on the state government which this House feeds into, but the 77 local governments and the ratepayers who fund them would be directly affected should this provision be taken away.

The provisions of the bill give effect to arrangements worked out between the government and the union bosses about reinstating no contracting out provisions within awards. The explanatory notes to the bill give the game away here. The explanatory notes state—

While there are no direct cost implications to Government with the legislative requirements set out in the Bill, it is noted that the reintroduction of job security, protections against contracting out and other measures arising from the Bill have cost implications to Government.

Clearly, if we get back to the old system of no contracting out provisions going into awards then the pressure on expenses goes up and the ability to deal with the financial situation before us is severely hampered.

In government, the Liberal National Party outsourced school maintenance. I am sure many local members on both sides of the House who were able to monitor what their schools were able to do once they were released from the obligation to use QBuild would find what I found as a local member: firstly, that those who use local traders to do their school maintenance instead of being bound to QBuild found that they were getting five jobs done for the cost of what used to be three jobs; and, secondly, QBuild's own costs unsurprisingly came down to meet the market because of the healthy wind that competition blew through all of that. That is a simple example of how communities benefited and how the budget benefited from the ability to contract services out, and any return to the 'good old days' of no contracting out provisions cannot be good for our budget and cannot be good for our community. The Mareeba Shire Council particularly noted in their submission that the move to reintroduce measures such as these would have a significant financial impact upon the council.

The union encouragement provisions which have been spoken about significantly in this House are ones which are of great concern to the opposition and I am sure of great concern to the community. I pointed out earlier in my speech that one of the cultural aspects obviously influencing this debate is that on the other side of the House we have 41, 42 or 43 union members who will be voting on this legislation. But we in fact have someone more significant than that. Indeed, the member for Mount Coot-tha, Minister Miles, is not only a rank and file supporter in this regard; he is actually a 'doctor of union encouragement'. His thesis *Trade union renewal in Australia: rebuilding worker involvement* was no doubt helpful to the government in determining its union encouragement provisions. It is a very good document. It is quite a lengthy one and I can see that a lot of work went into it. I might dip into it from time to time. But just for today there was some great hypotheses proved as a result of this thesis. The hypothesis I particularly liked, on my way through to my main point, was, 'Those who identify as Green or Labor will have a higher union participation rating.' This was his hypothesis. That was on page 100. By the time he got to page 157 he was able to conclude—

... the relationship between identification with a left of centre political party ... was significant at 0.7. Therefore hypothesis 11 is found to be supported.

So that was helpful to know on the way through. But, more importantly in relation to this debate, he looked at the hypothesis of 'workers who have a workplace delegate will have a higher participation rating'. This was on page 112. And guess what? By the time we get to page 182 he concludes—

The presence of a delegate in the workplace was important,—

but this is a clincher—I love this bit and the minister may have to explain this at some stage—

what they did and how good they were not so.

That was quite an interesting conclusion, but it was pretty clear that having a union delegate there was going to make a hell of a lot of difference. They did not have to do anything. They did not have to be any good. But if they were there union numbers would skyrocket.

What will happen under the new government's encouragement policy for unions? There is a provision that says employees are to be allowed 'full access to union delegates/officials during working hours to discuss any employment matter' and that delegates will be provided with 'reasonable access to facilities for the purpose of undertaking union activities'. So the research done by the member for Mount Coot-tha has fed into this encouragement policy, and that of course is what is going to happen. The people of Queensland object to union delegates using government time and facilities for this sort of thing. That is not what they are there for.

Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Mr WALKER: That is an interesting point. The Leader of the House says they are there for decades.

Mr Hinchliffe: No, no. I said they didn't object for decades. Don't misrepresent what I said.

Mr WALKER: They did not object for decades. But the point that has been taken by the government a number of times is, 'What's all the fuss about? These go back decades.' The point is that going back decades is not what this state is about. We are talking about going forward, not going back. This back to the future stuff is exactly what is driving this union encouragement provision.

Part of the union encouragement provision with which the opposition is specifically concerned is the privacy issue. It is concerning that this bill reverts important changes that our government introduced with respect to private information of public sector employees. It has been said that at the committee inquiry the Privacy Commissioner said that none of this offended the provisions of the privacy legislation. That is a very different thing from saying that it does not interfere with the principles of privacy. Whether it is legally affected by the act or not is one thing, but there would hardly be a reasonable person who would say that it does not impinge upon your privacy if you turn up and get a government job and your details will be passed on to the union whether you consent or not. It is a pretty basic principle that if you are in favour of people's privacy you will not agree to that. You will allow them to say, 'Yes, I am happy for my details to go on,' or 'No, I am not.' That is what we will be putting in an amendment to the provisions tonight, because it seems a provision of basic fairness and basic respect to people's privacy for such a provision to be within the legislation.

The other issue of concern for us is in relation to local government and the transitional provisions in the bill. There are enterprise agreements which have already been entered into under the existing rules for local government and they have been certified as modern awards. There was some very good and I thought persuasive evidence from the CEO of the Moreton Bay Regional Council who came to the committee and explained the significantly lengthy process that that council had been through to get its new modern award in shape. It had, it appeared, done a significant amount of work in relation to collaboration with the workers, so much so that the provisions of the agreement were approved by some 92.2 per cent of the staff within that council. To seek to overturn agreements that have had that level of agreement by the workers and that level of effort by the employer is a retrospective provision which this House should not countenance. If the House is determined to proceed with these changes, it is fine for them to apply to agreements as they now come up. But to go back and to unwind agreements that are already there is unfair to both the employer and employees who have spent significant time reaching those agreements.

The workers in that case were happy because they voted in favour of the proposal. Councils were happy because it gave them more labour flexibility. Unions were at the negotiation table right throughout that process. Yet Labor seems determined to steamroll over those agreements and the local governments who have spent time and money in going through the proper processes. It leaves staff in those areas in a period of uncertainty. Many councils are affected. The Mareeba Shire Council

noted that they had recently entered into an employee based certified agreement and 76 per cent of the staff voted to adopt the agreement. On the Fraser Coast, 71 per cent of council staff and 82 per cent of Wide Bay Water staff voted in support of the respective enterprise agreements that were put forward. In terms of the overall modernisation process, the Local Government Association said—

Award modernisation for local government has never been about saving councils money or spending less on their workforce; it has been about providing councils with an optimism that they can better manage their workforce. Award modernisation has been about simplifying the system so councils can divert money spent on administering an overly complicated ... arrangement to actually employing people.

Even the Labor Party's policy platform—this is the printed one, not the one that is in letters to various people—states—

Labor will ensure that workers have the security of knowing that the terms and conditions of employment mutually agreed to by themselves and their employers will not be unilaterally extinguished or modified while in force.

That is exactly what this legislation would do and we should resist it.

The Cloncurry Shire Council and the Mornington Shire Council had their agreements certified yesterday and today, bringing the total number of agreements under the modern award to eight. Certification has occurred with the support of the workers, and the benefits of their agreements should not be denied to them by this legislation overturning them. I foreshadow amendments to the bill to ensure that the existing agreements stand and support the local arrangements that have been entered into.

The next item of objection in the bill is the issue of legal representation at the commission. The bill reverses the right of automatic legal representation in the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission, and that is of concern I believe to many individuals and of course to the Queensland Law Society and the Bar Association. The view of the Bar Association is this—

... the premise of this statement of the objective is misplaced and that legislation seeking to effect that outcome is likely to have adverse effects on Queenslanders' access to justice.

What it was talking about is the frequently bandied about term that this should be a lay people's tribunal and that the only way to get a level playing field is to have a lay people's tribunal and to have no lawyers within it. That sounds okay on the surface, but as we all know many of the participants in those tribunal hearings may not be represented by lawyers but by skilled and experienced advocates of many years standing. It means that if an individual is pitted against an organisation with that ability, or another organisation is pitted against an organisation with that ability, the apparent level playing field is not that at all. Ironic as it may seem, to allow each party to engage a lawyer is the best way of levelling the playing field. I support what the Bar Association says, what the Law Society says, and I am sure what those individuals who are not represented by major groups would want to say, that is, their access to this tribunal and their ability to seek legal representation in what is a difficult area should be guaranteed. It is all very well to have the fairytale feeling of, 'We'll all sit down and talk about it,' but there are significant rights at risk here, and people have the right to engage a lawyer and to be represented by a lawyer in that tribunal.

The effect on the economy of this legislation is also of concern to the opposition. The issue of effectively rolling back the award modernisation process for local governments, in particular, puts incredible pressures on their budgets at a time when they are already feeling considerable pain. The LGAQ says in its submission to the committee—

... unless Councils can be confident of greater flexibility and efficiency in managing their workforce, and increasing the competitiveness of their workforce. Without the changes, LGAQ has calculated this further decrease could be in the vicinity of 1500 jobs over the next couple of years.

That is a significant impact upon employment in this state. There is no ability here for there to be a win under the awards and not a consequent loss if wages go up unreasonably to the workforce more generally, because councils have only a limited amount of money. That is what they are saying to us. I urge members of the House to take that seriously. In the case of local governments, if the reintroduction of these provisions—going backwards in time—sends their costs up then it is either cuts in jobs or services or an increase in rates or a combination of all of those that we will be voting for if this legislation is supported. There is no evidence to suggest that the award modernisation process undertaken by the former government had any disadvantage to workers. As I said, in Moreton Bay 92.2 per cent of the council workforce voted for their new agreement and that was made under the modern award.

The union encouragement provisions, which I have spoken about, and the union right of entry provisions, in particular, are objectionable. Page 6 of the explanatory notes state—

While the removal of notice requirements for right of entry is not consistent with the FW Act—

that is the Commonwealth Fair Work Act—

it should be noted that the FW Act responds to particular needs of the private sector.

So it was good enough to have 24 hours right of entry notification in Julia Gillard's Fair Work Act, but the same is now not to be applied for the public sector here in Queensland. In fact, the provisions of the Fair Work Act govern the Victorian public sector because its state industrial relations jurisdiction was referred to the Commonwealth in the 1990s. So why is it vital that union bosses have unfettered access to public sector workplaces? It is not about safety; it is about an industrial right for the public sector unions. It is clear that there has been a significant decline in union membership in recent years. The member for Mount Coot-tha was able to point his finger at that in his thesis. These union encouragement provisions and right-of-access provisions are all about building up union membership once again.

There are other significant provisions of the legislation which are contained in the recent amendments which the Treasurer has tabled, largely to deal with doctors within the Public Service, and other members of the opposition will be speaking in relation to those matters as the debate continues.

The opposition, as I said, to this legislation has to be seen within a culture that is rapidly becoming apparent to the people of Queensland of undue union influence on this government. The union encouragement provisions, in our view, relate directly to that, and they go back to the things that the people of Queensland have seen since this government has come into office—Mr Bullock from the United Voice union claiming some MPs as United Voice MPs; the charter letters within which nine ministers have orders directly relating to union demands on this government; and union meetings which, as we saw in the recently released diary, occurred 71 times over the last three months. We have a police minister who is a member of the CFMEU who at the moment is supervising an investigation of members of that union. We know that she never, ever meddles in operational matters but she does have the—

Mrs MILLER: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. I find those comments personally offensive. They are wrong and I ask for them to be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): Order! Member for Mansfield, I ask you to withdraw unconditionally.

Mr WALKER: I withdraw, Mr Deputy Speaker. It has been a catchcry of this side of the House that the government does not have a plan. One thing that I think is becoming clear is that, in fact, it does have a plan. I think I have been able to interpret what that plan is. I call it progressive regression. It is progressively going back to the past. I think we know exactly where this government wants to take Queensland to the hour, the day and the time. It is to 23 March 2012 at midnight, just before the election in 2012. That is where this government wants to take Queensland back to. There is no forward looking. Everything is about revenge and turning back to that time. There is no plan for the future. It is a plan to go backwards. This bill is the epitome of that, and the opposition will be opposing it.

 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (3.56 pm): As the chair of the Finance and Administration Committee, I rise to speak in support of the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. I am one of those unionists whom the well-known LNP stalwart Des Houghton referred to in the *Courier-Mail* recently when he was slamming the bill before us that is going to restore fairness to Queensland workers. 'The revised IR laws are in the hands of a parliamentary committee stacked with unionists,' he thundered. I am not sure exactly what he thinks a unionist is, but it is obviously a very, very bad person. I do know he is right about one thing, and that is that our committee, which has even numbers in terms of government and non-government members, is stacked with union members. As well as my colleagues the member for Barron River and the member for Stretton, the member for Coomera, we were delighted to hear during the process of the inquiry, is also a member of the union so we can call him 'comrade' as well. Unfortunately, that union membership did not lead him to agree with us on the amendments that we are considering. If being a unionist means that I am a proud member of a union and that I will always defend the rights of workers in this state to be treated with fairness and dignity in their workplace, then I am very proud to

wear that label. I am a very proud member of the National Union of Workers, and I am passionate about defending the rights of every person in this state to have just and fair employment conditions, which is exactly what this bill is about in relation to public sector workers.

The bill was introduced by the Treasurer and Minister for Industrial Relations on 7 May 2015, fulfilling an election commitment of the Palaszczuk government to restore fairness for government workers by reinstating employment conditions for government workers that were lost as a result of changes to the IR Act, re-establishing the independence of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission when determining wage cases, returning the commission to its position as a layperson's tribunal where employees and union advocates operate on a level playing field with employers, and restoring the ability of industrial organisations and their representatives to freely organise and access members so as to enhance and protect their industrial interests.

Government members and non-government members are possibly always going to be at polar ends of the spectrum in terms of their ideological views on an industrial relations bill, and that is exactly what happened on our committee. We were able to agree on only two relatively minor amendments, and I have to say we were all pretty surprised that we were even able to identify those. However, the committee did work diligently to examine the submissions we received—over 1,000 of them—and the evidence presented to us by the numerous witnesses who appeared before us. I thank all of the witnesses who either wrote or spoke to us in person for the time and effort they took to inform us of their views. It was greatly appreciated.

There are so many things I want to say about this bill. It has been a very long time coming, and I know there are people all over Queensland anxiously awaiting the outcome of the debate today. People will hold the LNP to account for the way they vote today—those people who own the over 10,000 signatures to the 'bring on the vote' petition that was signed in the last couple of weeks to exhort us all to respect Queensland workers, and many, many others.

I referred just before to the two minor recommendations on which committee members were able to reach agreement, and I thank the Treasurer for his response on those. What I want to talk about now are not just the things which we totally disagreed on but also the things which we completely disagreed with either the non-government members' interpretation of the evidence that was presented to the inquiry or in some cases their lack of acceptance of the evidence that was put before them on the basis it seems that it did not fit the way their party wishes to position this debate.

We have heard a lot of talk this week about the integrity of the committee process and about how all of our decisions should be based on evidence and how responsible we are to evaluate that evidence and present the House with a balanced viewpoint. We had a big lecture on it in the last sitting and we had another one yesterday but, given what has been happening around this bill, I find those lectures to be the ultimate in hypocrisy. We know that the LNP members are going to talk about the matter of union encouragement, and that has already been covered by the member for Mansfield. It is almost certain they will not mention that in the days of Joh Bjelke-Petersen—that hero of many sitting on the other side of the House—it was actually compulsory to join a union. It is almost certain they will not mention the extent to which departmental officers went to ensure the union encouragement provisions did not breach the Information Privacy Act. Union encouragement guidelines had been in place for many years before the LNP government came to government and prior to the Information Privacy Act being introduced in 2009. But upon the introduction of that act, departmental officers worked with the Public Sector Industrial and Employee Relations team—the central public sector industrial relations team providing support to all government agencies and government owned corporations on IR issues—to make sure the union encouragement guidelines complied with the Information Privacy Act. They got crown law advice in 2009 and the advice of senior counsel in 2011 that said there was no breach.

Did the non-government members of our committee accept this evidence? No, they did not. Did they accept the advice of the Privacy Commissioner that the guidelines signify no breach of the Information Privacy Act, that it was not necessary for the department to have consulted her, and that the information to be provided to unions—that is, name, position and location of their workplace, and let us be very clear on that because that is what the details are—are details that are already in the public domain through other means like the public gazetting of new employees? So the unions—or anyone else for that matter, including the person who does the footy tipping competition in an office—can obtain those details through publicly available means. Did they accept that these are details that neither touch upon the personal affairs of the individuals concerned nor comprise information of a private, intimate or sensitive character? No, they did not.

In fact, the non-government members of our committee were so incensed that they were not getting the outcome they wanted from the public hearing with the Privacy Commissioner that they stormed out yelling before the hearing was even over, and it was quite unbecoming. Did they accept the legal advice passed on to us by the Together union from one of the most respected barristers in this state, Mr Michael Amerena, and from Maurice Blackburn, that the union encouragement provision did not breach the Information Privacy Act? No, they did not.

Did they acknowledge clause 31, which clearly states that the employee can indicate in writing if they do not wish to have their details provided to the union? No, they did not. When they raised concerns about how the unions safeguard the employee information with which they are provided and whether they had consulted the Privacy Commissioner about storage and management, and when the Privacy Commissioner confirmed that she has no jurisdiction over unions but they are bound by national privacy regulations, and when they were referred to comprehensive privacy statements of the unions which referenced compliance with strict national privacy regulations, did that stop them from insinuating that unions were dodgy in the way they handle employee details anyway? No, it did not.

Why do the LNP members not accept all of this evidence? Is it because they really care about the privacy of government workers in this state? No, it is because it did not suit their story. And what is the record of these LNP people who hold themselves up as the stewards of privacy in this state? I think we really need to talk about that. The LNP introduced workers compensation legislation in 2013—and that is the legislation that did not even go to committee after the first reading—which introduced a new obligation on prospective employees to disclose, where requested by a prospective employer to do so, any pre-existing injury or medical condition, while at the same time giving prospective employers the authority to request from the Workers' Compensation Regulator a copy of a prospective employee's claims history summary. We are talking here about the legislation that has led to over 22,000 employers accessing the personal records of their prospective employees over the last two years. Did the LNP members worry about privacy issues then? Did they consult the Acting Privacy Commissioner about the issue at all or invite her to submit or attend any of the many hearings they held? No, they did not. Did they get legal advice about whether what they were doing breached the Information Privacy Act or the Anti-Discrimination Act? No, they did not.

In fact when at the time the member for Mulgrave, now the Treasurer and Minister for Industrial Relations, raised concerns that the bill did not place any requirement on the employer to ensure they do not use this information when deciding whether or not to engage the worker, the then attorney-general stated—

Allowing access to claims histories from consenting prospective employees will ensure employers ... are not placed in positions to which they are not suited and in which they can carry the risk of re-injury or aggravation of pre-existing injury. The government is satisfied that the balance is appropriate and does not breach privacy legislation.

Does that make us all feel really good about what the LNP thinks of privacy principles? In fact, the LNP holds such little regard for the Information Privacy Act—the act which says there will be a Privacy Commissioner—that it did not even formally appoint a Privacy Commissioner in the entire three years it was in government. There was either no Privacy Commissioner in that period or an Acting Privacy Commissioner in all that time. The former attorney-general certainly had enough time to get his dodgy boot camp tender up, but he never really put much of a priority on the importance of privacy so the Privacy Commissioner role just never got sorted. That is how much they care about privacy—unless it happens to fit their political agenda. While we are on privacy, I am not even going to start on the way the member for Southern Downs used the private details of children to further his political agenda when the media spotlight was on the member for Cook. For the LNP to lecture us on privacy or to try to take the high moral ground is beyond comprehension.

I know one of the other things those opposite are also going to say—and in fact they already have said this—is that unions were privy to the details of this bill far earlier than anyone else. Despite the fact that there was absolutely no evidence at all that this was the case, this is still what they say because it fits their story. So we have selective listening again. It is a bit like their inference—and the member for Mansfield just made it again—after having gone through the ministerial diaries that they are trying to say that cabinet has been busily meeting only with unions since we have been in government. They went through the ministerial diaries and they claimed there had been 70 or 71 meetings with unions—shock and horror—but the same exercise would have shown them that over that same period cabinet met with around 250 businesses or business leaders. But that would not have fit their story, despite the fact that they had that information.

Then there has been talk of the fact that councils were not consulted. I do appreciate the position of councils. I accept what the department told us—that they have always consulted with councils through the LGAQ and their industrial relations working team that has members from councils across the state and that there was no deliberate attempt on the part of the department to exclude them. This was their established protocol. It has helped to learn some lessons for the future. It is excellent that the submissions from the councils were very similar to the LGAQ's and that they are clearly so in tune with their members' views. But then I thought, with the LNP being in such high dudgeon on behalf of the councils, that we should go and check whether it consulted councils when it went through their IR bills. So I did, and what do you think I found, Mr Deputy Speaker? Do you think any individual councils were consulted in its IR bills? What do you think? No, they were not.

I do know that when the workers compensation bill was introduced, the LNP went out of its way to make sure unions were not given too much of a say. I think the secretary of the Nurses Union, the largest union in the state, with 53,000 nurses—yes, they are the ones who look after us in the hospitals, the nursing homes and the community health centres—was given 90 seconds to state her case before that committee. That brings me to another point. Who do they think these union people, unionists or union thugs actually are? They speak of them as if they are some kind of separate human grouping. I will tell members opposite who they are. They are the person next door, the president of the local P&C, the lady you run into at the fruit shop, the mums and dads who take their kids to sport on the weekends, the nurses, the ambos, the firies, the teachers, the doctors, the cleaners—they are everyday people whose lives have been deeply impacted.

On 31 January the Palaszczuk government came to power on the back of the LNP losing 36 seats after only one term in government, and that did not happen by accident. There was nothing in that Borbidge-Sheldon review that any of us on this side could not have told them over a cup of coffee. There was nothing in that report that every second person on the street could not have told them. I can tell them that there was nothing in that report that any public servant could not have told them. Although we did not know it at the time, what happened to public servants in this state when Campbell Newman and the LNP came to power was symptomatic of what was about to happen to just about every employee group, interest group or group of any kind over the next three years at the hands of that government. What happened to public servants in that time was immoral. After coming to power, promising them that they had nothing to fear, Campbell Newman systematically set about sacking 14,000 public servants. While he was doing so, he painted them as the B team who did not really do a proper job anyway and who were pretty lazy. For the people who had been sacked, that was a travesty, but those who would remain could only stay on wondering if they were going to be next. It did not matter what their job was, no-one felt safe.

Then the LNP changed the industrial relations laws for public sector workers. If public sector workers did not know before then what the LNP government really thought of them, they certainly knew afterwards. As the QCU said in its submission to our committee so eloquently, 'If you really want to make your employees hate you, unilaterally take away provisions which they had previously accepted lower wage offers to obtain.' We are talking about things like employment security, contracting out, the requirement to consult on organisational change, workload management, access to training, provisions about unfair dismissal, right of entry and the big one for those opposite, union encouragement—and we have already talked about that.

These are good, hardworking people who are doing exactly what their job title says: they are serving the public. I cannot tell honourable members how many of them I spoke to during the election campaign who were devastated by the way they were being treated. It was not just about the removal of their hard-fought conditions; it was about what that and the mass sackings meant, and that was a complete lack of respect by the LNP government for who they are and what they do. I cannot tell honourable members the number of conversations I had ending with the public servant saying to me, 'You know what, Di, I just don't think they're very nice people.' I stood beside the public hospital specialists outside Woolies in Bulimba early last year during the contract dispute when they were fighting to retain their rights and the safety of their patients. Some of those doctors had had Bill Glasson signs on their fences in the federal election and Griffith by-election campaigns. I can tell honourable members that my signs were on their fences during the last campaign. We were so mobbed by local residents, wanting to sign their petition that I could not even hear myself speaking. The groundswell against the former government from every member of our community about the way the LNP treated workers was absolutely clear. On the subject of the doctors, I am absolutely delighted that the Treasurer is putting forward the amendment to remove the high-income contract guarantees that have so compromised what they do.

There are so many other things I would like to say about this bill, but I know my colleagues are going to make many excellent points. Before I take my seat, I do wish to put on record my sincere appreciation to the research directorate staff who support our committee, Ms Deb Jeffrey and Dr Maggie Lillith, for their work. We did have tight time frames in which to conduct our work, and they worked tirelessly over long hours to help us complete our task. I acknowledge also the assistance of the research directorate staff in general who I know took an 'all hands on deck' approach to processing the enormous volume of paperwork that was involved in this inquiry.

By supporting this bill, we are recognising that public sector workers in this state deserve our respect. We are saying every worker deserves to be treated with fairness and dignity. I am so proud to be part of a government which sees that as an important priority. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (4.14 pm): Who would not want to join the CFMEU when they have a pastoral care team like the Minister for Police, who makes personal phone calls? She will probably be doing house calls next. I will come back to the union encouragement clause.

Mrs MILLER: I rise to a point of order. I find the words of the member for Maroochydore personally offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Ms SIMPSON: I withdraw. I will come back to the union encouragement clause. It would appear that Labor does not need to enshrine it in legislation when it has the actions of ministers to rely upon with its personal encouragement.

This bill is falsely named. Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill might give the warm fuzzies to the Labor members opposite, but there is nothing fair about a bill that has not had consultation—appropriate consultation—with the majority of those who are affected by it, who are employers, in this case local government. When we read the explanatory notes alone and see the long list of those who were consulted about this legislation, we see it is predominantly the union movement, and they are key stakeholders who should be consulted. However, we only see the Local Government Association of Queensland, LGAQ; we do not see the employers of those local governments represented directly with the opportunity to put forward their case as to why this legislation is bad legislation. What we see now is a government that has deliberately misled the people of Queensland in their platform 2014, and I will quote from it. Labor promised to consult with local government. On page 65 of their platform released last year they promised to 'promote and facilitate regular discussion, consultation and negotiation with local governments'. However, they failed to do that with regard to a bill that they are warning is going to cost jobs in their local communities. So there can be no fairness when there is no balance, and this bill has no balance. An industrial system has to have balance to be fair to all who are involved. We want to see a system that is fair for workers and fair for those who employ them because, without that balance, you do not have jobs.

What the local governments of Queensland have warned is that this bill could cost as many as 1,500 jobs. Labor's proposal is to entrench a clunky and antiquated system that puts the brakes on local governments being able to employ who they need to meet the changing requirements of their local communities—local governments who are predominantly funded by local ratepayers. There is no magic pudding; the money comes predominantly from local rates funded by local ratepayers. One mayor told me that, under the old antiquated agreements, wages for young, entry-level administration staff in his council can be as much as 20 to 30 per cent higher than those at the local bank or solicitor's office in the private sector doing predominantly the same level of tasks. It is great work if you can get it, but the financial reality is that councils such as his simply choose not to employ these young people because they cannot afford it.

Another senior councillor told me a similar story and said Labor's changes to go back to this antiquated system clearly would cost jobs. His council wanted to pay more for certain categories of skilled staff to meet the needs of their community but was unable to do so without restructuring because of Labor's reversion to an antiquated industrial system with multiple awards and this, he said, would make it next to impossible to do so. As another mayor said to me, existing employers were not under any threat from the award modernisation process started by the LNP government in his area. However, the Labor Party's commitment goes backwards with the reform process and it will have a direct financial impact on their ability to employ more people for the right jobs in the future—the right people for the right jobs.

The multitude of industrial agreements council by council with many different unions is cumbersome and costly to administer. I support workers having appropriate protection in awards—of course we do. I also support employers being able to support the needs of their business, in this case the business of local government.

This bill does not protect jobs, as it acts as a deterrent to councils to employ who they need to do the work. The no-contracting-out provisions as well are going to prevent local councils from being able to do the job as effectively as possible. As the member for Mansfield outlined, under the LNP we found that giving the power back to local communities—in this case through local schools—enabled them to employ local contractors to do local jobs, so they got more bang for their buck. They saw more work being done more efficiently by being able to contract out rather than the centralised system of QBuild. Taking away the power from local governments to best meet the needs of their local communities so that they are answerable to their local communities is in fact a backward step with cost implications.

What is the full extent of those cost implications? As I have outlined, councils and the LGAQ have estimated up to 1,500 jobs, but is there a figure in the explanatory notes about the no-contracting-out provisions? All that we see on page 4 of the explanatory notes is where it says that it has cost implications to government, but they do not define them. They do not want to know because they do not want to pay the bill. They think that taxpayers are some bottomless pit of money. 'Don't tell them. They don't need to know.' That is not transparency and that is not integrity, because the money that we are talking about belongs to taxpayers and ratepayers.

I want to come back to the issue of consultation, because not only is it in the formation of appropriate awards and workplace agreements but it is about the very fabric of how you run good government, which is recognising the need for appropriate consultation. The way this government has treated local government is appalling. We believe in empowering local governments as much as possible to make decisions as close as possible to the people who are affected by them, and this bill is taking away that right.

There has been much said about the union encouragement clauses. I note that the minister for police took offence before to my comments in regard to the pastoral care team approach, but quite frankly this is not about union encouragement; this is about union preference. It is being done by stealth and it is sneaky. There has been no protection provided to workers to ensure that their private details are not handed over to union officials against their will and without their consent. It is all very well to have a group of people sitting in a room and asking 'Who gives consent?', but the person who does not want to give their consent is blackmailed by the group approach. That is not fair and that is not right, and I have heard that complaint from workers in regard to how some of union delegates operate.

It is extraordinary that this government is requiring people in management positions of the public sector to encourage people to join unions. People have a right to join unions and they have a right not to join unions, but there should not be a situation where government is in fact the recruitment agency for the union movement. That is bizarre and should be considered something completely out of order in any modern award system. That starts to entrench not just an atmosphere of passive encouragement, but it is active discouragement for those who do not wish to join unions and that is just wrong. In today's era people should have the right to privacy and control over their own information so that it is not handed over to others. There are stealthy ways that people can be forced and bullied into feeling ostracised by the fact that they choose not to join a union. They should be allowed to join a union if they want to, but they should not be bullied. I have heard that there are ways this has occurred in the way that some members of the union movement operate.

With respect to this legislation we have also heard there are changes with regard to the fact that people will not be able to use legal practitioners to represent them in cases before the tribunal. As my colleague has outlined, that in fact does not create a level playing field at all. We know that there is a need for people to be appropriately represented, and the same is true in regard to appropriate legal representation. We do not support this—

(Time expired)

 **Mr CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (4.24 pm): I rise with much pride to speak in favour of the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015—or, as it seems to be known as tonight, the 'unionism bill'—currently before the House. I am one of the United Voice members to whom the member for Mansfield referred earlier, and I am quite proud to say that I am a

member of United Voice. Before I move into my speech can I just note that I will not take up the full 20 minutes tonight because I know there are a lot of members who want to have their five or 10 minutes, so I will cut my contribution short this evening.

Prior to becoming a member of parliament I was a proud union delegate representing paramedics covering two states between Victoria and Queensland—as some would probably say, a pesky unionist, communist and other words like that. I have heard them all. During this time and over two states, the public sector that I was involved in worked well. We had workers who were represented by delegates and work colleagues who could work with management and who could consult on changes that were happening in the workplace. I do not think it is too unrealistic to ask that, if something is going to happen, two parties from opposite sides of the fence could sit down and talk about it, get some feedback on how things could be changed, generate new ideas or perhaps even provide cost-saving ideas to the company or to the organisation that everyone works for because, at the end of the day, workers, union delegates and employers essentially are on the same page. Everyone wants a job to come back to the next day and they want to be able to generate an income—whether it is through profits in industry or through wages—and to be able to go home, feed the family and maybe have a holiday. But a couple of years ago in Queensland that changed when the incoming government at the time decided that they wanted to make a law against it, and that is the law that we are essentially debating tonight.

I want to acknowledge the Finance and Administration Committee, of which I am part, and the member for Bulimba for the work that has been done. We had a very short time frame for this—some 17 days—but we held a number of meetings. I will not go through them all, but we had meetings at various times of the day. Some were held by teleconference. The number of public hearings that were held is certainly testament to the members that we have on both sides of the House. As the chair pointed out before, I also acknowledge the work of the secretariat. The document that most members have is some 100 pages long. I think it is probably the thickest committee document that has hit the House so far in this parliament.

Jumping forward to a few key issues that we have seen so far, the first one relates to the issue of privacy. This was discussed at some length during committee meetings and in committee hearings; it was raised in conversations with representatives from unions, with union delegates, with employer organisations such as the LGAQ and also with the department. As a result, the LNP members on the committee asked that we interview the Privacy Commissioner. The government members agreed, and I believe it was on Thursday last week we had a public hearing with the Privacy Commissioner. The Privacy Commissioner was quite clear in what she said—

Clause 31 refers to the right to inspect and request information by an authorised industrial officer. I understand from reading the explanatory notes that it reinstates the version of the section that existed prior to the amendments in 2013, but the way the Information Privacy Act operates is that it is subject to other legislation. So this will override the privacy principles with respect to disclosure in these circumstances. Indeed, the privacy principles themselves talk about disclosure being permitted where it is authorised by law. Because this provision appears in the Industrial Relations Act, it is authorised by law and permitted under the Information Privacy Act.

So there is no issue with respect to privacy. The Privacy Commission is the entity we go to for advice on such matters. The Privacy Commissioner has ruled that there is no issue on privacy.

We spoke to other people at the hearings we conducted. I particularly want to focus not on the paid union secretaries, policy advisers, research advisers or representatives of LGAQ or other employment bodies but on the union delegates who appeared before the committee on Monday, 25 May. I want to highlight some of the comments they made, particularly in response to a question that I put to all of them about why they joined the union, when they joined the union and whether they were coerced in any way, shape or form. At the first hearing we heard from a doctor from Cairns with whom I happen to have done some work previously, Dr Sandy Donald, who is a public health delegate with Together Queensland.

Mrs Miller: A good man.

Mr CRAWFORD: He is a very good man—a very tall man also. Dr Donald stated—

I come from Cairns. Far North Queensland lost a number of existing senior doctors as a result of the previous government's attack on the health system, but we also had a number of newly qualified specialists who withdrew their job applications and moved interstate or went into private practice. Amongst the remaining specialists, trust is gone.

To have that comment come from a doctor is certainly quite alarming to me. When I asked Dr Donald whether he was pressured to join the union under previous encouragement policies, he responded—

There was certainly no pressure at all. There was union material in the workplace not particularly prominent, but visible, and I joined in fact because I had seen some things going wrong and wanted to be able to help my colleagues.

Having seen the work Dr Sandy Donald has done in Far North Queensland, I cannot dispute that he has gone on to look after his colleagues. I put the same question to Jo O'Shanesy, who is a child safety and disability services delegate for Together Queensland, and she responded—

No, I was not pressured ... I joined the union on my third stint in child safety in 2003. I did that when an organiser came around to the workplace and explained some of the entitlements and services that they could provide to me. At no point was I pressured; in fact, as a social worker it is incumbent on me that at all times I am looking at matters of social justice and fairness, and therefore it was only sensible for me to join the union.

This is an example of an organiser coming around and speaking to an employee about the benefits that they otherwise might not have seen or heard about. If that had not happened, we would not have had this wonderful person stepping forward and being a delegate in her workplace. Who would have thought being a delegate in your workplace would have you sitting in Parliament House in front of a parliamentary committee talking about something as significant as this?

Some other people we spoke to included Mr Michael Beak, an ambulance delegate and paramedic with United Voice, the same organisation and position I held; Mr Des Hardman, a health delegate for medical imaging with United Voice; and Ms Kate MacDonald, a local government employee and vice-president of The Services Union's local authorities industry committee. I will relate some of the comments made by these people. Mr Hardman said—

I was never obviously pressured to join a union and I was relieved to be asked.

Mr Beak said—

I cannot remember how I joined the union it was that long ago, so I suggest I was not pressured at all.

He then said—

Prior to the introduction of these laws, the then union LHMU and the Queensland Ambulance Service had an outstanding partnership. With the introduction of these changes, that disappeared.

He went on to say—

Now we are at a stage where we have unscrupulous managers putting the fear of God into employees ...

A statement like that from a paramedic in Queensland certainly concerns me. Ms MacDonald said—

Could I add that the Newman legislation grew delegates on its own. We went from having four delegates at Mackay; I have 13 now. It was not that we went out and said, 'Do you want to be a delegate?' They came to us, because of the unfairness of the current legislation. It was definitely not about us going on a sales pitch as a union to get members or to get an increase in our delegates; they were coming to us.

Finally, so my colleagues can take their turn to speak, I simply want to refer to the Borbidge-Sheldon review. There are a couple of sections that I think are pertinent to this debate. Section 1.6 states—

Undoubtedly, the leadership of the government contributed to the election loss including:

- the breaking of the promise that public servants had 'nothing to fear';
- the perception of arrogance arising from not listening to the people;
- pursuing the large scale privatisation of assets ...
- the alienation of key stakeholders in the decision making process;

Section 2.3 states—

The decision to sack 14,000 public servants and the manner in which the issue was handled poisoned relations with the people who were needed to embrace and implement the government's reform agenda and surprised and shocked voters.

We knew this at the time. We knew this during the election campaign. It surprises me to actually read it coming from the LNP.

There is one comment I would like to pull out in relation to unions. They refer to being 'undermined by a fierce and ruthless union led guerrilla war'. I cannot remember a time when I got painted up in camouflage! Another comment in the report that I think is pertinent is 'a belief that an early election would take the opposition by surprise and diminish the willingness of the union movement to campaign over the holiday period'. They got it wrong. On 31 January we showed it.

My final comment—this has nothing to do with this particular bill—is that I note section 12.1 states—

The party's social media is not in the space with where it can offset its opponent's diversity.

It is tweeting, not twittering.

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (4.38 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, and a very appropriately named bill it is. Before the 2012 election the Liberal National Party had one message for the public servants of Queensland: you have nothing to fear from an LNP government. Apparently public servants had nothing to fear when the former LNP government used its massive majority to remove a range of employment conditions that helped ensure a politically impartial Public Service. Apparently public servants had nothing to fear when the former LNP government axed employment security provisions and cut protections against the contracting out of government services, the slashing of organisational change provisions and the removal of termination, change and redundancy provisions.

According to the LNP before the 2012 election, the public servants of Queensland had nothing to fear when the former LNP government proceeded to use this new industrial relations system to sack 14,000 government workers. That is 14,000 public servants who suffered the ultimate betrayal under an LNP government from whom they were told they had nothing to fear. On 19 February this year the Premier wrote to the government workers of Queensland following the swearing-in of the Palaszczuk Labor government. In the letter addressed to our valued public servants, the Premier said the following of the Palaszczuk government's priorities for the Queensland public sector workforce—

From the outset, I want to assure you that the new government has the highest regard for the professionalism and independence of the Queensland Public Service.

That is why I have committed to restoring fairness for public servants and ensuring that the proper conditions exist for them to provide frank and fearless advice to government.

I assure the House that with this bill the Palaszczuk Labor government is delivering on the Premier's undertaking to the public servants of Queensland. The Leader of the Opposition was health minister when the former LNP government used its disgraceful industrial relations changes to sack 14,000 government workers including 4,800 health and hospital workers, 1,800 of them nurses and midwives. Unlike the Leader of the Opposition and the members opposite, who disgracefully slashed the working conditions of government workers, the Palaszczuk government will fulfil its commitment to restore fairness for public servants and will ensure that proper conditions exist for public servants to provide frank and fearless advice to government.

Recently the local impact of the former LNP government's disgraceful IR law changes in my electorate was highlighted for me when I met with delegates from the Australian Services Union representing members negotiating an enterprise bargaining agreement with the Ipswich City Council. These ASU delegates advised me of the impact of the former LNP government's IR changes on negotiations with the council and they told me of the ASU campaign to urge the Palaszczuk government to kick the goal and deliver the legislation that members working in local government need for a secure future without their working conditions being stripped away. They told me how the former LNP government's lowest common denominator approach to award modernisation when reducing 18 local government industry awards down to one led to a stripping of conditions for many local government workers.

I spoke to delegate Rik McGloin and his wife, Leisa McGloin, who both work for Ipswich City Council and live in my electorate in Eastern Heights with their two children. Rik and Leisa told me why they think the former LNP government's laws were unfair and why they wanted them to change. Rik said that local government workers need to retain the conditions they deserve to sustain job security for current generations and for generations to come and to get a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. Leisa said changes to the former LNP government's laws were very important for her planning her family's future. She said that no-one wants to lose these conditions, especially with rising cost-of-living pressures. She said that life would be very difficult without them. Another of my constituents from Yamanto said—

I have been with Ipswich City Council for 20 years, and some of the benefits that they are removing are why I have chosen to stay with the Council: long service, sick leave and job security. Without these, Council may struggle to retain or recruit experienced staff.

And the former LNP government would have had us believe that these local government public servants had nothing to fear from an LNP government! The Australian Services Union says negotiating its next agreement with Ipswich City Council under the current LNP IR laws would mean that for the first time in recent history the current and next generation of local government workers in Ipswich would be left with worse employment conditions than those they have inherited and enjoyed.

This bill will make a number of amendments to the Industrial Relations Act to achieve the Palaszczuk government's aim of restoring fairness to the working conditions of public servants. Importantly, this bill will also re-establish the independence of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission—an important cornerstone of our IR system that was undermined by the former LNP government. The bill will remove the December 2015 deadline to complete award modernisation and, importantly for the local government workers in my electorate negotiating an agreement with the Ipswich City Council, the bill's transitional arrangements address concerns of employee disadvantage surrounding modern awards and modern certified agreements made under the industrial relations arrangements under the former LNP government. This is a bill that delivers on the Palaszczuk government's commitment to restore fairness for public servants in Queensland. For their sake and for the sake of millions of Queenslanders who depend on their services, I am proud to support this bill.

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (4.44 pm): Today I rise to speak in support of the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. Under the previous government, the rights of workers to collectively bargain were removed. The rights of workers to have their fair representation under the enterprise bargaining agreement process were removed. There was no negotiation with the previous government at the table. It simply did not exist. I know this because I personally experienced it, having been part of the enterprise bargaining agreement representing ambulance officers in the last two EBAs in this state.

In 2008, as a representative for paramedics, we were able to collectively bargain across the table on a number of key points with the Queensland Ambulance Service and the government of the day. Unfortunately, no agreement was able to be reached at that time and the matter was correctly referred to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. In the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission matters of interests from both parties were able to be tabled, evidence based research provided, multiple witness statements tabled and workplace visits conducted. I again stress that the evidence based research on the benefits of advanced and critical care prehospital clinical care interventions were also able to be tabled. Those discussions were in depth, particularly around the benefits of upskilling thousands of Queensland paramedics which provided improved prehospital care. As a result and with the evidence provided, that showed that there were direct cost savings to the community and the government of the day because, as the evidence suggested, those modern clinical interventions such as prehospital thrombolysis reduced patient length of stay.

For the benefit of those not aware of the clinical knowledge required to reduce costs in the overall patient journey, if the correct, planned and practised prehospital clinical interventions are performed this has a direct cost saving in patient length of stay. When you take into account the thousands of dollars required to care for just a single ventilated patient in an intensive care unit for a single night, it all starts to make sense. The Queensland Industrial Relations Commission carefully listened to all evidence provided and I believe made a fair judgement in determining wage increases for Queensland Ambulance Service employees during that time. I know this because I was one of those critical care paramedics providing substantive, comprehensive and quantifiable evidence.

However, in 2012 we again went in to what we believed would be negotiations with the government of the day—dare I say it too loudly in this place—the Newman government, and the reality of that situation was in very stark contrast to the previous experience that I have described today. What was experienced from day one with representatives from the public sector commission representing the Queensland government of the day seated on one side of the table was simple: they would be dictating terms and making it very clear to us that there will be no negotiations with the Newman government. The sheer hatred displayed by even having to sit at the table with some representatives from the union was almost tangible. However, as they passed a single piece of paper around dictating terms, they did so with glee and a seemingly arrogant approach to the entire meeting. This was it, and I was the first one to receive it. My jaw hit the ground—a 2.2 per cent wage offer provided, with clauses inserted, paramedics agreed to remove existing roster arrangements, remove consultation and remove existing meal arrangements for the thousands of paramedics in Queensland. It was nothing more than an insult to every paramedic in this state. It is a shame that the member for Gaven is not sitting in the chamber today and someone should probably—

Miss BARTON: I rise to a point of order. I appreciate that the member is a new member, but it is a convention of this House that you do not reflect on the absence of a member and I would ask that he withdraw the statement.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, I take the point of order. Will you withdraw?

Mr HARPER: I will withdraw that statement, but can I refer to the—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: No.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will withdraw and resume his speech.

Mr HARPER: Okay. For a particular—

Miss BARTON: I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Excuse me, but the member will withdraw.

Mr HARPER: I withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay. I call the member for Thuringowa.

Mr HARPER: Yes. Members in this place have supported other work through their associations and in particular the EMSPA, of which a member in this place said in his maiden speech that he was the founding member. My point is that we in this House were told that that association represents thousands of Queensland paramedics. Yet not one single submission was tabled by that association—an association that represents thousands of paramedics. The hypocrisy! This hearing was supposed to be that association's chance to come along, with 1,040 other people, associations, individuals and unions. Thank goodness for United Voice, which ensured that paramedics were represented at the hearing. Representatives of United Voice bothered to show up. They put in a submission. Unfortunately, EMSPA did not get the chance to be represented. I do not know why. Here was its chance to be represented by its purported members on such an important and relevant industrial relations bill—a bill that restores fairness and ensures that we all get a fair share in negotiations.

I inform the House that out of those 1,040 submissions seeking the restoration of fairness in the industrial relations legislation, the submissions that were received were from people, unions or associations such as the Queensland Law Society, the Together union, the Fraser Coast Regional Council, the Australian Industry Group, the Local Government Association of Australia, the Australian Salaried Medical Officers' Federation Queensland, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland, the Australian Sugar Milling Council, the Queensland Community Services Employers Association, and United Voice. It is organisations like those—and there are many in Queensland—that want change to the industrial relations system in Queensland. Representatives of those organisations bothered to turn up and represent a good cross-section of the Queensland community and Queensland industries.

This process demonstrated clearly the out-of-touch and arrogant approach of the Newman government, which had just awarded itself a 22 per cent pay rise in stark contrast to its 2.2 per cent wage offer to the many thousands of workers in this state. That was disgraceful behaviour, out there for all to see. The good people of Queensland saw that behaviour and other concerning behaviour.

The Newman government would go on to ensure that the contracting out of services would be introduced to bring in some of the cheapest labour hire firms into various industries. That caused more problems than the LNP government thought it would. I use the outsourcing of patient transport services as an example. The criteria required for people to work in that industry were indeed worrying. All the applicants for such positions were required to have was the ability to speak English, a driver's licence and a first-aid certificate. Those qualifications are in stark contrast to the 400-plus staff who were employed by the Queensland Ambulance Service patient transport service, who were trained staff with a much higher level of training than a first-aid certificate. Their jobs were put at risk. With the introduction of such private services, I believe that patient safety could be put at risk. The people of Queensland deserve better. I believe that the restoration of collective bargaining will restore fairness and equity to all workers in this great state. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (4.53 pm): It is a great pleasure to rise today to speak to the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. At the outset, I place on the record my great appreciation to the Finance and Administration Committee secretariat for the amazing work that it has done. I am sure that all members of this House would agree that when a secretariat has to respond to more than 1,000 submissions on a significant piece of

legislation within 17 working days so that we were able to put together and table a report, an amazing job has been done. I think it is particularly worth acknowledging that the research director of the Finance and Administration Committee celebrated her birthday on the Saturday. Instead of spending that day with her family, she was here at Parliament House working on various iterations of the draft report so that members of the committee were able to make changes or make notes. I would like to not only wish Deb a happy birthday for last Saturday—and having done so on the record—but also thank her and the other committee staff for the work that they did in assisting the committee in putting together this report.

To that end, I would also like to acknowledge my fellow members of the committee—the chair, the member for Bulimba; the deputy chair, the member for Coomera; my good friend and colleague the member for Condamine; and the members for Stretton and Barron River. I think we would all agree that this was a report that certainly engendered a fair amount of heated debate and discussion among the committee members. But at all times I think we would agree we were all incredibly respectful of the role that we had to play as committee members. Although, as I say, we did not agree, we worked very hard to make sure that we could table a report. I know that the chair of the committee, the member for Bulimba, has indeed reflected on her point of view that it is almost a badge of honour that our committee, having had a number of considerations of bills where we have not been able to reach a conclusion about whether the bill should be passed, has still been able to put together a document of which we are proud and which is truly representative of the points of view of the committee.

I would also like to acknowledge those who took the time to make submissions to the committee. As I said, more than 1,000 submissions were made in relation to this bill. I would like to thank those who took the time to make submissions and thank those who appeared at departmental briefings and public hearings. I would also like to acknowledge those residents of my electorate who took the time to personally contact me about the bill.

This bill contains a range of provisions and I do not intend to canvass all of them today. I note that a number of members in this House wish to make a contribution to the debate on this bill. I am sure that the various aspects of the bill will be canvassed by those members. But I want to touch on a few provisions of the bill. I am sure that it will come as no surprise to my colleagues on the committee that those provisions were the ones on which we were not able to reach agreement. But on those where we were able to reach agreement, I would encourage members of the House to look at the report that the committee has tabled.

The first point that I want to address was the urgency with which the bill was dealt with. I think that we would all agree that 17 working days was an insufficient time for the Finance and Administration Committee to conduct an inquiry and prepare a report. I think it is testament not only to the secretariat but also to the dedication of the committee members that we were able to do that. Certainly, I think it is worth noting that, as a result of the 17-working days time frame that was provided to the committee to consider this bill, it resulted in the secretariat having to do a significant amount of overtime and other committee staff joining the secretariat, albeit temporarily, to make sure that the work that needed to be done could be done. I refer particularly to the number of submissions that were received in relation to this bill. As I am sure all members of this House would be aware, each of those submissions had to be read, checked and made sure that it was okay before it could be uploaded to the web page. So there was an incredibly significant workload.

I know that all members on this side of the House are struggling to understand why the bill is being rammed through the House. If this government were genuine about wanting to be a government of consensus, if this government were genuine about wanting to listen to the people of Queensland, then why is it that it feels the need to ram this bill through the House? One can only surmise that the government is providing payback to the unions for the support and the cash that they offered during the election campaign.

It is an absolute disgrace that the LGAQ was effectively gagged from being able to consult its members. This situation was highlighted by the urgency that we saw in the consideration of the bill. Whilst I am talking about that, in the same vein I want to touch on consultation. I referred to the fact that the LGAQ was effectively gagged. The response from the government was, 'The LGAQ is the overarching body that is representative of councils in Queensland.' If that is the case, why was it that, in addition to the Queensland Council of Unions being consulted—which is the overarching body of unions in Queensland—we saw 11 or 12 other unions being consulted?

The short and truncated time frame had a significant impact on the ability of local government authorities affected by the provisions of this bill to make submissions to the committee. It was noted by the Mareeba Shire Council, if I am not mistaken. The council made a point of contacting the committee to say that the time frame was too short for them. They did not have a full council meeting in the time that we had available for them to make submissions so it was simply not possible for them to make submissions on this particular bill. In addition to the Local Government Association of Queensland being gagged, we also saw that the Queensland Law Society and the Queensland Bar Association, which are relevant stakeholders for a number of the provisions in this amendment bill, were only given advice of the introduction of the bill at 4.30 the afternoon before the Treasurer introduced it.

As I said, there are a couple of issues I want to canvass in my contribution. The first is fiscal strategy. One of the reasons that the Newman government felt that fiscal strategy and fiscal position should be a relevant consideration when a matter is before the QIRC was that we believed that it is in the public interest. The LNP remains of that view. It is particularly so because the employers that we are talking about are public entities. We are talking about taxpayer dollars. We are talking about people who work to represent either the people of Queensland, because they work in the state public sector, or their local communities where they work for local governments. I am sure that all members on this side of the House would agree that, where we are talking about taxpayer funds and ratepayer dollars, it is entirely appropriate that we consider the fiscal position and the fiscal strategy of the entity, particularly for local governments that have limited resources.

I note that last night the member for Mount Isa was talking about how some of the local councils in his area are struggling. I know that the member for Condamine, the member for Gregory, the member for Warrego and other members who represent Central and Western Queensland are incredibly vocal about just how difficult it is for local governments whose source of revenue is rates and that there are people in their area who simply cannot afford to pay their rates because of the circumstances they are in as a result of the drought. That is why it is so important that fiscal strategy be an important element of any matter before the QIRC.

I want to briefly touch on the contracting out provisions. One of the things that we genuinely believe in is that local government authorities should be free to make decisions for themselves. They are independent entities that are separate from the state government; albeit, I acknowledge, created by a statute of state government. They are separate entities. It is not for us, as one arm of government, to say to the Gold Coast City Council or the Torres Strait Island Regional Council or any of the regional councils right across Queensland how they can and cannot do business and how they can and cannot provide services to their communities. It is for that organisation to determine how they provide services to their communities. That is why I cannot support the removal of the contracting out provisions.

Whilst I am talking about economic factors and how much things are going to cost, I think it is important to highlight that the Local Government Association of Queensland, in its submission to the committee, said that the provisions that we are looking at here in the bill will have a significant impact on jobs in Queensland, because it will see approximately 1,500 jobs lost across Queensland. I am incredibly aggrieved by the fact that the LGAQ would consider that we might lose 1,500 jobs across Queensland as a result of this particular amendment bill. That is why I am proud to be a member of this LNP team. We will stand up for the jobs of those workers so that we do not see 1,500 jobs lost in the local government sector. I think members will find that where it will hit hardest is in rural and regional Queensland. This is testament to the fact that it is the LNP that stands up for rural and regional Queensland, whether it is talking about the fiscal position and the fiscal strategy of local government authorities or whether it is talking about jobs that would be lost.

I also want to briefly touch on the dispute resolution clause. The non-government members of the committee accept that not every circumstance is going to be the same and that flexibility is required. We did suggest that perhaps the minister could consider a standard draft clause that could be available to parties if they wish to use it, a little bit like organisations who go to the Department of Fair Trading website for a draft constitution, a base model that is there for organisations to use if they wish, but ultimately they would have the power to not use it or the power to amend it. That is something that I would hope that the Treasurer and the Minister for Industrial Relations might consider.

The shadow Attorney-General and the member for Mansfield raised the representation of parties. I know it is never very popular for people to be talking about giving lawyers and barristers a greater opportunity to get in there and arbitrate matters and be advocates. I think everyone tends to be fairly

sceptical of how many six-minute increments something is going to be. But at the end of the day there is a role for legally qualified people to represent employees who are taking a matter to the QIRC. It was noted, either by the Queensland Law Society or the Bar Association, that union membership across Australia is at approximately 40 per cent, which means that 60 per cent of employees across Australia do not have access to industrial support through their union. I am incredibly concerned that a party such as a local government authority or even, indeed, the state government when a matter is arbitrated before the QIRC is significantly better placed because of the advocates that they have who are well experienced in this field. That is why I think we need to consider the option of having legal representation for parties. I note that an application can be made. However, that requires the consent of the other party. The Queensland Law Society and the Queensland Bar Association raised that in some circumstances it could actually be used as a tactic to prevent the person, who is effectively a layperson, being able to advocate strongly for themselves. I think all members of this House would agree that having the ability to have legal representation alongside them or even, indeed, a McKenzie friend so to speak, would be of great benefit to employees who are taking matters to the commission, seeking to advocate for themselves but simply perhaps do not have the knowledge or the experience to do so. The member for Mansfield is seeking to move an amendment in relation to this and I am sure that he will speak to that, but I would urge members of the government to consider whether or not it is really in the best interests of unrepresented employees to not have advocacy alongside them.

I want to touch on three other issues: the right of entry, the transitional arrangements and the privacy concerns. I will quickly touch on the transitional arrangements. As I am sure members of this House would be aware, there are currently 10 certified agreements, some of which have been voted on incredibly recently. Some have had incredibly significant levels of support. The Moreton Bay Regional Council, for example, recently saw a 92 per cent or 94 per cent vote of yes for its certified agreement. The Torres Strait Island Regional Council voted 98 per cent in favour of its certified agreement, an agreement that it has been trying to reach since 2008. I would urge the minister to consider what options may be open to consider the transitional arrangements or even allowing those certified agreements to stand because it will be a significant impost for those entities that already have certified agreements in place to go back to the table to begin their negotiations again. That not only has impacts on the employer, but it obviously has significant impacts on the employee, particularly in areas like the Torres Strait where, as I say, it has taken them since 2008 to negotiate their certified agreement.

With regard to the right of entry, I am sure that all members of this House would agree that in exigent circumstances it is entirely appropriate that a workplace health and safety representative or a union representative should be able to enter a workplace to draw immediate attention to a particularly dangerous set of circumstances. The reason the changes were brought in was that that was being abused. I note that this is inconsistent with the Fair Work Act, which was brought in by former prime minister Julia Gillard when the Labor Party was in power. We need to see courtesy and respect on both sides; it needs to come not only from the employer but also from the union. As I say, I have grave concerns about an unfettered right of entry.

In the time that I have remaining, the last thing that I want to touch on is the impact on privacy. At the outset, I respond to what the chair of the committee, the member for Bulimba, said about the public briefing that we had with the Acting Privacy Commissioner. I openly admit that I was one of the people who advocated for that briefing to happen. It should be noted that a private meeting was to be held from 11 to 11.15 and from 11.15 to 12 o'clock there was to be a public briefing. The reason that the public briefing was finishing at 12 was that I had an obligation to hand out certificates to participants of the Gold Coast youth parliament, which is run by this House, and the member for Bulimba knew that. The member for Bulimba was well aware that I needed to leave the teleconference at 12 o'clock. The public hearing was supposed to start at 11.15, but it did not actually start until 11.35. Non-government members of the committee had very courteously explained that they had other things to do at 12 o'clock as we had set our diaries according to the public schedule. Therefore, the public hearing ended because it was supposed to end at 12 o'clock.

Personally, I think that the union encouragement provisions and the provisions that allow for the unfettered distribution of public servants' information to unions is an egregious breach of public servants' right to privacy and it is an egregious breach of their right to association. A right to association is equally a right to not associate if you do not want to. When in opposition, Labor Party members consistently said that they stood for rights and freedoms of association and the freedom of

political speech. However, at the end of the day, they are simply saying that people do not have a right to not associate. The CFMEU said that it thought that it was a vulgar stretch to suggest that the right to associate is equally the right to not associate.

I have no issue if public servants want to join a union. That is their right. I welcome a public servant making an informed judgement about what they want to do with their money and with their time. However, they should be able to make that decision for themselves. It should be about opting in. At the end of the day, this is an egregious breach of public servants' privacy. It is an egregious breach of their right to freedom of association. It is egregious when we consider that the contempt that has been shown by this government to public servants is something that they are so incredibly proud of. Public servants have contacted my office to express their absolute discontent at the fact that their privacy was being thrown away and that the government had no concern whatsoever for their private information. Public servants from my electorate have contacted me to say that they think that this is absolutely disgraceful. Union members have contacted me to tell me that they think this is absolutely disgraceful. If the government believes in the right to association and in the rights and freedoms of political speech, conversely it should respect public servants and it should agree with their right to not associate.

(Time expired)

 **Ms GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (5.13 pm): Today I am more than happy to rise to speak in support of the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. WorkChoices may have been dead and buried federally, although they are trying to resurrect it again, but it was alive and well in Queensland. When the incompetent and inexperienced former minister for industrial relations made changes to the Industrial Relations Act, it was very clear very quickly that it was ideologically driven by an almost pathological hatred for unions and was based on vengeance and broken promises by guaranteeing one thing and doing another. The attacks on our hardworking public sector were actually breathtaking when one looks at what was passed by their industrial relations bill.

It is good to see that finally we have a common-sense approach that is based largely upon a government employee sector. In this state, the IR bill largely covers public sector, local government and government workers and there are very few employers compared to what is covered by the federal industrial relations law. This bill is a commitment that we took to the people of Queensland to reverse the unworkable legislation that the former government introduced. Therefore, it is breathtaking in the extreme to hear their concerns in relation to the possibility that something might happen in a sector, such as the loss of jobs, because when they changed the law job security was basically thrown out of the window and 24,000 of our hardworking public servants lost their jobs. It is no wonder that Queenslanders are more trusting of us on this side of the House than they are of those opposite.

Our system of industrial relations is based largely on a government sector that takes a cooperative approach to industrial relations, rather than a combative approach such as that of those opposite. It recognises that workers know best about their work and their workplaces, and we want to tap into that knowledge and their experiences. It recognises that these are union agreements. As much as those opposite hate it, these are union agreements in a highly unionised workforce. The QNU is over 95 per cent unionised and the QTU is also over 95 per cent unionised, yet we know what was taken away by the Industrial Relations Act brought in by the incompetent former industrial relations minister.

We are going to reinstate the independence of the commission. Clearly, not one of them has ever set foot in the commission, which has always been independent and has always been free to take into account whatever information is presented to it when dealing with wages and conditions. The commission can take account of any information that is sent to it. To mandate or somehow enforce it to place particular emphasis on one part of the decision-making process that it implements shows their lack of information when bringing in their laws. Labor will bring back the independent decision-making capability of the commission. This is an experienced group of commissioners who are professional and well educated. The commissioners know their trade and they have always served Queensland well.

We hear a lot about union encouragement provisions. I decided to print out the union encouragement clause, because so much misinformation is being given about what is included in a union encouragement clause. What comes through very clearly is that not one of them has read it, has seen it or would even know what is in it. When it comes to privacy—what was the word? Gregarious? Whatever the word was, it was a beautiful word.

Mr Minnikin: Egregious.

Ms GRACE: Egregious. I can tell the House what is egregious when it comes to privacy provisions. I was at the QNU for the past three years, before I was elected back into this House. I remember an incident where the then health minister, now the Leader of the Opposition, emailed the nurses and midwives of the hospitals. Can members guess what? He used their private email addresses; not work addresses, but private email addresses. Our email system nearly went down because people were very concerned about how the minister's office was able to get very private information on nurses and midwives which was used to email them about—guess what? The award modernisation process! The QNU twice wrote to the then minister raising breaches of privacy provisions. I do not think they would have minded receiving a notice to their work email address, but they were a little bit upset about how the government got its hands on their private email addresses. To this day, there has been no response to those two letters.

Very early in the piece, they wrote to the current Leader of the Opposition. I cannot count the number of questions without notice that have been asked in this House about breaches of privacy for union encouragement provisions, yet the Leader of the Opposition himself was not able to defend the manner in which he breached the privacy of nurses and midwives. I look forward to the day when they do get an explanation, but I will not hold my breath.

When it comes to the privacy provisions, there is nothing in the encouragement clause that breaches any privacy provisions. Even the Privacy Commissioner confirmed that. When it comes to the choice to join a union, the first clause of an encouragement provision states—

The employer recognises the right of individuals to join a union and will encourage that membership; however, it is also recognised that union membership remains at the discretion of individuals.

That is written in the clause. Yet somehow those opposite are misleading this House by saying that this is the union recruitment clause. Nothing could be further from the truth. Stop misleading the House. Read the clause and understand what it says. Go to the commission that approved this clause and see what the award actually says.

What other things does the union encouragement clause talk about? It talks about the possibility of payroll facilities. Thank you, but no thank you; unions are more than happy to deal directly with their members on that one. The provision also states—

Information on relevant unions (which will be supplied by unions) will be made available to relevant employees at the point of engagement.

That is if people would like to know how to go about joining the union who negotiated their union agreement that determines their wages and conditions. That is a real breach of privacy, is it not? But use their private email addresses—that is fine. The provision goes on to state—

Union officials or authorised representatives will be given the opportunity to discuss union membership ...

They will provide the employee with material should they wish that to happen. It seeks leave to undertake work with a union. We need to have experienced, trained and educated delegates when in bargaining positions. Those opposite want a union run democratically, they want a union with corporate governance but they do not want their workers to be trained in how to run a union.

An encouragement clause merely says that it makes good sense to have workers trained in an area so that they can ensure the corporate governance of that union, and unions welcome it. The provision then states—

At the discretion of the employer, employees may be granted special leave without salary to undertake a period of work with the union.

This is so that they can assist in negotiating agreements, do a particular project or something like that. That is what the union encouragement clause says. There should be no more misleading in this House by those opposite. If you want to introduce things that do not belong in this clause, I ask you to cite them in the clause. Put up or shut up, is what I say.

The other issue that is really quite concerning is the number of non-allowable matters that they allowed in the—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms GRACE: They are getting all precious now.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): Member for Brisbane Central, it might be helpful if you address your comments through the chair.

Ms GRACE: I am addressing them through the chair. What did they do then? They bought in non-allowable matters. We have had the BPF, the business planning framework, in the nursing industry now for about 15 years. It talks about the number of nurses to deliver quality and safe care. What did those opposite say? They said, 'You cannot have that in agreements anymore. We are going to wipe it out.' Given the non-allowable matters, even the safety of patients was going to be put at risk by those opposite. No wonder they extended the term of the modernisation of the nurses award. They knew they would never get it in. I welcome these changes. It is a Labor commitment. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (5.23 pm): I rise to support the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr SAUNDERS: I will take that interjection, thank you very much. The peanut gallery is busy tonight.

This bill is about three things: restoring fairness to workplaces in Queensland; recognising that the LNP's broken promises to Queensland were wrong and need to be remedied; and ensuring that the people who deliver services to Queenslanders have the protection they need to speak out, can stand up for quality services and can support accountability and better government for Queensland.

This bill supports people who deliver services every day. It supports our correctional officers as they campaign against overcrowding and security risks at the prisons they work in. It supports child safety workers who have strived for years to have their workload managed appropriately in the interests of vulnerable children. It empowers medical officers and health workers who have stood up time and time again to defend the quality of our public hospitals and health systems against those who would sell them out and undercut them for a profit. Profit before people—that is what they stand for.

I say to those who are opposing the bill, 'Look past the rhetoric and talk to the people who deliver services in your electorates.' I know there are many stories from their electorates because we are getting them through our offices. Ask people to talk about the day they had to go home and tell their families that they did not have a job after Campbell Newman and the LNP promised them that they had 'nothing to fear'. I will repeat that in case they have forgotten—'nothing to fear'.

Talk to the people who were left behind after their colleagues were sacked, who had to work in offices that were understaffed and overloaded, who had their pay and conditions cut and who had employers threatening them that if they tried to change any of these things there would be more job losses in their department. Ministers received big increases. Maybe they should have driven down the streets of cities and towns like Maryborough and see what happened. It was made the Detroit city of Queensland through the efforts of the Newman government.

The people in the electorates of those opposite will tell them these stories. They are not faceless union bullies. They are people who are not out to violate anyone's privacy. But they are absolutely determined to stand up for the work that they do and people in the community who rely on their services. That this parliament should be supporting them and their aims is straightforwardly a matter of justice.

Let us have a look at the public record. In February 2012 Campbell Newman and the LNP in writing in response to specific questioning from a union delegate about provisions in awards and agreements and union rights said—

Mutually respectful consultation between senior management and unions is a practical and constructive way to do business. We respect the existing rights of the Together union and will agree to continue to include such rights in future collective bargaining agreements.

There was no caveat or mention of concerns with privacy. There was no suggestion that the same system that operated in Queensland for 15 years—the system that this bill restores—was some kind of threat. There was no LNP scare campaign then. This was the policy that the LNP took to the electorate in 2012. They should reflect on that. The last time the LNP won an election in Queensland was when they were clearly and directly publicly endorsing the union support of provisions that this bill reinstates.

The privacy justification has been plucked out of thin air with no basis in fact or law. Unions are covered by the federal privacy legislation in any case. It was the best thing the LNP could find in their focus group testing. The way they treated public servants in the three years they were in government and the way they still want to treat them now is deplorable.

Very few people in the LNP seem to understand or want to understand what this bill is about. Let us remind them tonight what it is about. This bill relates to clauses that are included in collective agreements and awards. That is provisions that employers and employees have both agreed to have been included. The provisions relating to union encouragement are a very small part of what the LNP stripped out. The bill restores those provisions. The LNP are still silent about the rights of workers to be consulted, the rights of workers to job security, the rights of correctional workers to have a say in their rosters or child safety workers to have their case loads kept at manageable levels.

In the specific case of senior medical officers, many of the award and agreement provisions that were stripped away from their agreement were in fact signed off by the LNP and the then minister for health, the now opposition leader, as part of the new collective agreement for doctors just weeks before. So that is why public servants turned on the LNP government.

The only reason you would want to remove clauses that an employer and an employee agreed to would be to enact an extreme anti-union, anti-organising agenda and to say to the people who provide services, 'Stop fighting job cuts. Stop fighting the privatisation of the services you provide. Stop raising the alarm about the health care being provided to kids in public hospitals.' But these workers—and it is a credit to them—were not intimidated. They stood tall and proud.

The people who provide public services in our state are passionate. They are hardworking, courageous people. They have suffered through three very difficult years—demoralising years, you could say—of cuts and destruction. However, they did fight back. They did talk to people in the community. They did knock on doors and they did act collectively across the state to change the government. If that scares the LNP, well it should. But the message for them should not be 'continue with your path of attacks on public servants and public services'. It should be 'change course, learn your lesson and respect the workers who are delivering government services in your electorates'. I, for one, will always support them, as all members should. Let's bring on the vote, and I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (5.30 pm): I rise to speak as a member of the Finance and Administration Committee on the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. The first part of the bill I would like to address is clause 3 and the removal of section 3(p). This amendment removes the need for the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission to take into account the financial position of the state or the employer when determining wage and employment conditions. The Chamber of Commerce & Industry advised the committee that they strongly believe the financial position of the employer should be taken into consideration when determining wage negotiations.

The local government authorities, in particular, have voiced their concern to the committee at the removal of section 3(p). The Torres Strait Island Regional Council stated that the result will be '... a total inability for local government to budget in accordance with the Local Government Act 2009 (Qld) for unforeseen financial implications by introduction and/or variation of modern awards midway into financial years'. They also stated that 'a lack of commitment by government to support ... increased funding to local government to allow for increases in human resource costs' would 'inevitably result' in 'redundancies to meet rising costs' and 'lower service delivery due to less staff'.

The Mareeba Shire Council, the Tablelands Regional Council and the Mackay Regional Council stated that they require consideration of their financial position as their main source of income is rates from communities that at times have limited capacity to pay. In quite simple terms, if any employer is not financially sustainable, the ability to continue to employ generally is quite seriously challenged. The Local Government Association of Queensland stated—

Given that labour costs make up a very significant proportion of local governments' operational expenditure (as high as 60% in some cases), LGAQ finds it difficult to see how it would be fair to a local government ... to ... make such binding determination ... without being required to also consider the local government's financial position.

It was stated by the union representatives at the hearing that the QIRC do take into account the financial position of the employer. If this is the case then why remove section 3(p) of the act? Why not leave it there to ensure that this is so?

Due to natural disasters, be it floods, storm events, drought or the replacement of other expensive infrastructure at short notice, councils can find themselves having to review their budgets to see them through a difficult passage. An example of just such a situation is facing many of our western regional councils at this very moment due to severe drought conditions. This situation was highlighted by the member for Mount Isa in his address-in-reply speech on Tuesday night in this House where the member recalled a conversation with a mayor in his electorate who said that there

were 10 to 12 people who have not paid their rates for a year. The member for Mount Isa went on to say that in the shire that he lives in there are 13 landowners that face foreclosure due to rate arrears. This situation is a prime example of why the financial position of the employer must be taken into account when wages agreements are being negotiated.

The LGAQ, the Chamber of Commerce & Industry and the regional councils that had an opportunity to submit given the short notice and time frame do not support this amendment. The union submissions, of which there were 16 in total, were unanimous in their support for the amendment.

The next part of the bill I would like to address is clause 25 and the removal of section 319. The removal of this section of the act has raised concerns with both the Queensland Bar Association and the Queensland Law Society regarding the availability of legal representation in the commission. They advised that it has been decades since the QIRC has operated in this way. The Bar Association also iterated its concern that, with union participation nationally in the order of 42 per cent as at August 2013, there is a significant body of employees not represented by union officers.

The QLS also did not support the restrictions imposed on legal representation by the proposed amendment. Their arguments were similar to those outlined by the Bar Association. They argued that employees who are union members may have the benefit of experienced union staff to represent them against employers who have the advantage of being represented by employees experienced in industrial relations. However, those employees who are not union members or who do not wish to engage their union for representation purposes are effectively denied the benefit of legal representation when those opposite are effectively provided with that benefit.

The QLS noted that, whilst there is provision for legal representation by consent in a number of instances, it is a common tactical step for an objection to be made to legal representation requests where the other party has the benefit of experienced industrial representatives. To consider that the principle that the QIRC is a layperson's jurisdiction does not reflect the practical reality of representation in Queensland, and the need for a hearing to determine whether legal representation should be allowed is in itself a deterrent to such applications given their time and cost and uncertainty of outcome. They do not consider that there is any evidence that the current provisions have resulted in any inequities in representation in the QIRC.

The committee did not agree on this section of the bill. We on this side of the House remain concerned that those who are not union members have access to legal representation. We have concerns for an employee who does not have access to legal representation or legal advice but are up against a well-resourced party. We, the LNP, view that legal representation should be available to all parties in disputes before the QIRC.

The right-of-entry amendments in clauses 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31 would reverse changes to the act made in 2013 to allow union access to the workplace. The Mareeba and Mackay regional councils were of the view that prior notice and control of access is essential for reasons of security, privacy, and workplace health and safety. They argued that unfettered and uncontrolled access without due notice is not practical.

The LGAQ expressed concern that 'the proposed amendments removing the obligations noted above mean that there is no obligation on an authorised industrial officer to give advanced notice to the employer prior to seeking entry to the employer's workplace'. They also expressed concern that 'the power provided under current subsection 373(13) of the IR Act is one that allows local governments to protect employees and industrial officers from unsafe circumstances'. It is a great concern that removing subsection 373(13) may put industrial officers at risk of injury while on government property and expose councils to litigation if an injury occurs. It is the view of the councils represented and the LGAQ that 24 hours notice should be given to ensure the safety of the industrial officer and to minimise disruption to the work site. We on this side of the House support that position.

I would now like to speak to the proposed new section 847 that would bring certain certified agreements to an early end. The committee heard from the LGAQ and the regional councils that had an opportunity to lodge a submission due to the very short notice and time frame that many local governments are in the final stage of negotiations, with some agreements already in place.

The Torres Strait Island Regional Council stated that this will result in them having to return to the negotiating table with staff within three months of an agreement being announced by the commission. It is anticipated that to go through this whole process again would cost council in the vicinity of \$200,000, and this would have an unforeseen impact on the budget. The Moreton Bay Regional Council also have an agreement in place which was finalised on 28 November 2014 with a

92.2 per cent vote in favour of the agreement. The Fraser Coast Regional Council stated that it would be damaging to both council and an overwhelming majority of staff if the agreements in place were not certified by the QIRC. The Mareeba Shire Council also recently entered into a certified agreement which 76 per cent of staff voted to adopt. The LGAQ stated—

The capacity of a third party (who is not a party to the agreement) to, post-certification of an agreement, arbitrarily cut-short an agreement which has been freely entered into and struck in accordance with the prevailing Queensland laws is totally repugnant to the very construct of enterprise bargaining.

The committee did not agree on this amendment. The LNP firmly believes that any agreements in place should be honoured in their entirety. Councils across Queensland are in the process of bringing down their budgets now and this will create great uncertainty in their financial projections, considering that wages are around 60 per cent of their expenses.

I would like to address the privacy issues in this bill and changes to section 691. This section goes to the reintroduction of provisions for union encouragement in the workplace and access to the private personal details of employees. Privacy of our personal information is something that we all hold dear and any use of our details should not happen without our approval. These changes would allow unions unfettered access to any employee's workplace record of details—such as name, phone number, location, occupation, wages and time sheet. This applies to both existing workers and new employees. We on this side of the House believe that the employee should have the right to decide if they wish the union to have access to this information. The employee should have the right to opt in or opt out. The right to join a union is every employee's right—free from any influence or pressure. They should have the right and freedom to choose whether or not to associate with a union. The LNP believe that this amendment has the potential to place an employee in a position where they may feel unnecessary pressure to make that decision.

The LNP members of the committee were very concerned about the consultation process during the formation of this bill. Whilst it would appear that there was wide consultation with the various unions—some 17 in total in fact, and they are listed on page 7 of the report—the same cannot be said for the local government councils. The LGAQ were consulted with in March on only one aspect of the bill, which they thought at the time was the extent of the changes. This was done under strict confidentiality. They advised that it was only when they saw a media release from the minister approximately a week before the bill was to be introduced that they notified their members. This resulted in many regional councils not having sufficient time to lodge a submission. The Queensland Law Society and the Bar Association of Queensland both advised that they were only consulted on the bill the day before the bill was introduced into the parliament. It is the view of the LNP that the consultation on this bill was not wide ranging enough and there was not enough time allowed for proper scrutiny in the committee process.

I would like to express my thanks to the staff who worked long hours on an extremely short time frame to help in the presentation of this report. I would also like to thank the other committee members. There was some robust discussion from time to time on this report and I would like to thank them all for their input.

 **Mr WHITING** (Murrumba—ALP) (5.44 pm): It is an honour to rise and speak on this vitally important bill tonight. All those workers and battlers who voted for a Labor government are relying on us to deliver protections for their working life. This bill helps deliver those protections. This bill restores fairness. Voters chose to have a Labor government because they wanted the protections in this bill. They never again want to see a government that oversees the loss of 24,000 jobs. They never again want to see laws that leave them open to attacks by employers and laws that strip away their pay and conditions. They never again want to live in fear about whether they or their family can ever have a secure job again during their working life.

Where have we seen one of the most concerted attacks on workers under the LNP and Campbell Newman government laws? The Queensland local councils, led by the LGAQ. All those hard-won pay and conditions built up by generations of local government workers are under risk if we do not introduce this bill. Under the LNP, the LGAQ and local councils embarked on a policy of stripping back pay and conditions. The LGAQ—this champion of local governments—has been a leader in this charge to wind back those conditions enjoyed by Queenslanders.

Let me give the House an example of what local government workers at Mackay Regional Council were facing if their agreement proceeded under the Campbell Newman laws. In recent enterprise bargaining negotiations, the Mackay Regional Council set up a corporation called Northern Australia Services. There is some secrecy surrounding Northern Australia Services, but this is what I

have been informed. Northern Australia Services is 50 per cent owned by Mackay Enterprises, a council company owned 100 per cent by council. Reportedly, the other 50 per cent is owned by Partnership Australia which is 50 per cent owned by the LGAQ. Yes, the LGAQ would form a company that would benefit from the Campbell Newman laws.

The crucial thing for workers is what the council wants to do with Northern Australia Services. Northern Australia Services will perform council services and ostensibly look for contracts across Northern Australia. Services at Mackay Regional Council that would go across to NAS would include IT, client services, rates, accounts, procurement, debt collection, administration support, payroll, HR and software systems. Reportedly, 650 workers from council would go across to this new company out of a workforce of 1,400 people. Now this company—part owned by the LGAQ—is a game changer for local government workers across northern and western Queensland. It is a potential threat to the workforce of all the local councils in those areas. It wants their outsourced business. No wonder the LGAQ opposes these new laws that prevent this contracting out. We could say goodbye to our white-collar workforce in council if this kind of set-up was introduced by councils.

The member for Maroochydore said earlier that the local council complained that the entry level for council workers is 20 to 30 per cent above the private sector. She also said that the council complained that they cannot contract out to the private sector. The real complaint is that wage levels are too high for local government workers. That is the real complaint. The crux of it is that they do not want to pay more for local government workers than what they are paying them now; they want to pay them less.

The council workers in Mackay—the ones not in Northern Australia Services—are facing this if the restoring fairness bill does not get up. Under the proposed agreement, they would lose an extra week of leave and their locality allowance. No-one would be disadvantaged with regard to their base pay, but they would lose their allowance in favour of a new reduced allowance. Under this proposed agreement under the LNP laws, existing conditions would be preserved in a separate document. These are the non-allowable matters that we have heard about tonight. These are the crucial working conditions that would not be in their new award. What is more, a worker can only enforce the conditions in this document through a civil action, not through the commission. They have to say to their employer, 'I'm going to take you to court because you're not giving me these conditions.'

Mr Pyne: Who could afford that?

Mr WHITING: Who could do that? No-one. New employees under the Campbell Newman award get no 'preserved' conditions. New employees go on to substandard and lesser conditions. That means people who are doing the same job may have up to \$10,000 a year difference in pay. They would not get the new allowance. What I find particularly offensive under these LNP laws is that in order to save their own conditions, workers are forced to trade off the conditions of new workers. They are told that if they do not vote for these agreements, their conditions are not going to be put into this preservation document and they also would not get their pay rise.

Let me touch on a couple of other issues. This issue was raised by the LNP: why get rid of agreements that have already been passed by overwhelming agreement? They know why: we saw some employers rush to use these unfair laws, deliberately doing deals before a Labor government came into power. They got these deals up through a vote because the workers felt they had no choice—sign up or lose out. These workers are telling us that agreements made under these unfair laws will have to go.

Another issue we have heard from the other side is that they have listened to the mayors and CEOs; they have listened to their fairyland claims that 1,500 jobs would be lost and that this is just about 'managing' their workforce, not reducing their wages bill. I say that members opposite should go and listen to the workers. They should listen to how many of their fellow workers have gone under that mob in the last couple of years. Listen to how the councils have saved untold millions already by 'restructuring' and reducing staff. My advice to them is to not just go into the CEO's or the mayor's office, but to walk in through the staff car parks and talk to the ordinary workers about what they have suffered. They should go to the coffee shop over the road and sit down with a couple of workers having a coffee and ask them what they have been through.

Another issue they have talked about is the union bosses being in control. I will tell them to whom we are beholden, and that is the ordinary worker: neighbours, friends and family, other mums and dads at the footy matches. They are who we have to face each day. They look to us to protect their jobs, conditions and wages, and we never forget that huge responsibility. Those opposite will never understand that and they will stay on that side until they do understand it.

Finally, I wish to pay tribute to all those workers who have contacted me and told me how important it is to get this bill passed. I have listened to three tele-town hall sessions run by the Together union and I received numerous emails. I say thanks to Alex Scott, Irene Munro and Neil Henderson, who have helped give their members a real voice. I especially acknowledge the members of the ASU Together union who have been in contact. They wanted us to 'bring on the vote' and we have.

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (5.52 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the government amendments. Through my work as an employment lawyer, I have long been committed to fighting for workers' rights and I bring that perspective with me to this House. I believe that government must protect and respect workers, and I am proud to be a member of the Palaszczuk government that has committed to restoring the rights of Queensland workers, who came under attack from the previous LNP government.

Not content with sacking public servants and undermining workers compensation, the previous LNP government went on to attack the conditions of senior medical staff in Queensland public hospitals. They deliberately went after the specialist staff who run emergency departments, provide world's best care and train the next generation of doctors coming into Queensland's public hospitals. Due to the ideological stubbornness of the LNP government, the breakdown in negotiations between doctors and the government reached such a crisis point that we almost lost so many hardworking doctors from our public health system. This would have led to a blowout in wait times and, critically, a loss of capacity to train future specialists in our hospitals. More than 4,000 senior doctors were placed on mandated individual employment contracts called high-income guarantee contracts—all our senior medical officers and most of our visiting medical officers. These amendments deliver on our election commitment to end these unreasonable and unfair contracts and undo the wrongs of the LNP government imposed on our senior medical officers. In just one term, the LNP signed a collective agreement with our doctors, had it certified and then, just 18 months in, ripped it up and forced senior doctors onto unfair contracts.

As the lawyer for senior medical officers, ASMOFQ and Together, I proudly worked with the 'keep our doctors' campaign in support of the many brave doctors who spoke out against these unfair contracts. In an unprecedented show of strength, thousands of normal, everyday doctors rallied together at numerous gatherings known as the 'Pineapple' meetings. They spoke of being denied the ability to speak up collectively to protect their patients. They spoke out about being forced onto contracts by the removal of any other option. It was a case of take it or leave it. Doctors travelled from across the state and queued around the block to speak about their concerns about the impact these contracts would have on their patients, only to be dismissed as 'highly emotional' by the then health minister.

These meetings culminated in a motion of no confidence by doctors in the former health minister, the man who had promised to lead Queensland Health into a new era. It certainly was a new era—an era where people were forced onto individual contracts, prevented from bargaining collectively and stripped of unfair dismissal rights and award coverage. The contracts gave complete power to the employer to vary terms, required little or no consultation on roster changes, and left them with no ability to take matters to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission or any other dispute mechanism. But, worse for patients, these high-income doctor contracts removed fatigue provisions and removed protections for doctors who spoke out about patient care.

The belligerent behaviour of the former government resulted in a loss of trust, warnings from other jurisdictions for people to give Queensland a miss and low morale. In fact, I will quote the evidence of Dr Sandy Donald at the public hearing into consideration of this bill. He said—

Far North Queensland lost a number of existing senior doctors as a result of the previous government's attack on the health system, but we also had a number of newly qualified specialists who withdrew their job applications and moved interstate or went into private practice. Amongst the remaining specialists, trust is gone.

Dr Chris Turnbull said—

The contracts have destroyed morale, recruitment and retention of all doctors in the public hospital system, with both junior and senior doctors seeking employment elsewhere.

The loss of dedicated, experienced and expert staff since 2013 has significantly, adversely impacted on the ability of the hospital system to deliver safe, timely and quality health care for all Queenslanders.

The campaign organised by doctors was a once-in-a-generation campaign. To see surgeons, intensive care specialists, paediatricians and anaesthetists standing side by side out the front of our hospitals protesting and rallying was an extraordinary display of their commitment to patient safety and the public health system. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our doctors for their courage and commitment to Queensland patients. These are people like Dr Rob Thomas, who was a highly valued intensive care specialist, anaesthetist and pain medicine specialist at Ipswich Hospital. Dr Thomas had been with Queensland Health for 14 years. He had dedicated his working life to the public health system because he believed people in that system deserve quality care. In the face of these contracts, Dr Thomas is now lost to Queensland. He now works in New South Wales. In considering his resignation he said—

It's not a decision I've taken lightly. Leaving my job will be a huge strain on my young family, but I owe it to the people of Queensland to stand firm against these unfair individual contracts.

I can't sign up to a contract knowing that by doing so I'll be agreeing to put my patients at risk.

There was absolutely no gain in moving to these contracts. It was simply a government with a huge majority picking another fight. The LNP's own Sheldon-Borbridge review pointed out that the LNP had alienated almost every key interest group across the state. Picking fight after fight, such as the one they picked with our state's senior doctors, did not turn out to be such a good plan. Make no mistake: the doctors and the doctors' representatives ran a campaign against a government that had broken its promises. The then health minister was known to say during the dispute that honesty and trust go both ways. Indeed, it does and the LNP government never regained the trust of our doctors.

I am proud to be a member of the Palaszczuk government that is restoring fair conditions for public servants and local government workers and restoring the right to collectively bargain for our senior public sector doctors, without whom our public hospital system would crumble. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Ms Fentiman, adjourned.

MOTION

Obstetric Services



Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—LNP) (6.00 pm): I seek leave to alter the terms of the notice of motion.

Leave granted.

Mr McARDLE: I move—

That this House:

1. Notes that mothers-to-be across Queensland should continue to have the choice to have their children delivered locally in low-risk pregnancies;
2. Commits to continue the rebuilding of antenatal and other key health services in regional and remote centres where it's safe to do so;
3. Notes that 'low-risk' pregnancies are those where the antenatal period is not complex and where the mother does not have a complex medical and obstetric history;
4. Notes the reopening of birthing services at Beaudesert and Cooktown and planned re-establishment of services at Ingham and Weipa this calendar year; and
5. Further calls on the Queensland government to commit to establishing four additional low-risk birthing services at Charters Towers, Yarrabah, Mossman and Cloncurry to be established this parliamentary term.

There are many people in this vast state who live in either the south-east corner or in large provincial towns and have ready access to a multitude of medical services, and in fact there are many members in this House who fit into either category. But there are many people who live in remote and rural Queensland who do not have access to some of the services that some of us take for granted on a daily basis. There are people in remote and regional Queensland who accept the fact that they cannot have access to the services that we have here—we cannot replicate the Lady Cilento, the PA Hospital or the facilities in Cairns and Townsville—but what we can do and what we should do as a House is work towards getting the services into remote and regional Queensland that we can to make life for these people is simpler and easier.

The LNP believes that we need to find a way to provide to these people the rights that we take for granted down here in the south-east corner. Members should understand that there are people in remote and regional Queensland who travel hundreds of kilometres on a daily and weekly basis to get

to the services that we take for granted. They do not do that just once; they do it multiple times. It is not just they themselves who do it; they take their families with them. So what would take us maybe three or four hours to attend to can take them hours and kilometres of travel, taking their families with them and thus impacting upon their businesses and other matters as well.

It is quite clear that one of the services I am talking about here is maternity services. In 2002-03 the Labor government closed dozens of maternity services right across this state. They shut down an essential service that had been in place for many years. They simply were not capable of establishing the ground rules and finding the solutions to continue maternity services. That continued until 2012, when the LNP committed to reopening maternity services right across this state where it was safe to do so and where we could work with midwives, obstetricians, doctors and telehealth to ensure that mothers could give birth safely in their home towns with their families and in their own communities.

In March 2014 we reopened the Beaudesert birthing service that to date has delivered 229 children because we took the bull by the horns and made it happen. In fact, there was one child born there today—perhaps a new little Jon Krause.

An honourable member: That is a scary thought!

Mr McARDLE: That is a scary thought! Some 229 families have gained the benefit of reopening maternity services. Earlier this year Cooktown was opened, and we have had 14 children born there. Ingham could open in late 2015 and can provide for the birth of 60 to 80 children. We simply put our heads together and came up with a plan, and we believe that opening these centres in Charters Towers, Yarrabah, Mossman and Cloncurry will provide greater incentives and greater services right across this state. We are not saying all children can be born in these scenarios. This is for low-risk pregnancies only, working with midwives and doctors and using telehealth.

What we need to do, members in this House, is push the politics aside. Look at what the LNP did do. We proved we could open birthing centres right across the state, and we had a plan to do so. Two have opened, and what we are saying to the government is that in the term of this parliament we can open a lot more. That is the least we can do for remote and rural areas of this great state. They deserve that. They miss out on so much because they devote their lives to the country and the regions in which they live. We need to work with them.

We believe in services to the regions. We believe in pushing the boundaries back and working through problems and finding solutions. Can I say that, if this is approved and accepted by the House today, we have two plans for the health minister: the surgery-on-time guarantee and maternity services—

(Time expired)

 **Ms GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (6.05 pm): I am very pleased to support this motion. The Labor Party has a proud record of giving women more birthing options, and we are the party that responds to community concerns. In my electorate we have one of the longest running birthing units in the Royal Brisbane Hospital, and I attended there with the Minister for Health just a month ago. Over the years it has been modernised and it is now a very impressive unit indeed. Although it is in the middle of a hospital, it looks more like a hotel room than a hospital ward. As a place to give birth it is very relaxing indeed, and I believe aromatherapy is used to relax the women even more.

The day I was there we were celebrating the extension of eligible private practising midwifery services into the hospital. The case previously was that women could have their own personal midwife attend to them right up to the actual birth, but not at the birth itself. Under the model that was starting there, women now have the option of having continuity of care throughout their entire pregnancy and after. This reflects women centred care and real choice. This reform came about through national maternity reform and the strategic direction taken by all states and territories to increase access to midwifery models of care, but it is also what can be achieved when governments work cooperatively and engage the community and women in determining the services they want in their areas.

I am not quite sure what the opposition's motives for the motion are, as patently I am going to support wider availability of the best facilities for women wherever they are in Queensland. While there is a case to be made for having such centres in places like Charters Towers, Yarrabah, Mossman and Cloncurry, I would have thought that there was an equally strong case for a concentration of better health services in places not only in my inner-city electorate, but also places like Caboolture, Logan, the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast and places where there is a very rapidly growing population. In that context, I cannot quite understand why these places have been singled out. As I said, no-one is going to deny the desirability of having low-risk birthing services around, but I

would have thought that surely the main priority would be to target those areas where the birth rate is the highest. There is also the matter of home births, where more and more women make arrangements to have their children in familiar surroundings where they are comfortable. These are the sorts of things that this motion does not address.

Of course I reinforce what the health minister has been saying about funding. It is wonderful to tell people that they can have services, but someone at the end of the day has to pay for them. As members opposite know, the changes in funding proposed by the federal government mean that we will be in a severely constrained financial environment going forward. It is difficult for any government to undertake proper long-term planning when there is no funding certainty. We will be \$11.8 billion worse off under the system that Tony Abbott and Joe Hockey are inflicting on the states, and that is going to flow through heavily to services on the ground.

Nonetheless, Labor will deliver women centred care where patient safety is paramount. We will ensure the continuity of care model is delivered by midwives at the appropriate skill level. We will ensure that nurses and midwives in an ageing workforce context will be educated and trained for the future. We will invest in our nurses and midwives; not sack them. We do not see our midwives and nurses as a cost, but as essential to deliver better patient care and safety. We will deliver women centred midwifery continuity of care services and invest in the best trained nurses and midwives this government can deliver. We will plan for the future needs of the best local midwifery services wherever they are throughout Queensland.

I want to take a little bit of time to commend the midwives of this state. I know that many in this House have aunts, parents, sisters and mothers-in-law who are nurses and midwives. They do an outstanding job. They are the best trained and educated nurses in the world. They did not deserve the sacking they received from the previous government. However, when it comes to continuity of care in midwifery services, this government will deliver.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (6.10 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion for restoring rural birthing and other health services in Queensland. Low-risk birthing services in rural communities such as Yarrabah, Mossman, Charters Towers and Cloncurry are vital. Rural birthing services are not only a fundamental right for rural women but also an ethical obligation on the Queensland state government to deliver.

Universal service obligations for basic service delivery such as rural birthing are vital for those in rural and regional Queensland. For years under successive Labor governments in Queensland rural birthing services were allowed to wither on the vine—years such as those Labor government years under the tenure of former health minister and former member for Mount Coot-tha Wendy Edmond. The Rural Doctors Association of Queensland, the Maternity Coalition, the Australian College of Midwives, Queensland branch, the Statewide Maternity and Neonatal Clinical Network and the Statewide Rural and Remote Clinical Network have all worked hard over recent years to develop sustainable clinical models which are able to be implemented and which work. The LNP government successfully reopened birthing services in both Beaudesert and Cooktown—a great achievement of those communities based on sound, evidence based public policy.

I am a former president of the Rural Doctors Association of Queensland and therefore I understand probably more than many members in this place, both professionally and personally, the vital nature of these services. I know Dr Tash Coventry, the incoming president of the Rural Doctors Association, and what birthing has meant for her personally, not only in her community but also for the community of Cooktown. I will give some other real examples.

I graduated from the University of Queensland in the 1990s and was posted as a Queensland Health rural scholarship holder to the position of medical superintendent with the right of private practice in Mungindi. In those communities you provide cradle-to-grave care. I would encourage all medical and health graduates to take up some rural experience in their career. In relation to the maternity service there, I was asked to provide antenatal and postnatal care, but women in that community were booked in to birth in either St George or Moree. As many would appreciate, in the final weeks of pregnancy women are often required to attend on a weekly basis. Therefore, people had to undertake significant travel.

Mungindi was and is still a closed rural maternity unit for low-risk birthing, so for those travelling women there is prolonged travel involved, personal distress and family disruption occurring if they are required to live in another town for prolonged periods due to medical complications such as preeclampsia or gestational diabetes. There are greater financial costs and potentially delayed and jeopardised obstetrical outcomes leading to higher caesarean section rates if women are unable to access a local birthing service.

To give another example, one of my Indigenous patients, who will now have to pay higher car registration costs come 1 July, at 36 weeks was involved in a single-vehicle accident while travelling to a final obstetric appointment review in another town because of the loss of the routine obstetrical low-risk birthing service in Mungindi. Another lady was the baker's wife, who spent many weeks having to live in Goondiwindi simply because she could not access a low-risk birthing service in her community. Unfortunately, one night she came back to Mungindi—or maybe fortunately—and ended up delivering there. But without all of the required equipment or staff to deal with emerging complications it was certainly a nail-biting situation.

Even when I was the medical superintendent of Oakey hospital and my wife, Jane, was pregnant with our son Angus, I and my family experienced firsthand the circumstances many rural families face with respect to not being able to access integrated local birthing care.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Moggill, one moment, please. Members, there is a lot of chatter.

Dr ROWAN: Providing health care in the antenatal, birthing and postnatal periods in local rural communities for their residents is not only socially and economically important, it is the right thing to do. There is significant clinical evidence that high standards for both mothers and their newborns can be maintained. Failing to reopen rural maternity units leads to poorer access to care for rural women in Queensland.

In health, the Labor Party has a rotten track record of clinical and corporate governance. They need to do more in relation to birthing services in rural communities. This House and the Labor Party should vote in favour of supporting rural birthing services, rural families and rural communities, and they should continue with the rebuilding of other rural health services started by the previous LNP government. I support the motion.

 **Ms DONALDSON** (Bundaberg—ALP) (6.15 pm): It is with pride that I stand before this chamber and speak in support of this motion. I am a proud working mum, and I know that there is nothing more important than being comfortable. Labor has a proud history of investing in the capital infrastructure our state needs to support health care. The Goss government invested millions of dollars building the backbone of our health services up and down this state. The Beattie and Bligh governments' capital expansion program More Beds for Hospitals gave this state a series of brand-new Labor built hospitals throughout Queensland. The previous Labor governments also recognised the need to revamp the way maternity services were delivered. This is why Labor invested in birth centres, which gave women greater choice and control of their birthing experience.

We on this side of the House think the delivery of safe and efficient healthcare services close to people's homes is important. Birthing services are no different. Where it is clinically safe to do so and where it is economically feasible, we should be delivering birthing services as close to people's place of residence as we can.

I am well aware of difficulties in childbirth—unfortunately, more aware than most. I have three children, and two of their births went very well. I had a low-risk, very low stress pregnancy but there were complications with my third birth. The only reason my son and I both survived is that I was very close to Brisbane and was able to be rushed in for an emergency delivery some seven weeks early. I was considered a very healthy woman. I was assessed as being very low risk. If I had been in a remote community then both my son and I would not have survived.

This is an important motion, but I wonder about the way it is so specific. Congratulations to the people of Charters Towers, Yarrabah, Mossman and Cloncurry, but one cannot really overlook the fact that three of these four proposed facilities are in electorates represented by those who sit on the crossbenches in this place. I would not mind better health services in Bundaberg. We suffered terribly under the Newman government. We lost over 300 nurses in the Wide Bay region. That had a real impact—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I would like members to listen to the member for Bundaberg in silence. Other members have been listened to in silence.

Ms DONALDSON: We suffered terribly under the Newman government. We lost over 300 nurses in the Wide Bay region. That had a real impact, not just on the quality of services that people in my electorate could reasonably expect but also on employment in the region.

While we have righted the ship at a state level, there is worse to come from the federal Liberal-National coalition. The health minister has referred to changes in the way the federal government is funding the states for health. This will have a very real impact on Bundaberg and Wide

Bay. It will mean that we will have over \$500 million less over the next decade in health. While those opposite call for new facilities, do they realise that their buddies in Canberra are going to make life so much harder for the states to deliver actual good-quality health services?

The area I represent is growing. Like most other parts of Queensland, it is also getting older. Everyone knows that older people have more call on health services than do younger people, so there will be more and more demands on the health system at a time when there is less money than the states thought there would be. That makes long-term planning very difficult. Ironically, it is exactly this sort of facility that will be more difficult to deliver because of the changes to the way the federal government is funding health.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (6.19 pm): Tonight it is a pleasure to speak in support of this motion. I want to read a quote from Cherrell Hirst from her report on the review of maternity services in Queensland—

The ways in which we care for pregnant women and babies reveals a great deal about the kind of society we are and wish to be.

For many years mothers in rural and regional Queensland have been forced to travel or relocate for maternity care. This has happened in my electorate at Chinchilla. Mothers were unable to birth in their local home town of Chinchilla with their local family and support. When they went into labour, they had to call the ambulance or a family member would drive them an hour away to Dalby. Not only does this place a lot of extra stress on mothers but it also isolates them from their support mechanisms at a time when they are most needed. It also places mothers and babies at risk of birthing on the side of the Warrego Highway in an ambulance or in car, which are certainly not well equipped for birthing. The roadside is no place for a child to be born and we should not accept this in our society. It does concern me and it should concern all members of this House if babies are being born in these conditions.

I am pleased to advise that the LNP government in its last term resolved the issues with maternity services at the Chinchilla Hospital. This hospital now has recommenced full maternity services, including weekends. Maternity services can be delivered—pardon the pun—in regional areas, as can babies, and the Chinchilla experience demonstrates clearly that it can be done. If it can be done in Chinchilla, it can be done in Charters Towers, it can be done in Yarrabah, it can be done in Mossman, Cloncurry, Ingham and Weipa. I am also pleased to advise that at Chinchilla it has been reported to me that about 100 babies are being born per year in a safe and appropriate environment. I want to commend the wonderful staff at the Chinchilla Hospital, especially those who are involved in the maternity services, for their great work and support of mothers and babies across the Western Downs region. I also want to read a paragraph from an email from a health worker who was delighted with the return of these services in Chinchilla under the LNP government. She said—

Mr Springborg, I understand rural health is particularly close to your heart as you are a country boy at heart, having your own children born in rural Queensland. I appreciate your continued support for rural services and applaud all involved in the fight for continued maternity services 'in the bush'.

Mothers and babies, be they in Cooktown or Cunnamulla, should have access to safe birthing services in their own community. Speaking of Cunnamulla in my electorate, it has similarities with the communities mentioned in this motion. Cunnamulla has a high Indigenous population and mothers are often transferred to Charleville for birthing. However, culturally these women prefer to birth in their own community and that is why it is important to provide these services for low-risk pregnancies in these communities. There will always be a risk element with birthing regardless of choice of birthplace. However, safety in childbirth is related to the mother's emotional, psychological and physical wellbeing during labour. There is no doubt that this is influenced by the choices which are made during pregnancy. It is our role to help give women choices, and this motion does that for the women of Ingham, Weipa, Charters Towers, Yarrabah, Mossman and Cloncurry. Women should not have to leave their family, leave their support or leave their community to access maternity services. As I said earlier in the words of Cherrell Hirst, and I will repeat them again—

The ways in which we care for pregnant women and babies reveals a great deal about the kind of society we are and wish to be.

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (6.23 pm): The government is pleased to agree with the motion and, on a personal level—as much as members opposite have tried to persuade me—the reason I am supporting this motion is that my mother was a maternity nurse and midwife. She was a triple certificate nurse and she was very proud of her service as a nurse. My mother would expect me to do nothing less tonight. Therefore, I am

pleased to agree with the motion. I also want to acknowledge the speakers in the debate, particularly the contributions by the member for Bundaberg and the member for Brisbane Central talking about their personal experiences, as did the member for Warrego. Two-thirds of the speakers in this debate on the Labor side were women and that shows the change in our party where we have a majority of women in our cabinet and the strong voice of women in our caucus. The women of our party are not slow to speak up on this very important issue and it is pleasing that two-thirds of the speakers in this debate from the Labor side were women.

The ALP of course has a very proud record in establishing what this motion calls low-risk birthing facilities. I understand that trends in modern birthing have changed over the years, but many women want a more informal midwife centred approach but with the assurance of an operating theatre and full hospital facilities close by. There was a strong community demand for such facilities and we are able to respond to that demand where it is safe to do so, and I will say more about that later. Last month I attended the birthing centre at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital with the member for Brisbane Central, but under various ALP governments birthing centres were opened in Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Mackay, Cairns, Toowoomba and Townsville. When I was in Toowoomba some three weeks ago I opened an expanded and redeveloped endoscopy treatment facility. That hospital in Toowoomba includes the birthing centre which came about as a result of the commitment made in 2009 by the then member for Toowoomba North, Kerry Shine. He received many delegations recommending the centre from the maternity coalition and once again we had an ALP government—the Bligh government—listening to the community and responding to its concerns.

While I share the enthusiasm of those opposite for having low-risk birthing services available as widely as possible around the state, as the member for Southern Downs would know it is not an easy option. Currently, there are 123 hospitals and health clinics in Queensland where less than 20 children were born in each of those hospitals and clinics last year. That would seem to indicate that they do not have dedicated birthing services. As the speakers in this debate have said, you wonder why they have chosen these particular communities. Low-risk birthing services can be very expensive indeed. The cost to deliver safe birthing services can be very expensive, but I am pleased to note that this motion recognises that antenatal and birthing services should only be established where it is safe to do so, and that is a sensible thing. One of the factors relevant to the establishment of clinical services at any health facility is the volume of services that are provided at that facility. It can be risky—in fact, dangerous—to patient care if clinicians are not conducting procedures, services or treatments in sufficient numbers to ensure ongoing and consistent safe clinical practice. I will always put patient safety first and this will impact on the nature and extent and establishment of any clinical services that are set up at any clinical health facility in Queensland. The women and children of Queensland not only deserve the best care; they deserve safe care.

This motion also talks about re-establishing services—again, a very important aspect of this motion. Some 4,800 staff were taken out of our health system under the LNP government, including 1,800 nurses and midwives. In the community that I serve, there was the cancellation of midwifery services in the city of Logan. Community midwifery clinics where low-risk women could attend appointments—exactly the sort of women identified in this motion—were closed in Eagleby, Beenleigh, Springwood, Crestmead in the electorate of Woodridge, Browns Plains and Logan Central in the electorate of Woodridge. Those services would not be provided to women in those communities as they were under Labor governments, and what a very sad thing that was. We will look to re-establish services for all Queenslanders—not just in regional Queensland but across the state. Funding of those services will be critical.

Other members of the parliamentary Labor Party and other members in this debate talked about the cost of services. Of course, if \$11.8 billion is ripped out of the health system in Queensland it will become exceedingly difficult to deliver services in local communities for local people throughout Queensland. We will deliver safe services, but we will do it where we can afford to do it properly. It is a shame that those members opposite cannot see the problem with \$11.8 billion being ripped out of the Queensland health system as it will over the next decade which will impact how we deliver services across our state, including birthing services.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 6.29 pm to 7.30 pm.

**INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (RESTORING FAIRNESS) AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL****Second Reading**

Resumed from p. 1188, on motion of Mr Pitt—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (7.30 pm): I rise to address the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill but, in order to do so, I must provide some contextual background with some specific references to matters reported on but, in my opinion and that of many others, inadequately analysed and assessed in the public domain over the past 18 months. In 2013, the Industrial Relations (Fair Work Act Harmonisation No. 2) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill was passed by the 54th Queensland Parliament. This 2013 legislation reformed Queensland's industrial relations legislative framework and associated systems and structure for the better by amending the Industrial Relations Act 1999, the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011, the Trading (Allowable Hours) Act 1990 and the Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990.

The Industrial Relations (Fair Work Act Harmonisation No. 2) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013 delivered a positive legislative platform to modernise and rationalise the then existing archaic awards. At that time there were 83 existing state and local government awards. The Queensland Employment Standards, similar to the National Employment Standards, were implemented, ensuring that minimum standards relating to public sector wages were upheld and that various leave provisions as well as notice of termination and redundancy pay were guaranteed. The Queensland Employment Standards are based on the existing Industrial Relations Act minimum conditions as well as the previously mentioned National Employment Standards as set under the Commonwealth's Fair Work Act 2009.

The Industrial Relations (Fair Work Act Harmonisation No. 2) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013 also provided for statutory industrial individual employment contracts for high-income public sector employees, such as those paid more than \$129,300—certainly, an appropriate reform for industrial relations in the modern era given that this is also the same high-income threshold that is used in the Commonwealth's Fair Work Act to determine eligibility for individual contracts. The changes also introduced a requirement for industrial organisations—that is unions—to be transparent with regard to spending for political purposes, including election campaigns. Other significant improvements included the introduction of specific time frames in which conciliation and arbitration by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission could occur as well as ensuring that, during relevant conciliation and arbitration periods, industrial action taken by negotiating parties could not be classified as protected industrial action. Also, removing encouragement provisions from certified agreements and awards, such as those encouragement provisions which, in essence, coerce or force a person to join or maintain membership of an industrial association, including unions, were prudent, wise and visionary for achieving a vibrant, harmonious, modern and productive public sector workforce accountable to the relevant state government of the day and, more importantly, the taxpayers of Queensland. In essence, it was transformational legislation that has delivered for Queensland.

I congratulate the former member for Stafford, Dr Chris Davis, for supporting the 2013 legislation. That is right: Dr Chris Davis voted for the LNP's legislation, as he knew and also agreed that it was in the best interests of Queenslanders, including patients. However, a short few months later he seemed to be opposed. He was opposed possibly for his own conflicted reasons, or perhaps he had not read the legislation, or perhaps he did not understand it. When you stand for everything, you stand for nothing. Perhaps Dr Chris Davis and the former member for Gaven, Dr Alex Douglas, are just in a perpetual state of confusion. Are they LNP? Are they Independents? Are they Palmer United? Are they Labor? Or perhaps they hope to become part of Team Lazarus. Perhaps both are suffering from African trypanosomiasis, otherwise known as sleeping sickness, or, in the case of Dr Douglas, his own self-inflicted voodoo spell. Whilst I cannot agree with the Premier's proposed industrial legislation, I congratulate the member for Inala on her party's wise decision to delay Dr Davis's membership of the ALP for at least 12 months, if ever.

I digress. The Palaszczuk government's Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 seeks to destroy the much improved, flexible and modernised industrial relations system of the past 18 months. If passed, the Palaszczuk government's legislation

will lead to reduced productivity, wastage and poorer efficiency in the public sector, including longer waiting times for patients in public hospitals, jeopardised clinical outcomes and a lack of value for money for taxpayers. And what about the personal details of public servants being given to unions bosses without their consent? Absolutely shameful!

Removing the requirement that the Industrial Relations Commission must consider the relevant employer's financial position and the state's financial position and fiscal strategy as part of public interest in wage arbitration matters should be cause for great alarm right across Queensland. Removing the potential right of an employer or employer representative to give a direction to a union officer if it is deemed reasonably necessary by the employer to discharge his or her duty under the Workplace Health and Safety Act is also inappropriate, as is removing the requirement for 24 hours notice of entry to be given by union representatives. What about the removal of the ability to enter into high-income guarantee contracts with individual employees? It will be interesting to see what the Palaszczuk government attempts to implement, as opposed to what the final outcome is, particularly with respect to Queensland Health's visiting medical officers, let alone senior medical officers.

Before a certain disgraceful cyber troll—in fact, a mediocre, unprofessional and erratic Brisbane based immunologist—makes an appearance on social media, can I thank his Facebook friends for keeping me up to date with his shameful online antics that may even draw the attention of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency once the federal government introduces cyberbullying laws later this year. His view of the world is very limited indeed. And what about the member for Bundamba's previous slur on the reputation of public sector visiting medical officers by referring to them as 'Tahitian doctors ripping off the system' when it is the member for Bundamba who is the Louis Vuitton fake? I acknowledge and pay respect to some truly great AMA Queensland presidents who have also served as visiting medical officers, including Dr Ross Cartmill, Dr Bill Glasson, Dr Russell Stitz and Dr David Molloy.

Those who support the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 are motivated purely by self-interest for their own conflicted reasons. As a president of a professional association such as the Australian Medical Association, as opposed to being a left-wing union boss like Dr Tony Sara of the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation, you have a mutual obligation to advocate not only for your members but also for what is in the interests of patients and the public—in other words, striking a balance when it comes to negotiated outcomes—but, if there is ever truly a conflict of interest, then choosing and prioritising the interests of the public and patients first and foremost. I will always advocate for and defend the interests of the public. Never again, having been democratically elected, will I be denied my right of freedom of speech by rogue, unethical and unconstitutional governance processes bastardised by a few individuals, their unions and associated union sympathisers and apologists primarily in the Together union and the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation.

Some senior doctor unionists also sought to profit—I say again 'profit'—by a prolonged Queensland public hospital doctor dispute. The Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, if passed, will cause harm to Queensland. This bill is prima facie evidence of the deal struck between the Labor Party and the medical unions prior to the last election.

The Local Government Association of Queensland has warned that Labor's proposed industrial relations changes will cost 1,500 jobs across Queensland in the next 18 months. The member for Mount Isa and the member for Dalrymple recently voted in favour of a motion in this parliament in support of waiting list integrity in Queensland. In order to ensure their constituents obtain treatment within clinically recommended time frames they must reject the Palaszczuk government's industrial legislation. I cannot support the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, nor should any other members do so. The Queensland parliament should vote to reject this legislation given that it is poor public policy and not in the interests of Queenslanders.

 **Mr PYNE** (Cairns—ALP) (7.40 pm): For the first time in the chamber I rise—and I continue to rise—to speak to the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. It is interesting to put this bill in some historical and ideological context. My first job on leaving school was to work for the Public Trustee. That would have been about 1985. Joh Bjelke-Petersen would have been Premier. I remember on my first day at work I had to sign a number of forms. One of them was union membership. I do find it very interesting that when I started work at the Public Trustee and signed up as a Queensland Public Sector Union member there was a bipartisan involvement in the union back then. In fact, it was controlled by the National Civic Council. I was not

particularly happy about that so what did I do? I paid my dues and got more involved with the union. Together with an interesting character members might know by the name of Dennis Bailey I engaged very strongly in union politics and certainly addressed that situation.

But I make the point that there is no reason for the opposition to vacate the space of union involvement and union activity. That is something it has chosen to do. I think it really is very sad—very sad indeed. I put it in the ideological context of what happened in the Thatcher and Reagan years. Margaret Thatcher was famous more than anything for her comment that there is no such thing as community, only individuals. That is indeed the philosophy that dominates on the other side of the House. I believe it is politically foolish because there is a whole constituency that is being completely ignored with that space being vacated by the opposition which has gone down to that far-right ideology. I recall earlier the member for Mansfield, I think it was, saying that we wanted to turn the clock back 40 years.

An honourable member: Thirty!

Mr PYNE: Thirty years. What, in fact, the opposition would do is turn things back 100 years, back to the time when there were no unions. I think our position, encouraging workers to work collectively, is a positive thing. The Katter's Australian Party members understand that you get better outcomes for producers and workers when you work together. That is what we on this side of the House are about.

I have also heard much comment about contracting out in the local councils. Having served as a local councillor, I must say that contracting out certainly does not always save money. Sometimes I think when tenders come in for council business people try it on. Often contracting out can be quite expensive. There has been more than one occasion where I have seen publicly owned machinery lay idle while work has been contracted out to private businesses. In my view that is just not on.

I have really enjoyed being involved in the Bring on the Vote campaign. I congratulate the Together union for its work in the Bring on the Vote campaign. I have been contacted by a number of people in my electorate. I made the time to see them. I am sure members of the opposition would have also been contacted by their constituents and I would hope that they made the time to see those people. Whether they listened to them or not we will know soon enough.

Tonight I would like to especially acknowledge some members of the Together union—Kevin O'Sullivan, Deb Pearson and Alex Scott—who I believe do great work. Let us be clear: it is as if those opposite think that we work for the unions or there is something improper about it. This legislation will make the jobs of some of our ministers harder because in their role as employers they will have to negotiate with an organised workforce, yet we pass this legislation because we know it is the right and decent thing to do.

It is interesting that we are passing this legislation today, 100 years after the TJ Ryan administration was sworn in and passed the Industrial Arbitration Act. Later on this year will be 100 years since the judicial assassination, if you like, of Joe Hill. I am sure that many on my side who have thought for Labor history will remember who Joe Hill was. There is, of course, the song *Joe Hill*. My favourite performance of that was by Paul Robeson who sings a great ode to Joe Hill.

An honourable member: I dreamt I saw him last night.

Mr PYNE: Yes, indeed. The ghost of Joe Hill.

Mr Costigan interjected.

Mr PYNE: Yes, indeed. Labour Day 2013 in Cairns was one of the biggest ever. It was very strongly dominated by public sector workers. The Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships spoke. There was a rousing ovation for his comments when he spoke about introducing this bill into the parliament. Those who were there on the day included doctors, like Dr Sandy Donald; nurses, like Fae Morgan, Robyn Page and Kayleen Turnball; ambulance paramedics, including Jennifer Moran and many members of the United Voice union there to support other paramedics; teachers, like Leigh Schelks and many other schoolteachers; and electricity workers, like Robert Hill and many others from the electrical trades. Many public sector workers showed up in numbers on Labour Day, voting with their feet and saying how strongly they were in favour of this legislation. I will conclude by saying that I commend this bill to the House and bring on the vote!

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (7.48 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This bill reflects an election commitment to restore fairness for government workers as a matter of urgency. It was a promise to the public servants of Queensland made by this government, and by every member on this side of the House, to repair the fundamental breach of trust effected by those opposite when they promised prior to the 2012 election that workers had nothing to fear and then delivered an entirely different scenario in government.

My community, like much of Queensland, is still feeling the effects of the mass sackings and undermining of employment conditions carried out by the former government. It is not just the scale of the job cuts that were so damaging; it was the way in which they occurred: bereft of any dignity for the human cost of such policies or recognition of the dedication and service of the individuals involved. Public servants and workers in general are not numbers on a page to be moved when convenient from one accounting column to another; they are individuals with skills, experience, hopes and aspirations and should be treated with dignity.

The bill before the House will reinstate employment conditions for government workers that were lost as a result of changes to the Industrial Relations Act made in 2012 and 2013 by the former government; re-establish the independence of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission when determining wage cases; return the commission to its position as a layperson's tribunal, where employees and union advocates operate on a level playing field with employers; and restore the ability of industrial organisations and their representatives to freely organise and access members so as to enhance and protect their industrial interests. The extensive amendments made to the Industrial Relations Act by the former government stripped away safeguards and conditions from Queensland workers, state and local government and sent a message to public servants that they were expendable, that their service was not valued and, for 14,000 of them, that their services were no longer required. The former government's amendments rendered certain provisions, including those dealing with employment security, contracting, union encouragement and resource allocation, to be of no effect and rendered termination, change and redundancy provisions to be of partial effect, representing a significant erosion of employee rights and the removal of longstanding employment terms and conditions. This bill, and I commend the Treasurer and Minister for Industrial Relations for bringing it before the House so expeditiously, will restore the employment conditions for government workers that were lost as a result of the former government's changes to the Industrial Relations Act in 2012 and 2013.

Additionally, the bill will return the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission to its status as a layperson's tribunal by restoring legal representation arrangements for parties appearing before the commission to be as they were prior to the Public Service and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2012, ensuring that employers and employees operate on a level playing field and will, at the same time, also re-establish the independence of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission when determining wage cases.

The notice requirements introduced by the former government before an authorised industrial officer could enter a workplace and exercise legitimate right of entry powers provided under the Industrial Relations Act, far from promoting a cooperative relationship between employers, unions and the workers they represent, is openly hostile to it. I realise that is not surprising, given the former government was openly hostile to such cooperative arrangements and, it appears, remains so in opposition. This has impeded the ability of industrial organisations and their representatives to freely organise and access members to enhance and protect their members' industrial interests and is addressed in the bill.

I am very pleased to see that the bill will seek to repeal the former government's 2013 amendments, which mandated contracts for all senior medical officers and precluded senior medical officers from rights to unfair dismissal under the act. This bill brings an end to unreasonable and unfair contracts for doctors, reinstating the right for all doctors to collectively bargain. I note the damning nature of the comments submitted to the committee in this regard by the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation of Queensland, and I quote—

The ensuing bitter dispute between doctors and the then LNP Government was a once in a generation crisis and has had lasting effects on the retention of senior doctors, with many leaving the system ... for interstate or private sector positions.

Many local doctors in my electorate and more broadly have raised with me the unfairness of the former government's amendments. It was an unprecedented attack on their right to collectively bargain, on their integrity and on their professionalism and this government is committed to addressing it.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the Finance and Administration Committee, and particularly the committee chair, the member for Bulimba, Di Farmer, for their examination of this bill and the in excess of 1,000 submissions received. I appreciate that, with committee members holding such diametrically opposed points of view on the premise of the bill, deliberations would have been robust to say the least.

The recent election gave people the chance to decide the future they wanted and the opportunity for Queenslanders to judge the Newman government on its record. On 31 January, the community spoke loud and clear. They chose a premier committed to leading a government of consensus that would act in the best interests of Queensland, and their confidence was well placed. This government, under the strong leadership of the Premier, Deputy Premier and Treasurer, made a clear commitment during the election to restore those conditions for government workers removed by the former government and today is about delivering on that commitment. The proposed amendments to the Industrial Relations Act ensure Queensland's industrial relations system supports and promotes fair and just employment conditions for employees and their right to collectively bargain for those terms and conditions.

To conclude, I am glad to have had the opportunity to speak in support of this important bill. Many members of my community have contacted my office with regard to this bill: they wrote, they called, they approached me in the local community and they requested meetings to discuss their concerns and put their case as to why they think this bill is so important, and I listened. The former government callously sacked 14,000 Public Service workers and diminished the rights of those who remained. The former government treated the Public Service with contempt and, at the recent state election, they returned the favour. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (7.54 pm): This bill is simply and plainly about increasing union power. This government is like a marionette dancing daily to the strings being pulled from union HQ. The bill is unfair, unjust and dismissive of the wishes of councils and workers who have legitimately and with good faith entered into employment negotiations or completed employment agreements. It will immediately create budgetary problems for councils, which are currently bringing down their annual budgets. Councils are already negotiating financial minefields left by disasters, drought, floods and from ratepayers who are financially stressed. I know from my own experience that councils are seeing an increase in ratepayers defaulting on their rates.

Previously, I served as deputy mayor of Gympie Regional Council and, before the infamous amalgamations, on the Kilkivan shire council. Armed with that experience, I am concerned with the total lack of legitimate consultation with local governments and the economic imposition of this legislation. I remember the bad old days of Labor governments under premiers Beattie and Bligh. Their relationships with councils were toxic and poisonous. I saw firsthand the disastrous effects their lack of consultation and railroading of legislation had on their relationships with local governments. It took Premier Beattie more than a decade to destroy that relationship and create a poisonous atmosphere of complete suspicion and distrust.

This government takes the prize for how quickly it is moving to replicate that situation. After only 100 days it has moved to significantly undermine councils and dismiss their position regarding the employment of workers and their budgetary position. Consultation with local governments has been virtually nonexistent and is nothing but lip-service paid to them and their organisation. That contrasts starkly with the completely overwhelming and suffocating input from unions. The government even has the hypocrisy to dismiss the wishes of council workers. When provided with evidence that some councils had sought the views of workers through a democratic vote, resulting in positive votes of 92 per cent and 98 per cent and overwhelming support for new agreements, in its report the committee stated—

The government Members also considered that it was not fair to accept that high positive votes were indicative of the full agreement of the employees ...

With that attitude I can confidently predict that this government's relationship is going to be just as toxic as that of the Beattie-Bligh regime.

This government is desperate to turn back the clock. It has no new ideas. It is a case of groundhog day. It somehow believes that 2012 represented the glory days of previous Labor administrations. Submission after submission from the unions state that they want to 'return to the position that existed prior to ... 2012'. Even the department said, '... it is quite correct to say that we have ... moved it back to a position which occurred ... up to 2012.' The Premier says she wants a government of consensus and consultation. What she did not tell people was that the consensus was union consensus and consultation was consultation overwhelmingly with the unions.

I experienced close up a Labor government's version of the consultation process during the amalgamation fiasco. The Beattie government established a supposedly independent commission that—surprise, surprise—with no consultation, came up with recommendations that were adopted immediately. Councils and local people had no input. It was controversial and sparked angry protests, with some councils proposing to hold referendums. The government threatened them with dismissal if they went ahead. While saying he was open to consensus, Premier Beattie vowed to implement the proposed boundary changes lock, stock and barrel. Local transition committees were created with councillors and staff from the original areas and, as a concession to the unions, the government gave equal billing to each and every union and, in many cases, there were more union members on the local transition committees than elected representatives. The councils and ratepayers were done over by the Labor government. That was not consensus and this is not consensus. The same treatment is being repeated here, with only lip-service being given to consultation. Consultation with councils is virtually nonexistent. Let us look at the timeline, the sequence of so-called consultation.

One: the bill was introduced, referred to the committee and then there were only 17 working days for submissions and consideration.

Two: there was no public consultation other than with 13 individual unions and union bodies, some state government departments and the Local Government Association of Queensland. The Queensland Law Society said that they '... do not accept that this is an exhaustive list of stakeholders in the Queensland industrial relations system ... a "closed shop" approach was taken.'

Three: the LGAQ was sideswiped. Its views were sought on the bill's non-allowable matters in late March and it was led to believe that that was the extent of the changes. It was advised to respect the confidentiality of the consultation and therefore could not seek the views of its members. Only after the minister issued a media release advising of the bill's introduction could it contact members.

Four: now for the icing on the cake. They saw the bill only 24 hours before it was introduced. They were not the only ones. The QLS and the Queensland Bar Association were not consulted until late on the day before it was introduced. Where is the consensus and consultation, I ask? Councils were not reasonably consulted and caught off guard. The LGAQ advised—

... we honoured the requirement for confidentiality and it was only once the bill was introduced that we were able to immediately and fully engage our members ... we did not see the specifics until 24 hours before its introduction. So our ability to engage all of our members was restricted to that point in time.

The Moreton Bay Regional Council stated—

... consultation has been undertaken with the Queensland Council of Unions as the peak body for unions, as well as individual unions themselves. Conversely, consultation with local government was only held with the peak body ... not the individual Councils individually affected by the proposed Bill. Therefore the detailed issues faced by this Council (the third-largest local government in Australia) and the potential negative impacts on staff were not considered in its drafting.

The Torres Strait Island Regional Council learned of the legislation through the LGAQ and confirmed on Facebook saying—

There was something on Facebook about the changes that were coming forward.

Something on Facebook! The Mareeba Shire Council noted—

Each local government finds itself in different circumstances and a one size fits all option is not suitable or effective.

Local governments have been trampled by this process. They have spent hundreds of hours and thousands of ratepayers' dollars negotiating with employees in good faith. In Gympie negotiations had finished, an agreement was in place and workers were scheduled to vote only four days after the minister's announcement. Already four local governments will have their certified agreements effectively overridden.

In the Moreton Bay Regional Council 92.2 per cent of staff supported their agreement and 98.25 per cent in the Torres Strait Island Regional Council supported their agreement. They stated—

After many years of unrest in the industrial relations arena, both staff and Council have now together achieved a sense of certainty, founded on trust and common understanding that Council's greatest assets are its staff. Rapport has improved immeasurably and Council is finally on its journey to becoming an employer of choice.

This haste to turn back the clock has no basis in good employer and employee agreements. It has no basis in good management or in good budgeting. There is no regard to the effect on local economies with estimates of up to 1,500 lost jobs. This government says it wants to create jobs. That is jobs for union mates but not jobs for decent, modest, hardworking employees.

Councils are currently in the process of bringing down their budgets. This legislation will financially impact forward planning and throws plans for rates and services out the window. It will cost councils in negotiations, it will cost councils in putting employees on multiple awards and it will cost ratepayers. Mareeba Shire Council said—

... the measures will have a significant financial impact on their council ... they will have a detrimental effect on a community which is unable to pay more through rates, and will therefore have no alternative but to reduce service levels.

The government did not even bother to see if there were any financial implications from the bill. While the government claims that there are no direct cost implications, the department advised that it—

... had not undertaken any costings and the costs will depend on the negotiation of those matters and agreements in the future.

The government says it is unnecessary to consider the employer's financial position or that it somehow impacts the independence of the Industrial Relations Commission. Yet when a previous Labor government wanted to amalgamate councils it used the financial position of councils to support its legislation. Why was it relevant then and not relevant now? The cat is out of the bag—financial implications are not to be used when dealing with unions. The government has forgotten to tell Queenslanders that the time for consensus and consultation is obviously over. Labor is beholden to the union bosses and this is payback and about increasing union power.

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (8.03 pm): It is indeed a privilege to lead one of the state's great institutions, Queensland Health—an institution with a proud history of delivering quality health care whenever and wherever it is needed. I, like so many Queenslanders, grew up believing our public hospital system was among the best in the world. I and my family have strong personal and positive experiences of it. But throughout the term of the LNP government there was no medical treatment possible to cure the sickness in my stomach caused by our predecessors' treatment of our doctors, forcing them onto their Work Choices style individual contracts. We all know the lineage in industrial relations of those on the other side of the House. We will never forget the images of strikebreakers in balaclavas with Dobermans on chains being brought into this country to work on our docks.

Doctors probably did not realise that the LNP also aimed to crush their longstanding and successful employment conditions in pursuit of an ideological agenda. The LNP had been plotting against doctors for years. In February 2013 they released the *Blueprint for better healthcare in Queensland* which had nothing to do with patients and was instead a political manifesto.

In 2014, two Queensland Audit Office reports were released. These concerned private practice arrangements. But instead of using those reports to improve our public hospital system the then health minister and now opposition leader and then premier Campbell Newman used the reports to attack our hardworking doctors as rorters and frauds.

Much has been made of the arrogance of the Newman government. The community obviously expressed their view on this. Our side of the House was consistent in pointing it out. Now there is a bipartisan agreement on this, given the findings of the LNP election review. Regrettably the review only discusses that there was a perception of arrogance. Those on this side of the House know that it was not just a perception; it was a reality.

Who can forget the 1,000 doctors who gathered at the Pineapple Hotel to express their anger, disappointment and disgust at the actions of the now Leader of the Opposition when he was the minister for health? This is not a group of wild-eyed reactionaries. This is a group of highly responsible people not given lightly to protesting. But the actions of the LNP government drove them to this strong expression of opposition.

In January 2014 the then opposition leader and now Premier described the push to individual contracts as yet another example of the heavy-handed and arrogant approach of the Newman government. But it would get worse, much worse, for our doctors. They would watch, stunned, as the government they worked for, the government they served, continued to attack them. Legislation was changed in the middle of the night and without any consultation or any warning the LNP launched an all-out assault.

There is no greater arrogance imaginable than that which saw a minister tell our state's best and brightest clinicians, highly trained and world renowned among them, how to treat our neighbours who were sick and injured. Across the state our doctors were shocked at the heavy-handed approach taken to their employment. After years of service to the people of Queensland who had come to depend on them and their life-saving skills, their government had turned against them.

The Australian Salaried Medical Officers' Federation Queensland, in a submission to the state government last year, claimed that over 70 senior doctors had resigned outright from Queensland's public hospitals as a direct result of the introduction of the Newman government contracts. ASMOFQ claimed that some of those who had left were highly qualified and world class in their field. The response of the then premier, Campbell Newman, was to continue to attack the doctors and threaten that he would simply employ doctors from other states and overseas. But even this would have been difficult.

Groups such as the Australasian Society for Emergency Medicine, scarcely a radical body, warned its members against taking up positions in Queensland. A bulletin they issued in March last year read—

Employment warning for Queensland—in view of the increasingly intransigent position of Minister Springborg and the lack of progress in resolving critical issues, the Queensland health system, in particular its emergency services provided by dedicated emergency consultants and trainees, are threatened. It is clear that the majority of SMOs are re-considering their employment options.

ASEM reiterates our employment warning: we advise against taking up any position within Queensland Health at this stage. Nor in the future until the legislation has been rescinded.

Even from New Zealand, the Association of Salaried Medical Specialists warned its members against accepting a position in Queensland Health.

In the face of this opposition from both the medical and broader community, the Newman government tried to enlist the aid of their political allies—the then head of the AMAQ among them. Dr Christian Rowan, now the member for Moggill, had tried to win seats for the LNP in Gympie, the Sunshine Coast and even here in Brisbane but was spectacularly unsuccessful. As head of the AMAQ he faced the dilemma of who he should support—his members, doctors, men and women who had voted for him to represent their interests or his LNP political mates.

For the now member for Moggill, there was no choice. He sold out his members. As the head of the Queensland branch of the AMA, he came out in favour of individual contracts, which his LNP mates were pursuing, and in doing so sold out his medical colleagues to support what he knew then and he knows now was a system designed to deliver a political outcome that would in no way deliver for patients.

Dr ROWAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I object to the statements put forward and ask him to withdraw. I take offence.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Minister, the member has taken personal offence.

Mr DICK: I withdraw. Clinicians could not believe that their efforts were being repaid with such disgust and they rallied, which they had never done before, in a desperate bid to fight back. They sidelined the now member for Moggill in a move which was unprecedented. But the now member for Moggill called in his debts to the political party that he supported ahead of his fellow doctors and own members when he sought to knock off another doctor, Dr Bruce Flegg, as the candidate for Moggill. The question has to be asked: what does the member for Moggill have against doctors? Patients lost and doctors lost but, if we are looking for a winner in the terrible, terrible tragedy of individual medical contracts, we need look no further than to the other side of the chamber and the member for Moggill.

A government member: You don't even hear the crickets, Cameron.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection. No-one on the opposite side are saying anything because they know it is true. In the meantime, our proud clinicians—who had held so many lives in the palms of their hands, who had delivered our children, cared for our kids—put their pride aside and begged the member for Southern Downs not to proceed. Until finally doctors said enough was enough, and almost 2,000 of them stood together at the Brisbane Convention Centre and said, 'Stop.' People like Dr Tony Sara were derided as interstate union thugs. People involved in ASMOFQ and Together Queensland stood with our doctors to support and protect them, and I recognise their outstanding service to fight against the LNP government.

Those unions, which had been demonised by those members opposite consistently this week without pause, stood up for people that mattered the most—the doctors who were under assault from the LNP government. Those doctors stood together and they forced Newman and the opposition leader back to the negotiating table. And it was here that Newman and the opposition leader played their final card, knowing, as we all do, that there is one overriding principle for doctors. They always put patients first—and they would do so again at great personal and professional cost. Their employment conditions were stripped away. Their access to the Industrial Relations Commission and

its protections was restricted. Their morale was devastated. And, for anyone who had any fight left in them, they were told that if they did not sign a contract they would not be able to treat Queenslanders under private practice. But they could not and they did not turn their backs on patients, nor did they turn their backs on Queenslanders.

While they worked on patients, their representatives in the trade union movement were continuing to fight—and I am proud to say that today that fight is over. We are going to restore the protections all government employees enjoy and rebuild the working relationship between those charged with managing the health system and those entrusted with the care of its patients, including senior doctors. No longer will doctors be distracted by the inherent unfairness of individual statutory contracts while they are working to deliver healthcare excellence to Queenslanders. Doctors work best when they can depend on each other, share their knowledge and expertise and look after one another when the pressure of their roles is high. They work best when they work as a team and work collectively. And now they will be employed under collective agreements again.

The Department of Health, along with hospital and health services, will draft new awards and negotiate for a new enterprise agreement with union representatives. We need a health network that provides real benefits for all Queenslanders based on the principles of fairness and equity for both our patients and our people. These people—including our senior and visiting medical officers—will be empowered through these new collective employment arrangements to work in partnership with local management. Then, and only then, Queenslanders will truly see the very best doctors working together to deliver the very best patient care in the country. Today doctors have won, but it is the patients of Queensland Health that are truly victorious.

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (8.13 pm): ‘No public servant needs to fear me.’ These immortal words will continue to haunt the LNP and the Public Service for years as they live vividly in the memories of many front-line workers who were sacked under the Newman government. And this week we learned that this was one of many crucial mistakes made.

Mr Newman also publically announced that he was ‘not a right-wing ideologue’ and respected the role of unions. He continued saying that he had a ‘fantastic’ industrial relations track record at the council, with a low level of industrial disputes. No sooner were the words out of his mouth than the attack dogs were set loose and the massive sackings of public servants forced state unemployment figures to skyrocket and cripple the economy in towns and cities like mine, Townsville.

In 2014 the Newman government announced that it would place doctors on individual contracts that would force our most senior specialists out of the public health system. The contracts would have stripped away vital working conditions, like fatigue management, and attacked job security, putting the needs of health bureaucrats ahead of those of the Queensland public and the doctors.

I cite the *Brisbane Times*. Speaking on behalf of the doctors, Christa Bell and David Spain said that every public ED specialist at Townsville, Cairns, Robina and the Gold Coast University Hospital had pledged to leave rather than sign the individual contracts. ‘The message from the government is that they’re actually wanting us to resign by not giving us a fair contract,’ Dr Spain said. Dr Bell said that the government was using public hospital doctors and patients to push an ideological industrial agenda. ‘I want to just go back to work, see patients, do my job and for this to be over,’ she said.

During a question time session in parliament dominated by the doctor employment contract issue at the time, then premier Campbell Newman said that the government was prepared to recruit ‘interstate or overseas’ doctors to replace Queensland doctors who chose to resign. He later went on to say, ‘Do not doubt the government’s resolve. Do not doubt that we will see this thing through.’

The year 1985 introduced a DeLorean car to audiences as it flashed across the big screen in the shape of a time machine that took participants ‘back to the future’. Jump on board the DeLorean because we are going back to the future and it is 1985. The National Party government of Joh Bjelke-Petersen sacked 1,100 electricity workers—all members of the ETU, all employed by SEQEB. Its aim was to privatise the industry. Bjelke-Petersen’s goal was to take away from the power workers job security, erode their conditions and increase the length of their working week. The workers resisted. It is sounding a little familiar, isn’t it?

On 6 February that same year, systems control, overhead linesmen, underground cable jinkers and trades assistants withdrew their labour. On 7 February, Bjelke-Petersen declared a state of emergency under the State Transport Act 1938 and sacked the striking workers. This action saw the power station operators cut supply in support of the dismissed men. Bjelke-Petersen responded by

giving his corrupt police commissioner at the time, Terry Lewis—we all remember him—‘concise, clear directions’ for the breaking of picket lines and the gathering of evidence of any threats made against ETU members wanting to scab.

The dispute could have been settled without the loss of any jobs had Bjelke-Petersen not vetoed a possible solution that would have been acceptable to the Queensland Industrial Commission, but then premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen said he wanted the striking workers, members of the ETU, to ‘suffer enormously’. The Bjelke-Petersen government tore up the industrial relations rule book and rammed savage anti-union legislation through parliament—this very House.

The Electricity (Continuity of Supply) Bill forbade strikes and picketing of electricity workers and made provision for confiscation of their property, including their homes, if they went on strike. The bill barred union officials from entering workplaces and made provision for the rapid deregistration of unions and seizure of their funds—all this because men and women wanted to protect their job security.

I used the analogy of the film *Back to the Future* because that is just what the Newman government wanted to do—take Queensland back to the future. In Campbell Newman’s maiden speech to parliament he praised Bjelke-Petersen’s ‘many achievements’ and announced his intention to ‘live up to the standards of my eminent predecessors’. True to his word, the former premier quickly began a relentless drive to attack unions and workers’ rights.

I recently met with a number of members of the Together union who said to me that they just wanted their employer to hear that they wanted job security. They, like the doctors, wanted to do a fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay and know that they could turn up to work the next day ready to do it all again. That is why I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (8.19 pm): I rise to speak on the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Can I say from the outset that the LNP recognises and respects the rights of the public sector and local government workers. We believe that a sound economy, sound financial management and a focus on creating jobs are beneficial to all Queenslanders. However, in regard to the changes proposed in this legislation, I am extremely concerned. I am concerned about the level of union focus in this legislation and the amount of influence unions have over this Labor government. What we have already seen is the reinstatement of the old Labor policy encouraging unionism, with the document titled *Queensland government commitment to union encouragement*. This document is seriously incredible.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I have read the document. Why is it incredible? Because it clearly instructs senior public servants to actively cooperate in union activity so the Labor government can honour a commitment to encourage union membership amongst its employees. It clearly says—

Passive acceptance by agencies of membership recruitment activity by unions does not satisfy the government’s commitment.

Those public servants—like the many who have contacted my office about this issue—who actually do not wish to be a member of a union are asking where their job security is. But more than that they want to know what will happen with their job advancement, because all of a sudden, apart from the fact that their personal details are going to be given out, they have to tell someone who employs them that they do not wish to join a union so therefore, bang, there goes their career advancement. What a shame to the future of the—

Government members interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: So rather than them getting on with the job they are being paid to do, our senior public servants must spend their time playing host and making cups of tea for union delegates when they visit the workplace. Then they must provide employees with documents encouraging them to join a union and provide their new details.

Government members interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: It is interesting that the government interjectors are asking me to name them. I am more than happy to go out and show government members the correspondence I have just read. I actually just received a post on my Facebook page which said, ‘Good on you. Together Queensland is disgraceful. I live in the Mount Ommaney seat and have been bombarded by the unions. Please fire it back.’

I particularly want to give a personal example. Since I have been a member in this House, my husband, my three daughters and I have been personally attacked by two unions. My children are of school age. I was contacted at 10 o’clock one evening advising me not to send my children to school

the next day because of the diabolical diatribe from the local Teachers' Union over my children and what school they attended. I see the education minister is smirking; I certainly was not. The principal of the school—

Ms JONES: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take offence at that comment. I was not smirking but I do not like attacks on the Teachers' Union either.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I beg your pardon. I missed the last bit from the minister.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Member for Nanango, the minister has taken personal exception to that. Will you withdraw please?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I withdraw. It is not unqualified. I did not hear the second part so I am not sure what the minister said but I do withdraw. What I am saying is that because I am not a member of a party that supports unions it was okay for them to attack my children and for me to receive warnings from a local Teachers' Union rep not to send my children to school. But worse than that—because my kids are obviously fairly tough and I sent them anyway—was what the local ETU did to me. They directed their union members to boycott my husband's—

Ms GRACE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Can you please rule on relevance in relation to the clauses in the legislation?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I think we have been pretty lenient all night in terms of where we have been going with this so I am happy for the member to continue. There is no point of order.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I am happy to get to the point and my point is this: union members were told by the delegate to boycott my husband's business. But little did the union realise that those union members were honest enough to come into my husband's shop and tell him. But it gets worse. Overnight there was a 25 per cent drop in sales in my husband's business. What the union delegates and the union people do not understand is that we employed eight staff, so through the entire disgusting boycott my husband had to continue to pay eight staff members. The unions had absolutely no concern for the eight juniors who worked in my husband's business. They had no concern for the fact that my husband's business and my husband's mental health—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I remind members that they should not be interjecting unless they are sitting in their allocated seat. I call for order.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: The worst was when a lady came into my husband's shop and said to him that if her husband knew she was in there the union would—

Government members interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: This is exactly why people do not respect the union movement anymore. This is absolutely diabolical. It has been reported in the *South Burnett Times* and it was reported on *South Burnett* online. I ask those on the other side of the House to go and check the history because this is exactly what happened. The jobs of eight of my husband's employees were in jeopardy because of a direction from the unions to boycott my husband's shop. The unions had no concern at all for the employees of a small business. His employees were not in a union so the unions would not care. It is just incredible that this Labor government has come in here believing that every single public servant wants to be in a union. Judging from the people who come into my office, I can tell the House that, trust me, there are not many out there at all who want to be in a union. It is simply not the case. Patrick Hannaford wrote an article in the *Australian* which states—

The use of taxpayer resources to increase union membership is a fundamental attack on freedom of association, but it shouldn't come as a surprise to the public.

...

... only 12 per cent of Australia's voting-age population consists of trade union members. 51 per cent of federal ALP parliamentarians are former union officials.

The Queensland government's actions are merely the result of this union influence.

I am happy to table that article.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Australian*, dated 21 May 2015, titled 'Party Time for Union Hacks: Symptoms of Labor's malaise take an ugly form in Queensland' [568].

While it is no secret that Labor is supported by the union movement, it does not mean it is appropriate for their political affiliation to spill into the independent Public Service. Labor needs to level with Queenslanders on this one, particularly the public servants whose independence is being completely diminished.

In conclusion, it was quite interesting when we saw in this House last night one of the ministers flag around some letters from our constituents which were written to him in good faith. Obviously, it is the case that, as they are not unionised, we are not even allowed to write to the ministers of this new government unless we get a union stamp on it. It is an absolute disgrace and an abuse of power.

Ms Jones: You can write to me anytime you want.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: And I have and you flashed it around.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Order! Members, let's not toss things across the chamber. Let's direct things via the chair, please.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: No, Minister Bailey. I think that the LNP showed much common sense in addressing the award modernisation process. I only wish those opposite would see common sense when it comes to legislative changes such as those that are before the House. With that, I cannot support this bill.

 **Mr PEGG** (Stretton—ALP) (8.29 pm): I rise today to speak in favour of the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. Firstly, I want to speak about the amendments that change the right to representation in the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. I want to make a contribution on this aspect of the bill as I have appeared in the QIRC, both in private practice and also as an industrial officer of a trade union.

The nature of disputes in the QIRC can vary widely. Disputes can range from matters of policy or issues such as uniforms to more detailed and complex matters. It is my view that there is a clear need and role for lawyers in relation to certain matters that come before the QIRC. There are many legal practitioners in this state who do a great job for those who are disadvantaged in our society. There are many legal practitioners in the state who do a tremendous amount of pro bono work.

I recently met with a representative from the Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services, known as QAILS, and it was great to get a better understanding of how much community work is done by members of the legal profession. However, I think it is appropriate that the QIRC has some discretion about when a lawyer can appear. For instance, when a dispute, albeit important but not particularly complex, reaches the stage of a conciliation conference it may not always be the case that legal representation is needed.

These amendments in relation to legal representation at the QIRC are not revolutionary. These changes return the provisions of the IR Act to what they were prior to the amendments made by the Public Service and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2015. Similar provisions are in the Fair Work Act for appearances by lawyers in the Fair Work Commission. Lawyers are still able to appear if the parties consent or if the commission is satisfied the party or person can be adequately represented only by a lawyer.

I believe that it is vitally important that we restore the status and the spirit of the QIRC to a layperson's tribunal. We should be trying to ensure, wherever possible, that industrial disputes are conciliated and resolved as expeditiously as possible. We should be looking to involve collaboration, negotiation and conciliation wherever possible. Clearly, there remains a very important role for lawyers in the QIRC. However, this can be properly assessed on a case-by-case basis.

I also want to speak in support of the amendments that remove the non-allowable provisions of the Industrial Relations Act. This will mean that the restrictions on the content of industrial instruments are removed. I think it is very important in this debate to explore some of the non-allowable matters that place restrictions that will now be removed, for instance, contracting provisions. Why would a government seek to prevent the parties from negotiating about the contracting out of jobs or services? Clearly it would be in the case of a government that intends to, and did, contract out jobs and services.

I turn to employment security provisions. We had a government that wanted to remove job security and maximise permanent employment being something that parties to an agreement could negotiate on. We need to be supporting jobs in this state. We need to be creating employment and we need to be creating secure employment. It is a fact of life in Queensland these days that many

people have a casual job where, at around 5 pm every afternoon, they get a phone call or a text message telling them whether or not they have a shift the next day. It is a fact of life for many families in the state—living day to day and waiting around every night for that phone call. There is no certainty; they are unable to plan. We need to do all we can to support secure employment in this state and we need to support jobs that people can count on. If the parties to an agreement wish to provide job security and maximise permanent employment, I say good on them. I say they should be free to do so.

Another aspect of the non-allowable provisions is the organisational change provisions. I find it unbelievable that the previous government thought that it should be non-allowable content for employers to notify and consult on decision-making about organisational change. I think consultation and discussion are important when there is any change. It helps facilitate the change. It provides the chance for people to have input into the process. Also, I would argue that if you are going to make a change, it is polite to tell people about it. Admittedly, I do concede that not telling people and not consulting about change was consistent with the behaviour of the previous government in other areas.

I want to talk about the practical effects of these non-allowable content provisions. During the public hearing of the Finance and Administration Committee we heard from Mr Daryl Hitzman, the CEO of the Moreton Bay Regional Council. It was great to hear from an organisation that had made a certified agreement pursuant to the existing provisions. It was very illuminating to find out the extent to which non-allowable provisions hindered the bargaining process and added unnecessary costs to the council. In fact, in order to reach agreement, the Moreton Bay Regional Council had to adopt a process whereby they had a legally binding letter that sat alongside their certified agreement. I think it is very instructive to look at what Mr Hitzman had to say about trying to bargain for a certified agreement under the existing provisions. To be clear, Mr Hitzman is not a union official; he is a council CEO. Mr Hitzman said—

... what we did is we went about a path of getting appropriate legal advice et cetera to ensure that what we were putting in place was binding. It is very easy to stand in front your staff and say, 'Trust me, this will happen,' but, of course, the staff become very cynical over time when they see processes that come in and change things without their involvement. So they wanted to see something in writing. It was originally promoted that we would do that by an MOU—a memorandum of understanding. The problem with the MOU is that it is not legally binding, as you well know.

So we had a situation where a party to the certified agreement, a council, had to legally explore a way of dealing with and making an agreement with these non-allowable provisions in place. Mr Hitzman went on—

Your question about whether the agreement got up because it had the legally binding letter, we took it as a package. We took the whole thing out as a package in relation to exactly what was on the table—how it compared, how the allowance system was going to work ...

What Mr Hitzman is saying there is that, in order to get employees to agree, in order to facilitate agreement, he had to have the certified agreement alongside a legally binding letter. He went on—

So there is no question. They knew exactly what they were voting for, and there is no question that they saw the whole package, inclusive of the pay increase.

Finally, Mr Hitzman was asked—

Would the process have been easier if this non-allowable content could have been included in the certified agreement?

What did Mr Hitzman say? He said—

... yes, because it would have taken all of that confusion away and the need to go out. It was already in our current EBA2, but we could not put in EBA3. So we had to do it via a letter. So all we will do in the future is, if our agreement allows to stand until 30 June 2018, of course, we will just pull that back into the agreement going forward. That would be our intention at this time. But what I am saying is that there is no need to strike a new agreement just because of that being in the agreement.

What we have is Mr Hitzman saying that he had to take it out and put it in a letter. If this bill is passed, he will be able to put that back into future agreements. I think this is a clear example of how the current legislation does not operate effectively.

I also want to talk about the provisions that will restore the ability of industrial organisations and their representatives to freely organise and access members. Not only has there been a long and proud history in Queensland of recognising the legal right of a person to be a member of a union; there has also been a proud history of the Queensland government recognising that employer organisations such as unions have legal standing, of giving them proper recognition as organisations representing the industrial interests of their members.

It is the right of any employee in Queensland and Australia to join a union if they wish. This government believes in that right. This government believes that it is right and proper to recognise the free and democratic choice a person makes if they choose to join a union. That is the proper position of any government and that is the position of this government. It is not the role of the Queensland government to turn the departments and agencies it controls into organisations that seek to undermine and deny Queenslanders their democratic right to be a member of a union. It is not the proper role of the government to deny an employee access to their representative. It is not the role of the Queensland government to change the laws, policies and procedures so that the only representative an employee can have is a government representative, or someone's own boss.

One of the main reasons a person joins a union is to ensure that they are being paid fairly. For an employee organisation to do that practically, it must be able to inspect their members' time and wages records. The reason for this is to ensure that an employee can have their representative check that they are being paid the correct hourly rate, the correct allowances, the correct penalty rates and that they are accumulating the correct entitlements such as annual leave, long service leave and superannuation. I believe in the old saying of a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. That is what all fair-minded people believe. How then can those opposite justify rules that make it harder to stop people being short-changed?

We have heard the member for Cairns and the member for Townsville both talk about going back in time. It is true that it was not always the case that a union official could inspect time and wages records. Back in 1931 the only person with the power to inspect an employee's time and wages records was a government employee: an industrial inspector. The 1932 Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1932 provided union officers with broad powers of entry onto workplaces; however, they were not authorised to inspect time and wage records.

In 1961 this system changed, and it was actually a Country Party government that made this change. The then premier, the Hon. Sir Frank Nicklin—or 'Honest Frank' as he was known back then—passed legislation that overhauled Queensland's industrial relations laws with the introduction of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1961. The 1961 act recognised for the first time the right of union officers to inspect time and wage records—a power previously reserved for industrial inspectors appointed under section 76 of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1932.

Any person who hindered or obstructed a union officer in the exercise of his power or who refused or unduly delayed such an officer's entry into such a place committed an offence subject to a penalty not exceeding £100. A union officer who, without authorisation, entered a workplace to inspect a time and wages book also committed an offence which was subject to the same penalty. This authority was liable to be revoked or suspended upon application by an employer to the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission or an industrial magistrate where it was proven that the union officer had exercised his power of entry in an unreasonable or vexatious manner or had made vexatious, unreasonable or improper use of any record made available to him. If the Country Party accepted the right of an ordinary worker to have their entitlements checked by a person of his or her choice way back in 1961, then why did the previous government take us back in time to the 1930s?

The government should not seek to deny people the right to be represented by an organisation that represents their interests. We cannot deny people the right to join a union. We cannot use the government as a weapon to crush organisations made up of members who are our own constituents. We must accept the lawful and proper role that unions play in Queensland and also the democratic right of someone to join that organisation. We cannot force people to be represented by a public servant. We cannot force people to fork out thousands of dollars to be represented by a private lawyer every time an issue arises in the workplace. We cannot and should not change the law to nobble the ability of an employee organisation to represent their members. There is nothing wrong with sticking up for yourself when you are being treated unfairly and there is nothing wrong with sticking up for yourself in a union. There is nothing wrong with a union inspecting your time and wages records to ensure that you are being paid fairly. You do not have to be represented by someone the government chooses; you can choose your own representative.

Another important aspect of this bill is that it re-establishes the independence of the QIRC when determining wage cases. When it comes to industrial relations, this government recognises the important and valid role that all industrial organisations play. We also recognise the important role of employer organisations. Mr Deputy Speaker, you cannot truly recognise the role of these organisations and their members if you do not respect the independence of the QIRC. The changes that were made allowed the previous government to waltz down the QIRC and totally undermine the

proper and independent process the QIRC follows when it determines a wage case. A proper process is one that recognises and listens to all parties, that hears evidence from both employer associations and employee associations. In addition, it can hear evidence from the government. Once it has heard evidence from a wide range of organisations and individuals, the QIRC can then make a fair and proper decision on what Queensland's lowest paid workers can expect as a wage rise.

The changes made by the previous government to allow political interference with this process amounted to an attack on workers. It allowed political hacks to come down to the QIRC and override an otherwise fair and reasonable system of determining wage increases for the lowest paid workers in Queensland. It was an attack on cleaners, kitchen hands, coffee shop workers, laundry workers and all hardworking Queenslanders. This government does not look down on these low-paid workers. We will not stack the system against them. We will not use the power of this parliament to change the goalposts so that they can never get a fair wage increase. We will not change laws to mean that submissions made to an independent court are pointless because we changed the rules in our favour.

Under the system instituted by the previous government the Treasurer could interfere in the deliberation of the QIRC by forcing them to answer to his demands. Under that system the game was rigged; all the cards were held by the government of the day. This bill is important because we must not let politicians interfere with decisions made by judges and commissioners. We must not 'game' the system so that the poorest always lose. We must not move the goalposts so that they can never have a win.

I know that others are keen to have the opportunity to speak on this bill, so I will conclude by saying it is high time that fairness is restored to the industrial relations system in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House. Bring on the vote!

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (8.45 pm): I rise to speak on the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. I have been lucky enough in the last few weeks to have had quite a deal of union presence in my electorate; whether it has been at the train station handing out pamphlets to commuters each morning, whether it is constituents receiving robocalls or whether it has been direct mailing my constituents, it has been incredibly interesting.

I firstly want to thank the union for the increased name recognition. It has been fantastic, as I have had quite a good response from the electorate. I will talk about that in a moment. When you read the letter that was sent to all of my constituents, it is classic union stuff. 'The legislation was passed in the middle of the night.' I do not know if you noticed, but we did a heck of a lot of work in the middle of the night during the last parliament. I do not think we did anything during the day at all, if you listen to what the unions say. We did lots of things in the middle of the night, and of course we had our dedicated senior doctors who were tied to unfair contracts. Our highly paid doctors, who were on hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, were not capable of negotiating a contract on their own: they had to have a collective bargaining agreement. I am sure that many members in the House would have received visits from doctors during the campaign talking about some of the unfair aspects of the contracts until it was pointed out to them, 'Do you understand those things that you are worried about are in your current collective agreement?' 'No, I didn't realise that.' It really was quite embarrassing and much ado about nothing. It is an insult to intelligent people who earn hundreds of thousands of dollars a year to think that they cannot negotiate a contract on their own. It is laughable. This is the type of rubbish that unions continue to put out, but it does not work.

We did get a response in my electorate, and the first thing they rang me up about was that they were cheesed off about robocalls when they are trying to have dinner. If there is one thing I have learned since I have become an elected politician, it is: no robocalls. They do not like robocalls, so that is a little advice for the unions. The second thing they were upset about is that they felt that this union encouragement clause that was being re-introduced was something that went beyond the pale. Many of them supported unions, but they believed this was just going—

Mr Minnikin: A bridge too far.

Mr MANDER: A bridge too far. I take that interjection from the member for Chatsworth. Let me just put on the record that I support the principle of unionism. I was brought up in a family that was full of unionists. In fact, my mother claimed that she voted for me in the last election but I am not so sure about that. I support the principle of unionism, but I support freedom of choice more. I believe that people have freedom of choice in what they want to do. I do not support someone being coerced into union membership. I do not support the overreach that union leaders practise on a daily basis. They are more interested in sabotaging the employer than in being genuinely concerned about their members.

Let me talk a little more about what the constituents of Everton are saying to me. As I have mentioned already, they take great umbrage at this concept that private details are being passed on to unions. The clause states that managers in the public sector need to provide unions with details of new employees. We have not been given any detail about what this actually means, so people are quite concerned about that. As I said, many of them are strong believers in unions but they have said to me, 'Tim, this is a step too far.'

The other thing they are really concerned about is the repercussions that might come upon them if they do not join a union. What will it mean for their future employment prospects? What will it mean for their future promotion prospects? That is genuinely concerning people who are philosophically opposed to unions. That is a real concern.

Another concern is held by those in management positions who are incredibly uncomfortable about putting pressure on people to join a union. Let us look again at the clause in the union encouragement policy which states—

Passive acceptance by agencies of membership recruitment activity by unions does not satisfy the government's commitment.

Passive acceptance does not satisfy the government's commitment. What is the opposite of passive acceptance? Active involvement. They are to be actively involved in making sure people join unions. That is something they take great umbrage at.

We all know that union membership is plummeting. As the member for Nanango said earlier, union membership in this country is around 17 or 18 per cent. Outside of the public sector it is around 12 per cent. It is quite obvious that those opposite have been given the brief by those who backed them and put them into power that they have to do something about increasing numbers. The reason for the long list of speakers from the government side is quite obvious. They want it on record so they can show the unions: 'We have done what you asked us to do. We are repaying the favour and we are going to increase membership as quickly and as enthusiastically as we can.'

Those opposite talk about the fact that this is not a surprise, that this has been in place for 20 years. It was a secret and we disclosed it in 2012. We revealed what was happening. For decades this was happening and we exposed it. Now they are trying to bring it back again. The motto of this bill is 'restoring fairness'. For whom is it restoring fairness? It is restoring fairness for the union leaders, for the union heavies—the union heavies that these people owe their existence to.

Many of my constituents are public sector employees. They are very concerned about the privacy issues that are raised by this encouragement policy. They are very concerned about the repercussions on those who actually do not join the union. There are those in management who are philosophically opposed to unions but who feel that they have to go out there and actively promote a cause they do not believe in. I believe that is unjust. That is why I will be voting against the bill.

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (8.54 pm): It is going to be hard to follow that!

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BROWN: I call it how I see it.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ryan): Order!

Mr BROWN: My speech has a little too many facts in it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am on my feet.

Mr BROWN: I will have to keep it to the facts.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, I am on my feet! The House is too rowdy. The House will come to order. I ask members to calm down. The night is going to be a long one.

Mr BROWN: Sorry for that, Mr Deputy Speaker. Tonight I rise to speak in support of the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. The Newman LNP industrial relations legislation was put to this House as a harmonisation bill. Nothing could be further from the truth, not because it did not harmonise any laws but because it created no harmony amongst the dedicated public servants in Queensland. It was the greatest betrayal. It showed public servants, despite the 2012 election promise that they had nothing to fear, that they did have something to fear.

I recall being in a bargaining meeting for health practitioners in September 2013. For those who do not know, health practitioners are radiographers, sonographers, pharmacists, social workers—all the essential staff who keep our health system running clinically but who are not doctors or nurses. I recall the tabling in those negotiations of an offer that would have seen those workers have take-home pay one-fifth less than their normal pay. An offer put to these workers at the time was 1.5 per cent. At that point this was the lowest offer anywhere in the Public Service in that round of bargaining. To add insult to injury, there was a reduction in their conditions—conditions like professional development provisions, radiation exposure leave and recall pay. Recall pay means that radiographers stay ready to serve at all hours of the day and night to handle emergency situations like traffic accidents, especially in rural and remote areas.

When objections were raised, the hardworking health workers were told, 'This is the new flavour in the industrial relations landscape.' And it was before the second round of the Newman LNP industrial relations reforms had even occurred, six weeks later. These workers took the view that if the law was unjust then resistance was a must. They rolled out to rallies outside this place. They rolled out to the Redcliffe by-election and stood side by side with nurses, doctors, firefighters, teachers, ambos—

Mr Elmes interjected.

Mr BROWN: I could show you the real ones. They're strippers, supposedly. They stood up and campaigned industrially and politically for fairness to be brought back to the system.

The reforms made by the previous government destroyed the independence of the Industrial Relations Commission. It made it impossible to negotiate meaningfully on important matters that public sector workers cared about, like safety and rostering. It created a climate where public sector workers could not take action as a union if they were unsatisfied. They could not even talk as a union about workplace conditions, and they could not even put up a poster. This bill has significance for me and for the union members I have worked with over the past few years because of what it represents. It represents a keeping of the faith for those union members that I have campaigned with over the past two years in particular. Items related to this bill reflect a constant source of grievance to United Voice members working in Queensland Health. They have been mistreated, and this mistreatment was an insult added to injury on top of the thousands of Health redundancies.

This bill addresses some of these things and restores fairness in a number of ways. First, it restores the independence of the Industrial Relations Commission as an independent arbiter of disputes. As the United Voice submission makes clear, the previous situation made it a requirement for the commission to consider not only what were fair pay increases but also the government's wages policy. This bill changes that. Indeed, it is hard to comprehend how independence can be claimed when the commission was required by law to consider one party's preferred outcomes as a priority over another's.

Secondly, it restores the rights of employees to employment security provisions to give them job certainty. It also restores protections against contracting out and the right to redundancy payments above the minimum. Similarly, the right to incorporate policy provisions into an agreement was removed by the LNP legislation on this matter. This, too, was nonsensical as it is a self-evident value in having things contained in a one-stop document for workers. This bill changes this too and restores the utility of agreements.

The final point I want to touch on addresses a major concern of the health workers that I campaigned with—that is, the right to consultation. Consultation about workplace change must be more than the notification that we saw under the previous government. Too often these consultations took the form of termination notices. Too often consultation was the unveiling of a grand plan for a health service or a hospital that was put forward as a fait accompli. Too often intelligent and dedicated public servants were insulted by these decrees brought forward from accountants and managers who had little understanding of clinical realities in an environment I had large dealings with.

This bill restores dignity. This bill restores a voice. This bill restores an independent umpire and, ultimately, it restores industrial harmony. My health members campaigned against the last government because they were campaigning for these things. They campaigned against the last government because they were both injured and insulted and they campaigned for dignity and respect. These health professionals are smart people. They were worried about their agreement, but the most common grievance I received from them was their lack of faith in the government that they saw as their employer and their lack of confidence in the industrial relations system that had been weighted so heavily in favour of their employer. They wanted moderate government that acted

responsibly—as previous Labor governments have—to keep the playing field level and create an environment of fairness for bargaining and fairness for raising concerns in a cooperative manner. This bill starts the healing process.

I know those opposite are seeking any mechanism they can to conjure up some opposition to what this bill represents. It is particularly craven to try and oppose fairness, but every day those opposite surprise me in the complex twists, turns and spins they pull to invent some way to justify their rabid opposition to everything put forward in this place. I recommend that they take a wider view and reconsider the degree to which they have bought in to an ideology that demonises union members and public servants. I say to those opposite in their time of soul searching: have no fear. Union bullyboys are a *Courier-Mail* beat-up. Most of the union activists I have worked with are dentists, pharmacists, sonographers and radiographers—some of the strongest unionists I have ever met. Although I would like to see how those opposite would fare against radiographers, I do not see them using standover tactics. They use solidarity and collective intelligence—the only weapons these workers had to level the playing field under Newman. In these stakes, I think the radiographers would come out on top. As a wise man once said though, never interrupt your opponents when they are making a mistake. In that vein, I say to those opposite: carry on! I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (9.02 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 introduced in the House on 7 May and referred to the Finance and Administration Committee to report to the House by 1 June, setting a negative precedent for inadequate hearing times. Not surprisingly, the committee report stated—

During its consideration of the Bill it became apparent that the Committee would be unable to reach agreement on this issue.

Rushed legislation such as this, especially when policy is prioritised to cash in an IOU rather than create jobs and govern for all Queenslanders, is destined to cause not only committee but also voter dissent. At the outset I want to acknowledge the important role of unions in the workplace. As the honourable member for Mansfield said earlier, the opposition's argument with this bill is the government's very close relationship with unions. The member for Gaven outlined in his maiden speech his involvement in the formation of EMSPA, the Emergency Medical Services Protection Association. I was delighted to assist in the birth of this association and begin the reform of employee representation in Australia. The honourable member distinguished this movement from some of the larger unions by saying it—

... was established as a professional association to provide representation and support solely for the benefit of ambulance officers and not a political party.

That is exactly what a union should be about—the benefits of workers and not a political weapon utilising membership fees for party political campaigns, not a union according to the honourable member like the LHMU, now United Voice, that not only failed in its duty to represent its union members but was also complicit with QAS management and the Labor government of the time. I therefore place on record my concerns about legislation such as this being rushed through our parliament. It does nothing to quash concerns that members of the public have with the wider union movement's perceived ownership of the Labor Party.

The committee received 1,040 submissions—a substantial number, especially when one considers that it only had a total of 17 working days for consideration of this bill. I commend it for its hard work. It is disappointing that this Labor administration went to the last election with, and continues to spruik, a platform of being a government that listens to the people but before us today we have yet another example of this being no more than a hollow sentiment. Of particular note is the lack of inclusiveness in this process. The committee report notes—

... the non-government Members made the point strongly that the very late inclusion of Councils in the invitation list and the very short time frame for the Councils to make submissions put them at a distinct disadvantage.

In more evidence of the failure to be truly inclusive in its consultation, the committee report states—

The Committee also sought advice from the department regarding why individual unions were consulted as well as the Queensland Council of Unions ... but only the LGAQ and not the individual councils.

Finally, the report notes—

The representatives from the Queensland Law Society ... and the Bar Association of Queensland both advised the Committee that they were consulted on the Bill late the day before the Bill was introduced into the Parliament.

That is simply not fair, but Labor has form here. The Treasurer has failed to articulate the genuine need for such haste. The question as to why this legislation was rushed through deserves an answer. After three months in government, all Labor has to show is more than 40 reviews underway and a state of total inertia. And now this House is being used as a political weapon by those opposite to tear down LNP reforms by repealing the significant inroads we made. Whilst people across greater Queensland might not know of this government's intentions, there are some who do. As the editorial in the *Courier-Mail* titled 'Special privileges for unions a step too far' said—

But one group isn't waiting for any mission statement from George Street Queensland. Unions know a soft touch when they see one and what better way to arrest falling membership numbers than get one of the state's biggest employers to hand out sign-up forms to employees and put in a good word for the shop steward at the same time.

In his introductory speech the Treasurer said that this bill puts fairness back into Queensland's industrial relations system. Fairness? How is it fair that private and personal details of government employees are handed over without consent or knowledge? How is it fair that taxpayer funds will be used to push union agenda? How is it fair that these union encouragement clauses will be forced on the Public Service despite union participation in the public sector shrinking when fewer than two out of five and of all workers four out of five actively choose not to be part of a union? This Labor government's brazen policy says—

Passive acceptance by agencies of membership recruitment activity by unions **does not satisfy** the government's commitment.

These words should be ringing in the ears of innocent Queenslanders—ringing loudly in tones that remind one of socialist rule in faraway countries. Des Houghton raised the alarm on 18 May when he said—

The pact means the State Government will in effect become a recruiting arm of the union movement, with union delegates granted a free run of agencies.

And, if you thought it was just the Public Service that should be fearful, he continues—

Union delegates will be given taxpayer subsidised office space, telephones, computers, noticeboards and other facilities and allowed to recruit members and conduct union business during office hours.

So not only does the policy and this bill seek to invade the privacy of the public sector; it is doing so at the expense of the taxpayer. Patrick Hannaford of the *Australian* on 25 May noted—

The use of taxpayer resources to increase union membership is a fundamental attack on freedom of association ... Rather than acting in the public's interest Palaszczuk has chosen to use people's hard-earned money to empower a special interest group.

In addition to union encouragement clauses, the bill also seeks to remove the notice requirements for an authorised industrial officer to enter a workplace and exercise rights under the act.

I understand that this issue was discussed at length by the committee, with opposition members rightly raising concern about unfettered access that would be inconsistent with the Fair Work Act 2009. A retention of the requirement for a notice period of 24 hours would be appropriate and fair. Letters to the editor headed, 'Union hold over Premier a worry' and 'Recruiting for unions raises ethical issues' show that Queenslanders did not vote for a government that is at the beck and call of its union mates. But that is exactly what is happening when legislation such as this bill is rushed through the parliament.

We know why the government is doing it. If members were witness to the conga line of Labor ministers and members who used their maiden speeches and address-in-reply speeches to thump their chest and thank the unions with more mentions than their own families, they would realise how beholden Labor members are to their beloved unions. They know that they cannot win elections without them to spread malicious, untrue propaganda.

The Local Government Association of Queensland in its submission made the point that councils should be able to operate in an environment of industrial stability and need to have confidence in the integrity of the industrial system in which they operate. In its submission the Local Government Association of Queensland stated—

Elements of this Bill serve to undermine that integrity and stability.

And further that the—

LGAQ welcomed the Award Modernisation process of 2014 ... to thoroughly address what was—

in their view—

... an untenable and unsustainable system of award regulation.

This bill proposes to reverse this award modernisation process. Despite in some cases seeing up to 96 per cent of employees voting for new certified agreements, local councils have had their certified agreements effectively overridden. The LGAQ states the following in its submission—

A fundamental principle in Industrial Relations that bargains struck lawfully and voluntarily will be honoured by the affected parties—

If those bargains can be affected by third parties, such as the government, then—

... all future bargaining will be approached with scepticism as to their level of certainty and necessary compliance.

I note that councils expressed their strongest possible objections to the proposed amendments. It is disappointing that this government is ignoring those concerns.

Taking away the 'no contracting out provision' means that small businesses in regional towns in particular will feel the burden. Some local councils have already voted for a new certified enterprise bargaining agreement. These views were echoed in the submissions of councils such as Mareeba, Tablelands and North Burnett.

I have listened to many speeches on this bill and heard the nonsense being peddled by Labor members. They talk of work conditions, the treatment of workers, the arrogance of governments and morale. After 11 years as a very proud member for Currumbin, and most of it in opposition, I can say that arrogance reigned in this place under the Labor Party. Nurses did not get paid—

A government member interjected.

Mrs STUCKEY: The member can laugh that nurses did not get paid. Doctors were told to drink more coffee to combat their ridiculous working hours, ambulance officers were forced to work double shifts and Labor MPs went to jail. In my 11 years in this House, under the Labor government, bills were rushed through the House, others were guillotined to prevent members debating them and gutter language was used to berate the opposition. So I say to those opposite to get their own house in order before they attack ours. They talk about breaching trust, but a number of ministers and members opposite sat around a cabinet table and sold off the state in a fire sale.

(Time expired)

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (9.12 pm): I rise as I have done on many other occasions in many other forums to advocate strongly for the rights of workers to organise a union. Over the years, I have copped many barbs for being prepared to stand collectively with my fellow workers and, no doubt, a few will be thrown my way right now. But I will willingly cop these, because what we do here is fundamentally right. As someone who is committed to social justice, it gives me great pleasure to rise to speak in support of the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015.

There will always be debate about what constitutes fairness. For me, fairness has always been difficult to define, but when it is absent it is very easy to identify. I think the steps taken by the previous government to destroy the rights of workers—rights enshrined by no lesser body than the United Nations in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—are an obvious example of unfairness. During my short time in this House, I have been shocked and disgusted by the vitriol expressed towards legitimate industrial organisations. Like most average workers who joined a union, I did so because I wanted to have my interests protected. Later, I realised the power of union members to achieve real and lasting social change. Perhaps that is what worries those opposite.

I thank the health minister for again pointing out yesterday the gagging of community organisations. The political party opposite seems so insecure that it cannot handle any group or organisation that seeks to advocate strongly on any issue. It seeks to destroy unions, gag community organisations and silence the voices of local residents in the planning and development of their own communities. Anyone or any group against the LNP is denigrated and, if it has the opportunity, legislated into silence or oblivion.

Over hundreds of years, we have seen multiple attempts to destroy the capacity of workers to organise. In recent history, we have seen the federal colleagues of those opposite introduce the very despised Work Choices. Then the former LNP state government brought in its own suite of antiworker changes. That went well for them! The voting public sent them a strong message twice. Sadly, they do not listen.

I support the objectives of this bill. The first objective is to implement the commitments of the Palaszczuk government. Yesterday, the member for Surfers Paradise said that he wanted the Palaszczuk government to implement its election promises. That is a fine sentiment. He now has the opportunity to achieve this by voting for this bill.

We proudly support the right of workers to organise, just like we support the rights of community organisations to advocate for their members. We recognise that workers who choose to form a union play an important and constructive function in our democracy just as we recognise that farmers, or small business owners, or any group that forms an association to advocate on their behalf collectively, are a crucial part of a functioning democracy. I have taken the step of joining both local chambers of commerce in my area as I recognise the important role these organisations play in my local area. As those opposite salivate over their desire to destroy unions of workers, they should perhaps take a moment to consider life in countries where workers are forced to sneak around, often with significant threats to their personal safety. Those countries fall far short of the type of democracy that we would recognise and one that we all play an important part in building in this country.

The re-establishment of the independence of the Industrial Relations Commission in determining wage cases and returning the commission to its position as a layperson's tribunal, where employees and union advocates operate on a level playing field with employers, is another objective that I fully support. You do not have to travel far overseas or go far back in history to find out happens when there is no effective or independent mechanism for resolving disputes between employers and employees. The disputes neither go away, nor do they resolve themselves; they fester and they explode. In Australia, we have found another way—a better way, a unique way—that resolves disputes in a manner that balances the outcomes between the parties. It has resulted in growth and shared prosperity.

Many people were transported to this country for committing the crime of conspiracy. People who were ripped from their homes did not give up. Against the odds and against the laws, they built unions. They struggled and they won. They built a new system that resulted in the Harvester decision—a decision that enshrined a fair go. We should be proud of this system and support it, not continually try to destroy it.

Let me talk about right-of-entry provisions that allow new employees to be asked to join a union. Over 10 years as a union official, I used my right-of-entry card on a very small number of occasions and each involved significant safety issues. Over 10 years I had occasion to force my way into a workplace on only very few occasions. This suggests to me that in workplaces where union delegates and officials can enter freely safely is taken seriously. Over the years in the public sector I have approached workers as a fellow worker, as a delegate and as an official. I have always identified myself and my purpose, which was followed by an offer to end the conversation if the worker was not interested. I can assure members that, after speaking to thousands of workers, I ran across fewer workers than I can count on one hand who did not want to find out about what being in a union meant for them. True, they did not all join, but all but a very small minority were interested. Of course, all I knew was the work details of the worker and any suggestion that I was invading their privacy is and was ludicrous.

Let me talk about the former health minister's approach to privacy. When I joined Queensland Health in 2012, I supplied my private email address. Not long after starting I received a Queensland Health email address. I received all information from Queensland Health on that work address. Only occasionally I used my private address to communicate with my direct line managers about day-to-day operational issues and professional development activities. I seem to recall that, when the member for Southern Downs wanted to attempt to justify the decision to ignore my union and cut it out of the award modernisation process, he sent me a message to my private email address. I recall no other information arriving at this email address from anyone in Queensland Health except my direct line managers.

That was until the former health minister decided it was okay to send me information that I felt was of a political nature. I raised concerns about a potential breach of privacy with my union and it is my understanding that they took this up with the former health minister on a number of occasions, receiving no response. So it is interesting that the member for Southern Downs is now the champion of privacy. I support this bill and will continue to fight to restore fairness for workers, starting with a vote for this bill. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (9.20 pm): I rise to oppose the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. While I am on my feet tonight I will expose the toadying relationship the current government has with its union masters. Those of us on this side of the House are interested in the welfare of Public Service employees—not just those, however, who are union members. What hypocrisy that this bill dares to mention restoring fairness as part of its title. What it is restoring is the rights of union heavyweights to run this state as they did to different degrees

under previous Labor administrations. Whatever the faults of the Beattie and Bligh governments, and there were many, they pale into insignificance when compared to the weakness of this union-controlled and dominated government.

This bill does nothing about restoring fairness. It is a legislative front for union heavies to come into a workplace and bully hardworking public servants into becoming union members. I can understand the desperation of union leaders to bolster their positions with this bill, because only about 20 per cent of workers are union members. Even in the traditionally unionised public sector the proportion has dropped to significantly less than 50 per cent. If this government was serious about fairness in the workplace, as this bill proclaims, it would look at reforming provisions around enterprise bargaining and the process so that all affected workers have a say, not just union members. If unions are serious about representing their members, the best thing that they could do is to find savings, flexibility and efficiencies rather than scheming with this administration to entrench their own power.

The *Courier-Mail* identified the issue clearly in an editorial last month in which it said—

It's hard to think of a greater admission of failure than the fact unions in Queensland have had to call in a debt owed to them by the Labor Party and the Palaszczuk Government to keep going.

It went on—

... the fact this was pushed through as a priority by a Government which hasn't been able to do or say much about creating and retaining jobs will do nothing to lessen the impression Ms Palaszczuk and her colleagues are there to look after their mates and the rest of us can wait our turn.

Who in this place, and we have heard them tonight, can forget the boast of left-wing United Voice union official Gary Bullock after the election when he referred publicly to United Voice MPs. These are desperate times for union leaders desperate to halt their slide in membership numbers so that they can reap the spoils of increased membership fees and influence. We saw recently revelations that soon after the Palaszczuk administration was sworn in the state secretary of the Premier's own union, the Australian Workers' Union, wrote to her demanding a meeting to discuss how the new government could reorganise the public sector workplaces to better suit unions. The head of the Together union, Alex Scott, has admitted that unions pressured the government to reintroduce the union preference provision which will turn public sector managers into union recruitment agents.

Forty-five thousand public servants covered by the core enterprise bargaining agreement found to their cost that unions can be the enemy of workers because they operate to their own agendas rather than to the needs of members. The Newman government tried for two years to give core public servants a fair and reasonable pay rise, but the offer every time was blocked by Alex Scott and his Together union cronies. Two-thirds of core public servants are not even members of the Together union but they were denied a say until the Newman government acted to override the Together union by granting a 2.2 per cent pay increase just before Christmas. The Together union was not interested in a result. The Together union was interested in yet another issue in the lead-up to the last election. When talking about that doyen of the workforce, Alex Scott, when one compares Mr Scott and his annual salary, of \$212,500 last time I looked, to those junior people in the Public Service waiting all of those months—I think the process started in about April—to try to get a small pay increase going into Christmas, isn't he one of the workers' friends?

I also do not think Queenslanders voted to allow union bosses to have access to the personal details of every new government employee, overriding an individual's right to privacy. What other antiproductivity policies does this union-owned Palaszczuk administration have in mind? While I am on my feet tonight I would like to give some of those people opposite who have only been in this place a few short weeks a little bit of a history lesson. If one goes back to the dying days of the Bligh government—remember those, when the government sold off Queensland Rail and the forestry—even it realised it had a problem with the growth of the Public Service completely out of control. It needed to do something about it. It formulated a plan. It went through and looked at each department in the Queensland Public Service, department by department, and figured out how many of those people in the Queensland Public Service were to lose their jobs.

An opposition member: What was the number?

Mr ELMES: It was 41,753. That was the plan of the Bligh government. Of those, 13,800 were front-line employees. That was the Bligh government's plan. Those opposite should talk about the fact that the Newman government and this opposition is operating in the best interests of Public Service employees. Unfortunately for those opposite, there are always honest and frustrated voices within

union and Labor ranks who are prepared to speak the truth and expose Labor for what it is: a political front run for and controlled by the union movement. Former Victorian Labor president and now candidate for national ALP president, Henry Pinski, former New South Wales treasurer and union boss Michael Costa, even former prime minister Paul Keating have recently gone public criticising the way the unions now run the Labor Party. This bill says loudly and clearly that they have ignored these warnings and the dark clouds of possible corruption and thuggery that one reads about almost every day in the southern press, if it does not go unchecked, could just as easily happen here in Queensland.

My grandfather was a waterside worker. He was a very, very proud waterside worker and I loved him dearly. I think it might have been the minister for main roads—I apologise if I have got the wrong minister—who was talking about those people who are the presidents of the P&Cs and the people who are volunteers in the community who do unpaid work as union delegates. I say good on them because they are out there doing something that they believe in. The people that I have real problems with are the Alex Scotts of this world who are sitting there dangling you lot at the end of a puppeteer's string and making sure that you dance to his tune.

This bill abandons the award modernisation process which was similar to that undertaken by the Rudd federal government between 2008 and 2009. That resulted in the number of federal awards being reduced from 1,560 to 122. I did not hear anyone complaining about that then. This bill also seeks to wind back the comprehensive minimum employment standards known as Queensland Employment Standards or QES. The QES provide a safety net of minimum employment conditions for workers and consistency and certainty for employers operating in the Queensland industrial relations jurisdiction. The bill also reasserts union dominance over service to the public in the way that Queensland public services are delivered.

The Newman government had a goal of a renewed and more efficient Public Service focused on the core and essential services that the people of Queensland need and deserve. This bill shows the Palaszczuk government's vision is focused squarely on the best interests of those very, very high ranking, very high paid, union mates. The government is treading a very sticky path by aligning itself so clearly and closely to the union hierarchy. If the other scandals surrounding this government do not bring it down, sooner or later this close toadying relationship with the union movement will.

This bill is about one thing and one thing only, which is increasing the influence and the power of unions in this state. The reason for the bill that has been brought before the House is simple: the Palaszczuk government owes a debt to the unions, which financed and ran its election campaign and that debt is being repaid tonight. What a pity it is that what drives those members opposite is not in the best interests of Queensland and Queenslanders. What a pity it is that there is no interest in making our workplace arrangements more efficient and responsive so that the state can be more productive.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (9.30 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise to support the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The worst excesses of the previous government were demonstrated in its approach to public sector industrial relations. It was arrogant, it was against its own election promises, it was in disregard of the views of experts and stakeholders, and it laid bare the disdain and disrespect it had for its workforce. They tore up workplace conditions that had been negotiated, agreed to and settled on with employees. They scrapped employment security for Public Service workers and the principle that allowed public servants to give frank and fearless advice without fear of personal repercussions. They cruelly cut 14,000 jobs and left the rest to languish under the long shadow of their axe. They limited the ability of public sector workers to exercise one of the fundamental rights of workers around the world—that is, the right to collectively bargain. They imposed politically motivated restrictions on unions and meddled in their internal management.

I support this bill because it is a true Labor bill. It restores fairness to workers, re-establishes rights to collective bargaining and unfair dismissal where removed by those opposite, and it keeps the faith with voters by delivering on a key set of election promises. We are a government of our word. One of the specific election promises we made, which is delivered in this bill, is the restoration of fair conditions for our senior public sector doctors. My colleague Minister Fentiman has already spoken about this issue, so I will simply say that the war waged on doctors by the LNP government really was extraordinary. I am proud to support this bill, which will restore fair workplace conditions for our doctors.

I note the refusal of the LNP to engage with the actual issues in this bill and to listen to the concerns of their constituents who are calling on them to support the bill. It shows they have really failed to heed the lessons of their electoral defeat. They keep carrying on with this fake outrage about their new-found passion: the privacy rights of government workers. For the past three years they had no interest at all in any of the rights of government workers. Now, all of a sudden, they are deeply concerned about their privacy. I am proud to stand up for the rights of public sector workers and I am proud to commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (9.32 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the bill before the House tonight. I have listened to numerous speakers from the government side. They talk about the trust of the workers. They talk about how employees should be treated with dignity. They talk about their belief that under the LNP workers were expendable and their services were not valued. They claim that the bill before the House will, in fact, put in place the protection all government employees enjoy. I agree with the member for Everton, who said that this bill really takes away the freedom of choice of workers. It is as simple as that. It takes away the freedom for workers to choose whether or not they want to be in a union.

Tonight the ALP members are championing their claim to protect the workers and they have said that the unions are there to protect the workers, but it was not that long ago that both, in fact, walked away from the workers. Those who were here can vividly recall the number of telephone calls that members on this side of the House received from numerous nurses who did not get paid. Week after week, those nurses had to line up for a handout to try to meet their mortgage repayments, to try to put food on their tables and to try to put petrol in their cars to get to and from work and to take their children to and from school. It was not all that long ago that we on this side of the House were inundated by calls from the same workers ALP members claim they are championing tonight, yet the ALP turned their backs on them and walked away from them.

I recall in this House we asked questions of Rob Swarten, Paul Lucas and Robertson, trying to get them to admit that the government of the day, which had put in place the diabolical system that led to the payroll debacle, should accept responsibility, but they never did. They were never game enough or man enough to stand up and accept that it was that government that put all of those nurses under not just financial stress but also untold emotional stress from being unable to meet their day-to-day expenses.

Complicit in that was the QNU, because it did not rail against the ALP government. They did not do a thing. They sat on their hands and did nothing to protect their members because of a misplaced loyalty to the government. That government turned its back on the workers it claimed to represent. I can remember before the 2012 election campaign—

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! I ask the member for Sandgate and the member for Southern Downs, if they want to speak, to do it outside the chamber, please.

Mr McARDLE: I remember before the 2012 election campaign there was a question-and-answer session at the QNU. I thought for sure that a member of the QNU would raise the issue of the payroll and what we were going to do to try to fix that. Not one member of the senior executive of the QNU raised one question about their own membership and the pain they had been through. That is the sort of union that does not represent workers and the ALP government was the sort of government that did not care about them. It was concerned about its own skin and nothing else. No apology has ever been given for what was imposed upon those nurses, week after week.

The current health minister sat around the cabinet table when this would have been discussed over and over and over again. There are members in this House who were ministers at the relevant time who sat around that table, but they never made a comment. They never accepted an obligation or responsibility for what their government had done. The financial loss was one thing, but the emotional turmoil was another. Members on this side of the House spoke on the telephone to nurses who were absolutely distraught. They were trying to seek some solace, but the QNU website directed nurses who were suffering to a state member of parliament, to ask them to put forward their case. The QNU would not put up the LNP state members; it put up only ALP members. The reason was that the QNU did not want us to understand the depth of the pain and agony that their members were going through. They should hang their heads in shame for what they did not do to protect their own membership and the ALP should be forever sorrowful that they did not take up the cause of the employees they claimed to represent here tonight.

The ALP did nothing. In an estimates hearing, I asked Paul Lucas repeatedly about this issue. All he would say was, 'It wasn't under my watch.' He palmed it off. He was the minister at the time, but he would not accept any liability.

I turn quickly to the amendments. Amendment No. 7 removes chapter 6A—the arrangements for high-income senior employees. That means we go back to the old common law. I remember very vividly Ross Cartmill and then premier Bligh going head to head over these contracts. I remember Ross standing in the doorway of a building in Brisbane waving resignation letters and saying that doctors had signed the letters and he was going to tender them to the then premier. The then premier had held these doctors to a common law contract for two or three years and refused to negotiate. This is what we are going back to. We are going back to an archaic system. The amendments put through by the LNP government and the then health minister revolutionised the industrial relations framework in this state and put in place a platform to grow into the future.

It is sad to see that a debt derived from an election commitment to union mates will throw all this into jeopardy. There have been many speakers here today who have raised other issues. I brought to the attention of the House the hypocrisy in the Labor Party. The member for Noosa highlighted a little earlier that over 41,000 state government employees were going to be shown the door by the ALP. As he said, 'Don't come to our house until your house is in order.'

This bill is a sham. It is a debt. It is a payback. It is an invoice received and a cheque written by the ALP to the unions to give them the power they want to yet again control the ALP in this state. It is epidemic across the nation. If it was a disease you would cut it out. But we cannot. In five years time we will look back on this and say, 'What a disaster this has been.' The unions will be back in charge. The thugs will be in charge of the cabinet table and the mugs in the ALP in this House will be doing their bidding. This bill simply is not worth the paper it is written on and should be opposed.

 **Miss BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (9.42 pm): I rise tonight to speak in support of the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. It is hard to believe that we are here again 124 years later. The party of which I am a member—the great Queensland Labor Party—was formed in this state 124 years ago because of a simple grievance. It was formed because, as long as Queensland could take away the rights of working people with the stroke of a pen, workers had no hope of negotiating fairly with entrenched employer powers and entrenched upper-class privilege.

The Labor Party was born in Queensland out of a failed industrial campaign in 1891. Less than one decade later the world saw its first Labor government in Queensland—short lived though it was. This week we celebrated 100 years since the TJ Ryan government—the first popularly elected Labor government in Queensland.

The parallels between 1915 and 2015 are striking. A premier wins an election with a tough-on-crime message, with a cuts agenda, alienates the community with industrial reforms and by neglecting the economy, loses an election in his own seat in dramatic fashion and a reforming Labor government comes into power.

I recall working with my union, United Voice—the health professionals union—during the years of the Newman and Bligh governments. Both governments negotiated hard from an employer perspective. Both were zealous in seeking public sector efficiencies. Both were seeking to keep the Queensland Health as small as possible. However, only the Newman government sought to pull a swiftie and change the rules of the game.

Only Newman would dare to try to remove the independence of the industrial commission. Only Newman would grant his ministers overriding rights on agreement. Only Newman would create a list of prohibited items from industrial agreements. Radical notions like workplace health and safety, training, rostering arrangements and—shock horror—wage increases were banned from agreements. It was hubris and arrogance at its finest. The LNP do not like the campaigning and fighting capacity of Queensland unions so they targeted them. In targeting them they forgot that those whom they were really targeting were ordinary, hardworking, committed Queenslanders.

By removing the protections we are reinstating today, the LNP had a free-for-all attack on the government departments our daily lives depend upon. It was truly sickening to watch. I recall more than one conversation on the election trail that made me both sick to the stomach and brought tears to my eyes. Every single worker touched by the LNP through the removal of protections was a sad and sorry story. But it was not just a story; it was a reality. Lives were torn apart and, for many, lives are not yet put back together.

Do you know what? Queenslanders do not like it when other Queenslanders get picked on. They do not like governments targeting their school staff or their health professionals. They do not like seeing their mates hard done by. So they stood up, rallied and took action. They petitioned and voted in Redcliffe and Stafford. When none of those things hit the message home to the Tories, they rose up in January in a record-breaking fashion and flushed the crew opposite out of power. It was just one of the reasons they were voted out, but it was a big one. The result in January is my Queensland Labor Party living up to its heritage and standing mission in this state—its entire reason for being; to protect fairness for working people.

So what does this bill do? In short, it does not do anything new. It takes us back to the fairness that existed before the time of the Newman government—a nightmare from which this state is still waking with relief. The measures in this bill will be familiar to anyone in our Public Service who has been there for more than three years. The measures will not be unfamiliar to pharmacists, teachers, child safety officers and so many hardworking public servants. They will not be unfamiliar because this bill reinstates the measures that were longstanding protections. These protections were stripped away in a cruel and callous way by those opposite. Workers have been mistreated and at the same time unions demonised to make way for the small government ideology of the LNP. It is the same old story—they tear it down, we build it up; they mess it up, we clean it up; they tear it apart, we put it back together.

Here is how we are going to put things back together. This bill reinstates employment conditions for government workers that were lost as a result of the changes to the Industrial Relations Act 1999 in both 2012 and 2013 at the hands of those opposite. This bill reinstates the independence of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission, the QIRC, when determining wage cases. This bill returns the commission to its rightful place. The commission will once again be a layperson tribunal where a level playing field will be established between employees and their union advocates and employers and their advocates.

Lastly, this bill restores the longstanding ability for union officials and delegates to freely communicate with and access members, to work together to make their workplaces better, to make our government departments more effective, more efficient and fair. I repeat: these are longstanding customs and practices. These include industrial provisions such as contracting, employment security, union encouragement, private practice and redundancy provisions. They are not new. They are not revolutionary. They are things that workers have been doing through their unions in our state for decades. They are protections, rights and entitlements that public servants have always had. Those opposite stripped them away in their failed experiment.

As a principle, workers should always be allowed to talk and negotiate with their boss about any item they wish to raise. This is a principle of honest communication that was wrecked under the LNP. Their changes meant that a group of workers, like Queensland ambulance officers or firefighters, could have their agreements intervened upon at the discretion of the government of the day during negotiations. They would be referred to the government appointed commissioners for arbitration. These commissioners would be put on short-term contracts at the government's discretion. These commissioners were supposed to adjudicate these referrals without fear or favour? Please.

It was an LNP commission set up not to be a tribunal for dispute resolution but to implement LNP policy. The commission had its hands tied behind its back. Pay increases could only be awarded in line with the policy of the government of the day. Even if the commission felt that their skills, duties and responsibilities deserved more or a higher increase was fair, it was bound by the government's budgetary position. As I have said previously in this place, it was rank hypocrisy of those opposite to award themselves extravagant increases while denying the rest of our state's public servants even fair cost-of-living increases.

This bill re-establishes the independence of the commission by repealing the provisions that made it a policy enforcement body and return its powers as an arbitration tribunal. As I have shared with this House, I proudly worked as an official for one of Queensland's largest and strongest unions. I have appeared before the QIRC to advocate for workers. Like all tribunals and courts, I understand the importance of fairness and balance in our state's industrial commission. It is an underpinning element of any democratic society that we get a fair hearing for our grievances.

Those opposite ignored the grievances of Queenslanders while they were in power. They did not want to talk about the lion's share of these measures in this bill and they are not focusing on them here tonight. In their paranoia of union hate, they cannot move past the fact that Queensland workers through

their unions campaigned in the community in January and we won, that employees once again can talk to their unions in their workplace, that they can talk about unions in their workplace, that they can hang a flyer on their union notice board, that they can have a discussion with their colleagues as a union about what will make their workplace better or what will make their jobs better.

Unionists are workers who are striving to achieve better conditions of life and work for others. Unionists are people with a deep appreciation and regard for democracy. Unionists fight for a fair go for all.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Miss BOYD: He does not want to—

An honourable member: He's being very provocative.

Miss BOYD: He sure is. Unionists formed our party to carry these values into parliament and we do it once again here proudly with this bill. Solidarity forever, comrades. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr GORDON** (Cook—Ind) (9.51 pm): It gives me considerable pleasure to rise tonight to give my first speech in debate on such an admirable bill. This bill winds back a raft of amendments introduced by the former government that reduced workers' rights. It implements this government's pre-election commitments to restore fairness to Queensland's public sector and local government. The previous government showed disdain for workers in general and public sector workers in particular. They showed their attitude towards workers very clearly and very early in their term by breaking an election promise not to sack public sector workers. Then they set about sacking 14,000 of them.

This was followed by the wholesale withdrawal of funding from the community sector, causing thousands more workers to lose their jobs. While this bill cannot and will not restore all of those jobs lost or overcome the hardship and despair of those who lost their jobs, this bill restores balance and reasonableness to the Queensland industrial relations system.

The former government legislated a raft of amendments to the Industrial Relations Act that ate away at public servants' rights. This, combined with their rolling program of redundancies, caused very low morale in the Public Service. In my own seat of Cook, services fell away and workers strained under ridiculously heavy workloads. Of course, as part of their strategy, the former government amended the act to limit public servants' access to their union representatives and their union's capacity to represent them.

This bill restores reasonable rights of access to workplaces for all union representatives. A healthy industrial relations system depends upon employees having ease of access to their representatives and vice versa. It is conducive to a harmonious and productive workplace. Denying this ease of contact is counterproductive.

Amongst the changes this bill brings is the allowance for certain employment entitlements to be included in industrial instruments such as awards and certified agreements. Among them is the provision for employment security which was removed by the former government's amendments. So this change is very appropriate, given the former LNP government's actions both as an employer and as a legislator. They made it very clear to their workers that they had no rights to security of employment—none at all.

This bill also allows for inclusion in awards and agreements protection against contracting out. Over recent years there has been a widespread tendency in governments at all levels to contract out services they had traditionally provided. The former Queensland government was no exception to this. When jobs were contracted out, no provision was made for those losing their jobs to be offered employment with the incoming contractors. Nor was there a requirement that rates of pay and conditions for workers moving over to contractors be maintained. What happened to these rates paid by the appointed contractors? They reverted to minimum rates. They moved from certified agreement rates, negotiated by their unions over many years, to the bare safety net rates. Those workers who were lucky enough to be kept on by contractors suffered huge losses of income. This was grossly unfair. So I support the right of parties to insert clauses into certified agreements to protect workers from contracting out.

There are seven modern agreements that have already been made under the LNP's restrictive bargaining regime. Two of these agreements apply to local government entities in my electorate and, as such, are of special interest to me. They are the Mareeba Shire Council Certified Agreement 2014-2017 and the Torres Strait Island Regional Council Agreement 2015. This bill provides that these

modern agreements, including the two mentioned, will be given new nominal expiry dates three months from the variation of the underpinning modern award. They can then renegotiate these arrangements under the new fairer framework.

Bargaining for a replacement agreement is being taken to have commenced once the underpinning modern award has been varied by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. It will ensure that employees engaged under these agreements will not be disadvantaged relative to those employees whose agreements will be made under the new fairer framework. This brings justice to these employees, including those in the electorate of Cook employed by the Mareeba Shire Council and the Torres Strait Island Regional Council. They will not be disadvantaged.

This bill seeks to restore fairness and balance to Queensland's industrial relations legislation. It seeks to return rights and respect to our respected Queensland public servants and local government workers upon whom we all depend. The changes introduced by the former government were unfair. This bill goes some way to restoring industrial fairness to Queensland government and local government employees. I commend the government for moving swiftly to fulfil this critical pre-election commitment by bringing this bill to the House. I commend the bill to the House, and I support it.

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (9.58 pm): I rise this evening to make a contribution to the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. This bill amends the Industrial Relations Act 1999 and the Industrial Relations Regulation 2011. The policy objectives of the bill are to give effect to the government's election commitments and priorities relating to restoring fairness for government workers and restoring the ability of industrial organisations and their representatives to freely organise and access members so as to enhance and protect their industrial interests.

I have seen industrial relations legislation changes as each successive government changes since 1980. I can recall when the industrial relations minister Vince Lester first introduced in this place a form of individual contracts into Queensland providing for lesser conditions in the transport awards in this state for MiniMovers, a removalist company.

Then we saw the accords brought in by the Labor Hawke government allowing for award modernisation and bargaining in the workplace, moving away from a centralised award and wages system. Subsequently, we saw the federal coalition government bring in the Workplace Relations Act 1996, which provided for individual contracts and fundamental changes to workers and their representatives, placing hurdles in their way for fair representation in the workplace and the ability to bargain fairly. Back in 1997 the then Liberal industrial relations minister, Santo Santoro, once again in this place—

Mr King: I've heard that name before.

Mr FURNER: I will take that interjection. Santo Santoro was the industrial relations minister in this place and he mirrored the Workplace Relations Act 1996, creating the Workplace Relations Act 1997. There was no rocket science in doing this. He actually turned the act over and made three slight changes. That is how lazy that minister was. He turned it over, changed the title of the act to the Workplace Relations Act 1997, increased the notice period from 24 hours to 48 hours and changed the title of Australian workplace agreements to Queensland workplace agreements. They were the only changes those on that side could fundamentally do for industrial relations in this place. That is what credence they give to workers in Queensland.

The worst piece of industrial relations legislation was passed through the Australian Senate towards the end of 2005—Work Choices. Work Choices saw the back of the Howard government, as did the changes to the previous Industrial Relations Act introduced by the Newman LNP government. We are an egalitarian society built on a fair go for all, and this Palaszczuk Labor government today is correcting the wrongs those opposite created. As history repeats itself, as it did in 2008 in the Australian Senate, it follows tonight in this House that we as a Labor government will introduce fair and reasonable industrial relations conditions for workers—the workers whom we on this side represent.

We listened to the evidence given at the hearing. Example after example was provided either by those who gave evidence at the public hearing on this bill or by those who sent submissions to the committee. Mr Spreckley, representing the United Firefighters Union of Queensland, explained in his evidence that impediments were placed in the way of our firefighters receiving an outcome. He stated—

After just four weeks of discussion between the parties, the government prematurely referred the fire service bargaining to the QIRC. In a period of almost three years the QIRC still has not produced a final order resulting from that arbitration.

That is what those members on the opposite side think of firefighters. Furthermore, during that period, the pay rates of firefighters at the lowest classification levels actually fell below the minimum award rates. The overall result is that firefighter wages have slipped about 2.7 per cent behind the inflation rate over that period.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr FURNER: Do not come into this chamber pretending you care for firefighters. Don't you ever do that, member for Kawana. It is little wonder that the United Firefighters Union and their members campaigned at the Redcliffe by-election and contributed to the landslide victory when Yvette D'Ath became the member for Redcliffe.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr FURNER: The disregard you had for those members, claiming they were acting—you are a disgrace, such a disgrace. Dr Turnbull, from the Australian Salaried Medical Officers' Federation, referred in his evidence before the committee to the tragic case of a 10-year-old girl who fell out of a top bunk, cracked her head and died of an intracranial haemorrhage. In the coronial inquest report, the coroner declared that one very significant factor was doctor fatigue. The young doctor concerned, who was a graduate of less than two years standing, had been on duty for 20 hours of a 24-hour shift and was clearly fatigued by that time.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr FURNER: If I want nonsense from you, I will come over there and squeeze your head. Further real-life experiences of the effect of those insidious LNP laws were provided through evidence from Ms MacDonald, a local government worker at the Mackay Regional Council. Ms MacDonald explained how she and her work colleagues lost many valuable conditions from the industrial award they work under—specifically, the locality allowance, fifth week annual leave provisions, job security and major change notification. She explained that as a single mother she struggles each day to assure her children that everything will be okay when she is unsure herself. Losing \$18.65 in the locality allowance, meaning a drop of almost \$1,000 a year, has had a significant impact on her family.

We heard tonight members opposite in this chamber talking about freedom of choice. What freedom of choice did Ms MacDonald have in respect of losing her locality allowance? What freedom of choice did Dr Turnbull have in working 20 hours of a 24-hour shift? What freedom of choice did the firefighters have in having their wages impeded and held up for three years? There was no freedom of choice at all. So the LNP members cannot come in here and lecture to us about freedom of choice. These scurrilous LNP laws which attack workers, their rights and their conditions will be corrected tonight. This year's Encore Score is out on the most hated public figures and it delivered second place to Tony Abbott, who just missed out on first to disgraced entertainer Rolf Harris. I encourage those opposite to remain off this list by coming over here and supporting this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (10.05 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. It was during the past industrial relations changes that we saw a range of employment conditions removed, leaving our public sector workers unable to negotiate on specific terms and conditions. This affected hundreds of thousands of jobs across the state. Workers have been denied many rights, such as locality allowances and job security, and they were unable to speak about many matters of concern to them. These are all significant issues for those who live in the electorate of Dalrymple.

Since then I have heard from many public sector workers, specifically council workers, who are concerned about the changes. Some agreements under the conditions, though certified, have been labelled unfair due to the list of non-negotiables. The ability to bargain all aspects of workplace agreements is a right I am happy to help restore. I believe the introduction of the bill will increase job security. Certainty for workers and their families is vital for the continuation of small country towns as confidence in the workplace flows on economically through local communities.

In supporting this bill, I believe this is very important, and I will use a council worker as an example. Many council workers have come to me expressing great concern over Newman's harmonisation legislation and having to negotiate under those agreements. Council workers work their guts out all their lives—they are up there amongst the flies, the crows, the heat and the dust, out in many different country towns living in dongas and caravans. By the time they retire, they have just paid off their house and possibly their car and they have a few dollars to spend. Under the Newman

legislation, the nine-day fortnight and the locality allowance were taken away. They are important things. The previous speaker mentioned losing \$1,000 a year, and those council workers probably lost \$600 but that money was everything to them because they were not on much money to start with. To take these conditions off them is a low act because of the way these people live.

Many CEOs have said that the sky was going to fall in with regard to the councils. They said it was going to cost them hundreds of thousands of dollars, but do you know that those hundreds of thousands of dollars are coming out of the workers' pay packets that they said they were going to save? It is all right for the CEO who is on \$160,000 or \$180,000 a year, but for that working-class person on \$45,000 or \$50,000 a year, a nine-day fortnight is everything to them because they go out west, they work, they come back and they have three days with their family. That is important to them—the locality allowance, the right to bargain and all of these things.

Likewise, we want to ensure that the economy is doing well. When the Newman government sacked 16,000 employees there was a lack of confidence out there. That was a great stunt: they thought that, when they went to the next election, everyone would have forgotten about it. It was also a low act when they promised during the election campaign that they would be public servant friendly. It was the lowest lying act we have ever seen to hear someone promise, 'We will look after you. We will care for you. Vote for us and, likewise, there will be no asset sales.' We saw a low, lying act. That is the way that I see it.

Mr ELMES: I rise to a point of order.

Mr KNUTH: I withdraw, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr ELMES: The member has used the word 'lying' twice.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! Thank you, the member for Dalrymple has withdrawn and he has the call.

Mr KNUTH: Business has suffered because the person who was about to spend money to buy a house all of a sudden did not have a job. So he did not buy a house. Then the builder did not have a job to build. His workers also did not have a job because the builder did not have a house to build. Then his mate the public servant, who did have a job, was so insecure about his job that he did not buy his new car. He did not spend because he was concerned about his job security. This filtered right throughout the state. The ripple effects of sacking those 16,000 employees are still being felt today, including in rural and regional Queensland. We are suffering very, very badly. The member for Mount Isa and I went out to Hughenden because of job cutbacks. I cannot recall, but I believe there was going to be 75 in the region. That hall filled with people and half of them were businesspeople.

Mr Katter interjected.

Mr KNUTH: It was more than half who were businesspeople because they relied on those railway jobs in order to survive. When they closed down the railway station in Charters Towers, 37 workers—and families—lost their job. Many left town. Small business there will tell honourable members right now that they felt the impacts of that a month after those jobs were gone. It is so important to look after the working-class people.

Another example is the railway station closures out in midwest Queensland, and I have mentioned this before. I used to work out there. I remember small country towns such as Nelia, Nonda, Maxwelton and Torrens Creek, all thriving little communities with a station master and a shunter. Pentland is another one. The train would pull up, the truck driver would pick up the goods. Those children at that station would go to the school. Because of that, the teachers were employed. One railway station was closed down and the school closed down, the little butcher's shop closed down, the truckie does not have a job and that is it; that is the end of those country towns.

That is why when the councils come out and say that the sky is falling I believe they are totally misleading people. The Local Government Association, likewise, have been misleading people. When we tie in these factors it is clear that we have to look after the working-class people; they are the backbone of this country. They work, they pay their taxes, they are generous, they buy raffle tickets and they contribute to our society. I am very pleased that this bill is coming in to restore those rights to those workers so they can contribute and play their part. We saw what happened when those rights were taken away. We almost saw a recession in this state. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (10.13 pm): I rise to speak in support of this bill and the amendments moved by the Treasurer and Minister for Industrial Relations. I wish to speak only briefly to this bill and I do so simply because it does what it says. I rise as a former lay advocate and Industrial Relations Commissioner, with 20 years as a workers' rights advocate, as a unionist and as a

local representative who delivers what I promise. The Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill will restore fairness. It will rebuild, it will repair, it is just, it is unbiased and it is equitable.

I want to acknowledge the work of the parliamentary committee on this bill. I also want to acknowledge this point: the government employees who have been listening to this debate, the parliamentary staff who serve us in this place, are some of the people that this bill is all about. I also wish to acknowledge the contribution of the member for Dalrymple, who ably represents two members of my family, two government employees living in Charters Towers. I say thank you.

To listen to the commentary from those opposite over the course of the past two weeks, one would think we are here to debate a bill that might impact on the operations of ASIO. That is the point, is it not? The debate that the opposition wants to have has very little to do with effective industrial relations. The objections to the bill from those opposite are not about whether or not the bill creates effective industrial relations systems and processes for a couple of hundred thousand Queensland government employees. It was clear from the committee hearings that I attended that little interest is apparent from the opposition in the effectiveness of industrial relations in Queensland. I attended the public hearings of the Finance and Administration Committee last Monday, 25 June 2015 for several hours. I am concerned about the focus of this debate by some. In four hours of hearings of the Finance and Administration Committee last Monday, the opposition members asked a total of 21 questions that pertained directly to the involvement of unions in workplaces. Their questions generally focused on whether or not the bill would have the effect of conferring on workers a greater level of propensity to become a member of their relevant union. I wonder if anyone here tonight can guess how many questions the opposition members of the committee asked about the service delivery impacts of this bill. Can anyone guess? The answer is zero. That makes it clear: 21 to zero—21 occasions that the opposition members raised concerns and objections about workers being represented in the workplace, having a right to have a say on their conditions, and zero in relation to the service delivery impacts of this bill.

Last week I met with a delegation of government employees in the Springwood electorate office. This last week I have personally spoken with over a thousand government employees on the telephone. I also thank Julie of Daisy Hill and Gordon of Shailer Park for taking the time to come to the Springwood electorate office to tell me why this parliament should vote in favour of passing this bill. I have also heard from health practitioners such as radiographers, as my parliamentary colleague the member for Capalaba spoke about earlier. They told me about the improved outcomes that important consultative mechanisms in the workplace have had. They explained the following outcomes benefitting the Logan Hospital CT unit and the patients who, unfortunately, end up there. They talked about their consultative committee providing radiographer training, decreasing stress and fatigue, reducing inefficiencies, reducing patient waiting times and improving patient experience. These measures not only reduce staff turnover in that department, saving this government millions in taxpayer funds; these measures save lives. I note the submission made by United Voice, the union that represents them, which stated—

The limitations under—

the current act—

are unacceptable and ultimately deny important rights and conditions to our members. Of particular concern to our members are:

...

The prohibition on provisions that deal with training arrangements. Skills development and increased knowledge are critical to enable an employee to perform their role more effectively, to progress, and to contribute to improved outcomes in the workplace. Employees are often best placed to know what training needs are required and deserve meaningful input, as well as certainty, around the support that employers will provide by way of training and professional development ...

The Queensland government should aim to set the highest standards in workplace relations. A submission to the 2014 Australian Senate Select Committee on Certain Aspects of the Queensland Government Administration pointed out—

Australia is also a signatory to a number of International Labour Organisation ... instruments, including the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention ... the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention ...

The submission said that Queensland's Industrial Relations (Fair Work Harmonisation) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2015 introduced by the Newman government is inconsistent with ILO convention No. 87 and within ILO convention No. 98 that protects the right of individual workers to join together and take action to improve their employment conditions.

Australia and Queensland should set a high standard that we can all be proud of, and at this time I want to refer to an independent poll that was conducted this evening in the electorate of Everton, I believe. The telephone poll asked recipients—

When it comes to the Queensland government employing nurses, teachers and other public servants, do you believe that the government should set the example for working conditions that they want other employers to achieve, or should the government employ people on the minimum legal standards required and no more? Press 1 if you believe that the Queensland government should set the example; press 2 if you think it should not.

Seventy-two per cent of voters answered that the Queensland government should set the example for working conditions that other employers should strive to achieve.

This bill in particular, through its amendments that remove restrictions on the rights of parties to an agreement to negotiate, freely returns our state to those high standards. In the past two weeks, as I mentioned, I have spoken with literally thousands of employees of this government who want fairness restored. This bill will restore fairness for 31,000 nurses employed by this state, 50,000 teachers, 1,500 members of the Queensland Police Service, 3,145 ambulance officers, 1,470 child safety officers, 600 park rangers and the list goes on. The bill will deliver for those workers, their families and the Queenslanders they serve. They ask us to bring on the vote.

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.20 pm): You would think those members opposite had been living in a different world going back a couple of years. Earlier on I was listening to the honourable member for Caloundra talking about the nurses in Queensland who were not being paid and the current health minister sat over there benignly, impotently and was not prepared to stand up for those people. In the last nine months of the Labor government, of which the member for Woodridge was a member, there were some four and a half thousand Queensland Health workers who were not re-employed and who had lost their jobs. The bulk of those people were nurses, and he said absolutely nothing. In 2011, when we had nurses ringing the opposition office asking us to assist them to get their pay, the member for Woodridge said nothing. Other members of the front bench of the government of the day said absolutely nothing, and it was a diabolical indictment on that government. Of the almost 80,000 Queensland Health workers, 70 per cent of them were underpaid, overpaid or not paid at all. Some of them were not paid for weeks or months on end, and all we heard from those members opposite was that those workers should go and get charity. They were handing out the number for the Salvation Army.

I think it is poignant to say, as the honourable member for Caloundra did: where was the Nurses' Union; where was the Together union; where was ASMOFQ? They were not helping them, and do you know why? They sent around the payroll implementation committee, and after 10 failed go-live tests they decided to push the button. Those unions sat around and they pushed the button that immolated thousands of Queensland Health workers and put them through amazing pain unlike anything they had ever seen before. What did we see from Geoff Wilson, the then minister for health? We did not see too much, because he was hiding under his desk and he had a lock on his door—the same as the current minister does—to keep away the workers. The first thing he did was put that button lock back on his door. He is terrified of the workers and terrified of the department. You can no longer walk through the door of the Health department to get to his office: you have to make an appointment. You would think he is a royal czar. You cannot even go in there and talk to him anymore because he is scared of the workers. The workers have to make an appointment to see him.

Geoff Wilson's action budget management plan said there was only going to be a 2.2 per cent pay rise for nurses in Queensland. I was asked by the then premier to do something better than that. We did .96 per cent better than that: 3.16 per cent. That is the difference between what they say about treating workers and how we treat workers. What about the 3,900 workers in Queensland Health who received a letter when the current health minister was in the cabinet saying, 'We have identified you as surplus to requirement. If you don't believe this, please sign this and send it back to us.' As a result of that, 800 Queensland Health workers were sacked. They lost their jobs, including front-line health workers. Nowhere did we see anything from the then member for Greenslopes or the current member for Woodridge.

We have seen revisionism from the current member for Ferny Grove. We know that sometimes the Senate can be a little bit like Hogwarts—removed from reality—but the case that he talked about here tonight with regard to the coroner and the issue of fatigue with that doctor happened on 6 January

2002. I am not sure who was in government on 6 January 2002, but it certainly was not the LNP government. I suspect it was the Beattie-Mackenroth government or maybe it was the Beattie-Bligh government, but it certainly was not the LNP government.

What did the Auditor-General say a year or so ago with regard to the previous government's right of private practice arrangements? Eight hundred million dollars had been paid out without any demonstrable benefit whatsoever to Queensland public health patients. He also said that, under the right of private practice arrangements, private patients were being treated in preference to public patients. Who was in government? The socialist reformers over there were in government. The member for Pine Rivers basically put up the hammer and sickle tonight and said, 'Come on with me, comrade.' Where were the 'comrades' when we saw right of private practice arrangements that saw private patients being treated in public hospitals at public expense in preference to public patients? They were nowhere to be seen. Where was the honourable member for Ferny Grove when the Labor Party was in government and we saw one particular one radiologist who worked for 16 hours a day, 180 days straight under Labor? Was the Labor Party out there revolting in the street? Where was the revolution happening? It did not exist.

What we have seen are transformational changes with regard to industrial reform that they are winding back. If the argument is that our laws went too far one way, then certainly the argument here is that these laws are too far the other way. A United Voice official sat in my office within a year of us coming to government and admitted that managerial prerogative had been restricted to the extent that it was curtailing innovation and productivity in the workplace. He was a very, very senior member of United Voice, but I am not going to embarrass him here tonight. Because of union intervention it took 18 months to shift one Queensland Health worker 16 metres on one floor as part of a restructure. That is why at the PA Hospital, with very limited gardens, we had five gardeners; in the wintertime with no gardens, when somebody went on leave the position had to be backfilled. How ridiculous is that? Similar gardens in the French countryside of 12 to 15 hectares in the summertime had the same number of gardeners, but they actually had gardens. This is the sort of nonsense that went on. If you go back to the United Kingdom in the days of Fleet Street when it went through that transformation in the early 80s, they had three people in the paper delivery van: one to drive it, one to deliver the papers and one to look out overhead for bombs. There had not been any changes since the 1940s, and they had to convince the unions of the most militant workforce at the time that they needed to come forward some 40 years because they were not dropping bombs on them any more in 1983.

This is the sort of thinking we have here. If you want balance, you need real balance—and there is no balance. What they have effectively done is take the balance out. People should have a right to join a union or not join a union. They should have the chance to choose, before their information is handed over to the CFMEU. I am not sure I would like them and their pastoral care of me, but I would like to know that I had a choice about whether my information was handed over to them. This government gives no choice with regard to that. The imbalance has gone too far.

I mention the doctors contracts in Queensland. When ASMOFQ—those that opposed this—actually had a ballot to determine who was in favour, 54 per cent of those doctors voted in favour of it and 34 per cent voted against it. The majority of those doctors supported the contract. In terms of the right to private practice arrangement, if we revert to what this government is proposing then the ability to maintain productivity and provide incentive into the future is out the window. Patients and taxpayers lose.



Mr RUSSO (Sunnybank—ALP) (10.31 pm): Mr Speaker—

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Mr : Member for Chatsworth, you have had a pretty good go. I do not think the member for Sunnybank needs your assistance.

Mr RUSSO: I rise in this House to support the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 and commend to the House the passing of this groundbreaking and significant piece of legislation. The bill will amend the Industrial Relations Act and the Industrial Relations Regulation. The policy objectives of this bill are to give effect to the government's election commitments and priorities relating to restoring fairness for government workers by reinstating employment conditions for government workers that were lost as a result of changes made in 2012 and 2013 to the Industrial Relations Act 1990.

When the Treasurer, the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships spoke in this House about the bill, he stated—

The ... Bill ... gives effect to the government's election commitments and priorities for industrial relations reforms. This bill abolishes those aspects of the LNP's industrial relations system that, if allowed to continue, would have irrevocably damaged the state's IR system and undermined the government's commitment to restoring fairness for government workers.

We do not have to look too far to find examples of Labor leaders who had a commitment to change and the passing of legislation to protect people who were doing it tough and only wanted a fair go. The date of 1 January 2015 marked 100 years since TJ Ryan was sworn in as Labor premier with a clear majority. This is what commentators of the day had to say about the TJ Ryan Labor government. I quote—

The TJ Ryan government arrived with a purpose and set to work with energy and urgency. Ryan himself was one of those Labor leaders that did not come from a union background. Rather, he had been a teacher. Ryan had a particular and clear interest in education. But his principal calling was the law, and he has been regarded then and since as possessing ... skill in understanding how the law and constitutional provisions might be used to advance socially and economically democratic agendas.

It was further stated—

TJ Ryan was to develop new approaches to the arbitration and conciliation of labour disputes, to support better conditions, to develop workers compensation (in association with a new State Government Insurance Office ...

From the time of TJ Ryan's election to this House he pursued a legislative program which led to the introduction of economic and social reforms aimed at improving standards of living and working conditions. TJ Ryan also brought about significant initiatives in empowerment, as in the case of the right of women to stand in this parliament and to be admitted to juries.

Those on the other side of the House just do not get it when it comes to speaking about unions and the good work they do in the community. On 2 September 2014, when making a speech to a large union audience in Wisconsin, President Obama said—

If I were looking for a good job that lets me build some security for my family, I'd join a union. If I were busting my butt in the service industry and wanted an honest day's pay for an honest day's work, I'd join a union. If I were a firefighter or a police officer risking my life and helping to keep my community safe and wanting to make sure that I come home safely to my family, I'd join a union. I'd want a union looking out for me.

That is what unions do: they look out for the worker so they get a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. They make sure workers can return to their homes safely. This bill gives the workers of Queensland the protection and the respect they deserve. I commend the bill to the House. Bring on the vote.

 **Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (10.35 pm): It is always is pleasure to rise in the House to speak to a bill. Tonight we are debating the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I will start my contribution with some suggestions. I have heard many members speak to this bill tonight. Interestingly, we hear all the time from the government about the worker—'the worker, the worker, the worker'. They do not talk about the workers who are not union members. They are really only ever referring to the union workers. Let us be clear on that.

I turn my attention to the title of the bill, which contains the words 'restoring fairness'. Let us be truthful about it. Let us call it what it is. This could be called the Industrial Relations (I'm Doing This Out of Spite) Bill. It could be called the Industrial Relations (The Piper has to be Paid) Bill, otherwise known as the 'union bosses bill'. Or my personal favourite, it could be called the Industrial Relations (Let's Put a Chokehold on the Public Sector Non-Union-Member Employees) Bill. I think that is more apt.

I ask members: where is the fairness? Where is the fairness in a third-party organisation setting up an office and utilising phones and office equipment in government buildings, using managers and other employees to do their recruitment, at the expense of the taxpayer? Where is the fairness when the right of workers to freedom of association is being compromised? Where is the fairness in the notion that unions will have access to all Public Service employees' personal details without their consent? Earlier the member for Bulimba made a comment regarding that provision. She said that if an employee did not want their details handed over then they could write a letter about it. But if we are going to be fair dinkum about this, why not reverse that onus? Why not make it that if people want to join the union they can write advising that they would like their information provided?

One of the biggest concerns I have with this bill relates to the promotional aspect, which the member for Nanango touched on. I think of people who are not union members, working their way up through the ranks. How will their progress and their career progression be hindered if they have the courage to say, 'No, I don't want to be a union member'? I think we have seen the example set in the ministry.

Mr Minnikin: Career limiting.

Mrs SMITH: It is very career limiting. Thank you, member for Chatsworth. Why is that the case when only 18 per cent of the Australian workforce are union members? I am really interested to know the minister's thoughts on that. That means that 82 per cent of workers reject the union movement. Some 82 per cent of workers have said, 'No, we don't want to be involved with the union.' I am interested to know what Labor members think of those 82 per cent of workers. I cannot hear anything. That probably tells us a lot. What if an employee does not want to join a union? I think there are names that those opposite call them, aren't there? There is a name. What is that name? It starts with an S. What is that name? I think they have been called 'scabs' before. I am sure the member for Springwood would have been able to prompt me on that one. Let us call this for what it is. Clearly the intent of this bill is to drum up union membership and get the precious union member fees which will fund current Labor members' next campaigns. At the end of the day, that is what this is all about.

I turn to the issue of unfettered access to the workplace in real terms. As a former industrial relations adviser for 12 years, I can tell members how this worked in the workplace. We had consultative committees for three months. This was a big issue. The unions came to the table and management came to the table and for three months the topic was that management had changed the brand of coffee. The unions were outraged by this and spent three months—three months—having that conversation. Talk about the big issues! Let us look when under Labor the—

Government members interjected.

Mrs SMITH: I will talk about the member for Capalaba's father in a minute, because the member for Capalaba's father was Industrial Relations Commissioner Don Brown. He actually was not a bad commissioner. I had a couple of wins with him. I think that was when the now Attorney-General was the AWU industrial relations officer way back when. It is interesting that we are here tonight talking about industrial relations when I went to the commission many a time, but probably the current Attorney-General does not want to be reminded of all of the wins that the employer had because of the unfairness that the unions were imposing on the workplace. We had the industrial relations unit in Health that was stacked with ex-ALP failed candidates. We had Des Elder in there. There he was giving industrial relations advice as an ex-ALP failed candidate. We have also been great mates with Bradley O'Carroll. When Bradley O'Carroll started as a union organiser, he walked in and his first words were, 'I don't solve problems. I create problems.' He trotted off to the Industrial Relations Commission over matters that were not allowed to be heard. We had Bob Parker, who used to come in as a QNU rep and say, 'The members want this. The members want that.' His union had 1,500 members. Guess how many were turning up to the meetings? Three! That is not very representative of the workforce—three!

Having said all of that, I guess this is a bit like a pyramid scheme: your job is to go out and recruit new people so you can keep moving up the levels. The sad reality is that with 18 per cent membership of workers in the union you are desperately in need of more funds. Let us go back to when unions were relevant and unions were needed instead of worrying about the brand of coffee. I remember Tommy Hannan—hard man, hard living, fair dinkum, knew the industry and had worked his way through all of the floors of the abattoir industry. In the meat industry, he was a tough man. Tommy Hannan would probably be turning in his grave seeing how the union movement has let him down. He was a decent, hardworking bloke who knew what he was on about and was a union delegate when there were issues that needed to be fixed. So I do not have an issue. For members on this side, this is absolutely nothing about union bashing or anything else. Rather, it is about supporting the right for people to have the choice whether or not to join a union and to ensure that we support all workers, not just union members. Let us call in this bill and let us decide what it is really all about: it is all about drumming up membership and getting those precious membership fees into the coffers so that at the end of the day current Labor members are sitting here after the next election campaign. That is what this is all about.

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (10.44 pm): I rise to make a contribution on the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and to speak in support of this bill that will replace the changes made. Over five months local governments across Queensland have

been negotiating new enterprise bargaining agreements under the Newman government's modernisation criteria, shrinking the number of awards operating within many councils from over a dozen—sometimes up to 18—down to one. However, one issue I have is that many of the EBAs that were made were done figuratively with their hands tied behind their backs with a number of exclusion rules, some of which are very relevant to my area and have an impact on the way that those EBAs end up. It is a lot of the innuendo that is not written into those clauses that has some impact on how they end up. They are not always clear in black and white, but it does end up with an imbalance with how that agreement is made. I think that imbalance went too far under those changes.

Since that time we have heard from many council workers who are concerned about the changes in the conditions to their jobs and job security. Many in other facets of the public sector are losing their jobs. I also engaged very heavily with mayors and CEOs thanks to a very spirited campaign by the LGAQ. About three or four weekends ago I received a copy of some electronic media that was sent to all mayors around Queensland giving my mobile number and the member for Dalrymple's mobile number. I received a number of calls from mayors and, quite frankly, some of the information they gave me was misguided. The first media I read in relation to this was that it was terrible because they were going from 18 awards down to one and back up to 18 again which was completely unmanageable. That was the main basis for their response, which of course concerned me. I thought that I had better educate myself on this issue because that does not sound too good. I then found out that at most it was going back up to three. That is quite different to what those people were telling me. They were telling me unequivocally that it was going back up to 18 and that that was a big problem for them. I was told that it was going to cause many job losses. I thought that that was a worry. However, upon further investigation, I found that many of those job losses related to general cutbacks in spent government funding to councils and the phasing out of funding exercises such as flood damage that have been happening for years. Those figures were collected and touted as the job losses that were going to occur. They are a terrible thing, but we cannot say that they are directly related to this.

The other issue I had with some of the information that was coming back to me was that in the same conversation I was being told that these changes are going to cause job losses, which of course would concern me. The job losses were because they were expecting to achieve a lower award and only be able to pay them less or have less output on wages so that they could save money to keep employing more people. Presumably that was the rationale, but there was a severe flaw in this rationale because in the same conversation they were saying that they have to pay them above the awards to get them out there in the first place. I do not see what the problem is. If you are paying them more already, then how are you going to lose money if these EBAs are not allowed to go through? It did not make sense. There was a severe flaw in that, so that made me question some of the advice that I was getting. The changes being put forward today will ensure bargaining can take place in a way that I believe is fair to both sides of the agreement. I acknowledge that there will always be tension between any corporate entity, be it a council or a large business, and their workers, but we need to strike a harmonious balance between both stakeholders. From my investigations after speaking to a large number of council employees and public sector employees, this is where we landed.

This bill seeks to achieve fairness by removing the restrictions placed on negotiations in relation to certain protections, which is especially relevant to my electorate. One of those protections that I alluded to earlier was locality allowances. Some CEOs and mayors have said that that allowance is almost always needed in an award to get people to go out to remote areas. So I do not understand why such an allowance should be excluded. I do not see the merit in that argument.

Another point to be made is that these changes to the industrial award that applied to a lot of these councils came amid a suite of fiscal tightening measures that came with the last government. Whether they were needed or not, they were conveniently married with this opportunity for them to save money on wages. That makes me question the motivation of why it was brought in in the first place.

The provisions to limit contracting is an issue that is very close to my heart and, as a party, it is an issue that we feel very strongly about. Whether we are talking about NDRAA and the day-labour issues, where the local council can do that work and it does not have to be done by contractors from outside, the same applies with local council employees. If you have a pay clerk doing a job, quite possibly on occasions you can get a pay clerk to do that job cheaper. But as the Premier said once in the House, these Public Service jobs and some of these council jobs are the bedrock of our rural towns. There are very fragile communities out there. Over the past couple of days I have spoken on the

phone to a worker from my electorate. She said, 'We had moved out west into your electorate, Robbie. My husband had a business. It was not going well and I was losing the security in my job under the awards they had. We have left town.' Part of the reason for that couple leaving town was the insecurity of that Public Service job. Perhaps that will not apply in all cases, but job insecurity is a factor. If there is the possibility of contracts threatening job security in rural areas, it is another pressure on people and it takes away the incentive for people to stay in rural towns. They are very big issues for me. Quite rightly, councils, mayors and CEOs have to look for savings. Those councils are doing it tough but, if they are looking at hiring contractors, we are all stuffed. There are other ways to achieve this balance.

This is where I got quite upset with the LGAQ. I did not have the LGAQ or mayors ringing me when the TIDS grants were cut in half. That had a much bigger impact on rural areas. Any reduction in FAGs in the western council areas has a massive impact. We had been pushing that issue with a number of mayors, but I did not have some of these mayors and CEOs ringing me up saying, 'We really need the FAGs grants' when I know that it is a big issue and I know that these grants could be of great benefit to them. It was, 'This is the issue that we are going to die in a ditch on. The sky is going to fall in because of this issue because we can save some money on wages.' I did not buy that. I was quite angry with the LGAQ, because I think there was a big political push in this. I think there was some uncertainty in the way the LGAQ was pushing it.

The issues that I want to push are increases in road funding to these councils, particularly to those western councils, and increases in TIDS funding and FAGs. It is through increased funding through those grants that viability will return to those councils, not through cutting the wages of workers. I do not walk around town and say, 'Gee whiz, these council workers are paid too much.' They are always the lowest paid workers around town and they are the ones who the council is going to start with. That is where they are going to cut costs and save a big heap of money. It does not wash with me, so I will be supporting this bill.

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (10.53 pm), in reply: Firstly, I thank all members for their contributions to this debate. I am enormously proud to have carriage of this bill. I am proud to have the honour of being an industrial relations minister in a Labor government.

Today, the Palaszczuk government puts fairness back into Queensland's industrial relations system and starts to repair the damage done by three years of the disgraceful LNP government's changes to the working conditions of many government workers. The Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 gives effect to the government's election commitments and priorities for industrial relations reform. Our reforms will ensure that the hard-fought-for working rights of Queenslanders—lost virtually overnight, I might add, under the previous government—are returned.

This bill fulfils our election commitment to restore fairness for government workers by reinstating employment conditions for government workers that were lost as a result of the changes that were made to the Industrial Relations Act 1999 in 2012 and 2013. It re-establishes the independence of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission when determining wage cases. It returns the commission to its position as a layperson's tribunal, where employees and union advocates operate on a level playing field with employers. It restores the ability of industrial organisations and their representatives to freely organise and access members so as to enhance and protect their industrial interests.

We on this side are committed to a fair framework for government workers so that they can negotiate fair and mutually beneficial outcomes now and into the future. The LNP's framework stripped vital safeguards out of the industrial relations system. That is why this bill was so needed. This bill abolishes those aspects of the LNP's industrial relations system that, if allowed to continue, would have irreparably damaged the state's industrial relations system and undermined the government's commitment to restoring fairness for government workers.

The contributions to this debate from the LNP members indicate clearly that they have not learned a thing from the recent election. Queenslanders voted out the LNP because the LNP does not care about workers, it does not care about a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, it does not care about fair conditions and it does not care about job security. The LNP does not like unions, because they provide all of those things for workers.

We have heard from those opposite about why Queensland public servants should apparently fear us. Those opposite seem to have an obsession with telling public servants who to fear and who not to fear. It was not long ago that Campbell Newman said that public sector workers had nothing to

fear from the LNP. If those opposite call sacking 24,000 government workers nothing, then I fear that the term 'fairness' would be beyond their comprehension. Every member of this House has 24,000 reasons to support the bill. Twenty-four thousand families who put their faith in the LNP have 24,000 reasons to support the need for a fair framework for our public sector industrial relations system.

There has been a sudden interest by those opposite in the privacy of public sector workers. We on this side of the House care about privacy. We protect workers' privacy just like we support workers in the workplace. To those opposite, who are still using their out-of-date lines on protecting public sector privacy that were prepared for them by the opposition's office, I urge them to read the Privacy Commissioner's responses from last week's public hearing. If the opposition members of the committee had hung around long enough, they would have heard the Privacy Commissioner confirm that all processes for commencing Queensland government employees are in accordance with privacy principles. All new starters in the Queensland government are protected by privacy laws. No private details are passed on. We know that and that is why we supported the Privacy Commissioner in her examination of the bill. Embarrassingly, when the LNP committee members did not get the answers that they were hoping for, they stormed out of the public hearing that they had called for.

If the LNP members want to talk about breaches of privacy, I can say that it was the LNP that shamefully legislated to allow workers' WorkCover history to be used against them in their future career prospects. Did the LNP consult the Privacy Commissioner when it allowed an employer to access these records? No, of course it did not. How many times did we hear the word 'privacy' when the LNP brought in its laws in the first place and did that damage? Was that a key reason the LNP brought in those laws? No, it was not.

What about the Leader of the Opposition revealing the private details of the member for Cook's children? Apparently, the privacy laws were de-necessary when the former minister for health contacted nurses by email—and no, not on their @Health.qld.gov.au email address; it was on their private home email addresses—to tell them about unilateral changes to their work conditions. What was his response when these nurses sent him a letter telling him their concerns about privacy? Nothing. The former minister for health and now opposition leader—fourth time's a charm—he did not have the decency to respond to their concerns and he still has not. That is how much the LNP respects privacy. Under the LNP, when it comes to privacy, there is no sacred ground. When it comes to privacy, the shirtless ironing, global financial crisis denying, de-necessary muckraker for Maranoa cannot claim the high moral ground. But at least he got his man into Moggill finally.

Unlike the arrogant LNP, which basically did not consult with anyone before ramming its unfair industrial relations changes through, the Palaszczuk government has consulted broadly, even within short time frames. We are not making these changes in the dead of night and we are making no apologies for working quickly—

Mr Rickuss: What's the time? It's 11 o'clock.

Mr PITT: The member for Lockyer should not worry. I will get to him. We make no apologies for working quickly to deliver on our election commitment to restore fairness to Queensland state and local government workers. If it is past the bedtime of the member for Lockyer he can go to sleep. The rest of us are here working to restore fairness to Queensland workers. We are delivering on our election commitment. We are delivering on what was promised. It must be such a foreign concept for those opposite to actually deliver on an election promise. Those opposite let down so many people. These changes are needed quickly because allowing the LNP's unfair laws to go unabated will cause damage to the state's IR system.

The Labor government and the relevant departments consulted with the peak body for local councils comprehensively on all aspects of the bill. It has been custom and practice to consult with the LGAQ as the representative body rather than individual councils. We have given everyone who wanted an opportunity to make a submission to the committee on the bill an opportunity to do so, including individual councils. As I mentioned last week, the LNP demanded a public hearing with the Privacy Commissioner. Of course the Palaszczuk government agreed to it as part of our priority on transparency in the wake of Campbell Newman's reign. Did the LNP consult with the Privacy Commissioner when it introduced its unnecessary and unfair changes to the act? No, it did not. It did not care about consultation. Did it consult with each and every council when it brought in its ideological laws? No, it did not. Imagine if I had introduced this bill on Tuesday, gave the committee one day to consider it and then debated the bill on the Thursday of the same week. That is exactly what those opposite did with the workers' compensation legislation changes in 2013. That became the pattern of behaviour in this place. And those opposite have the gall to talk about shortened time frames on reporting and what we do in committees!

I heard the member for Caloundra saying that the members of the former Labor government should hang their heads in shame. I do not know what he was talking about. If anyone should be hanging their heads in shame it is those opposite for the way they treated this place like a plaything. Some local councils have made comments in the media today, as have some LNP members, that these changes will result in job losses. There is no excuse for councils to use this act, which restores fairness to local government workers, as a cover to sack employees. I refer to comments made in the *Cairns Post* on 17 May 2015 where the Cairns Regional Council mayor stated that job losses in the Douglas shire would not be happening. Interestingly, she said she did not believe the act would have any impact on jobs in her council and if anything they may be increasing their employment by a small amount. Fewer than eight of Queensland's 77 councils have made agreements using the Newman government award. Under Mr Newman's award modernisation process employees in these councils were prevented from bargaining for some of the most important workplace conditions, such as job security and the right to be consulted. By passing these laws tonight, this parliament will give local governments in Queensland certainty and the opportunity to either rollover existing agreements until after the council elections in 2016 or get back to the bargaining table in the second half of this year. Remaking the local government award and bargaining within the framework of this new act benefits local government employees by allowing them to bargain for the things that matter to them. I have offered to provide assistance to those councils needing to go through the enterprise bargaining process again and I look forward to working with local councils to ensure Queensland's IR system delivers positive outcomes in bargaining for Queensland's local government workforce.

When making wage determinations in arbitrated matters, the QIRC has always taken into account the arguments from the employer, which in these matters is the government, about their financial position. As Treasurer I can say that this is an eminently sensible thing to do. This is an obvious and commonsense approach. Under this bill the QIRC will continue to consider balancing social and economic needs. However, explicitly requiring the QIRC to take into account the fiscal strategy of the state, indeed to be briefed directly by the government on its fiscal strategy without an opportunity for employees to test what information is given, is simply inappropriate. It is simply inappropriate to make it mandatory for the QIRC to take into account the government of the day's fiscal policies without the ability to cross-examine that evidence.

Public servants are not greedy. They are reasonable people. As we have heard, some of the lowest paid people in our community often work for the local council. They are people in our communities. They are consumers. They are Queensland families. They deserve to have wage determinations made that take their interests into account and not just those of the employer. We are committed to restoring fairness for workers and that includes returning the QIRC to its position as a layperson's court where worker and union advocates operate on a level playing field with the employers. I thank the committee for its recommendation regarding a proposed amendment to enable the QIRC to develop a standard dispute resolution clause that could be available to parties and be able to be amended by mutual agreement. The bill removes the previously mandated prescription for the dispute resolution clause and in its place provides the QIRC with a broad ambit of what is to be included in a dispute resolution clause. The bill as presented supports the creation of a model dispute resolution clause by the QIRC as the independent tribunal and the appropriate body to prepare such a model clause should it prefer to do so. I will bring the committee's sound recommendation to the attention of the QIRC to be considered in the development of a default or model clause.

In our moment of need health professionals provide life-saving services for our loved ones. Queenslanders value the health care provided by health professionals. This bill and further amendments are designed to restore conditions that were ripped away from our doctors who, quite frankly, got the rough end of the pineapple—pardon the pun. The Newman LNP government did this to doctors. This bill is the first step in beginning to rebuild the trust between doctors and the Queensland government. It is very simple: a fairer workplace for our doctors and health professionals will mean better service delivery and better outcomes for patients. Our senior medical staff will be respected for their skills, valued for their professionalism and focused on delivering quality health services to the people of Queensland. This government is committed to ending unreasonable and unfair contracts for doctors and reinstating the right for all doctors to collectively bargain.

The LNP turned back the clock 25 years with its draconian IR laws. The previous LNP government's IR regime reduced job security and created a climate of fear and uncertainty in workplaces throughout the state. Its laws attacked the day-to-day conditions and take-home pay of hardworking Queenslanders. There has been a bit of discussion tonight about the LNP's election campaign review, the Borbidge Sheldon review. As members can imagine, my input was not sought in

this review. I do agree with the two main reasons why those opposite are right now sitting opposite: the breaking of the promise that public servants had nothing to fear and the perception of arrogance arising from not listening to people. To those opposite I say listen to your constituents and listen to Queenslanders. Those opposite have 24,000 reasons to right a wrong; 24,000 reasons to learn from their mistakes; 24,000 reasons to support our public sector; and 24,000 reasons to support this bill. I call on members to support our public servants who work so hard to support our state. To all on this side of the House, let us bring on the vote!

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

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, Blejje, 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.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Mr PITT (11.13 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 After clause 4

Page 7, after line 5—

insert—

4A Amendment of s 71KE (Application of sdiv 2)

Section 71KE(5)—

omit.

This amendment to clarify the operation of redundancy provisions was recommended by the committee.

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper: Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes to Hon. Curtis Pitt’s amendments [\[569\]](#).

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 10, as read, agreed to.

Clause 11—

Mr PITT (11.14 pm): I move the following amendments—

2 Clause 11 (Amendment of s 71NA (Provisions related to Queensland Employment Standards))

Page 8, line 21, before ‘Section’—

insert—

(1)

3 Clause 11 (Amendment of s 71NA (Provisions related to Queensland Employment Standards))

Page 8, after line 22—

insert—

(2) Section 71NA(2)—

omit, insert—

(2) However, subsection (1) applies only to the extent the effect of the provision is no less favourable to an employee than the Queensland Employment Standards.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 11, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 12 to 16, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

Mr PITT (11.15 pm): I move the following amendment—

4 After clause 16

Page 10, after line 17—

insert—

16A Amendment of s 72 (Employees to whom this chapter does not apply)

Section 72(1A)—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 17 and 18, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

Mr PITT (11.15 pm): I move the following amendment—

5 After clause 18

Page 11, after line 3—

insert—

18A Amendment of s 142 (Who may make certified agreements)

Section 142(2)—

omit.

This amendment is complementary to the removal of high-income senior employee arrangements from the Industrial Relations Act.

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 19 to 23, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

Mr PITT (11.16 pm): I move the following amendment—

6 After clause 23

Page 12, after line 4—

insert—

23A Amendment of s 164 (When a certified agreement is in operation)

Section 164(2)(c) and (3)—

omit.

This amendment removes the automatic expiry arrangements for agreements reaching three years after their nominal expiry. The automatic expiry was introduced by the former government. Concerns have been raised by stakeholders that it may lead to the unintended consequence of expiring an active agreement.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 24, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Mr PITT (11.17 pm): I move the following amendment—

7 After clause 24

Page 12, after line 8—

insert—

24A Omission of ch 6A (Arrangements for high-income senior employees)

Chapter 6A—

omit.

This provision removes the arrangements for high-income senior employees and statutory individual contracts from legislation. It gives effect to the government's priority to ensure that there are no statutory individual contracts for workers covered by industrial instruments as articulated in the *Queensland Labor State Policy Platform 2014*. As I stated in my second reading speech, this government is committed to restoring the rights of senior medical officers to collectively bargain by removing compulsory unfair contracts of SMOs and once again allowing them to access unfair dismissal. Those draconian contracts stripped away key rights for doctors. Their purely ideological changes were not about better outcomes for patients. Queensland's public health system suffered for the loss of experienced and dedicated staff. And they were not about remedying questionable practices in Queensland Health. In fact, individual contracts set up the possibility of sweetheart deals and made robust governance and oversight more difficult.

Mr McARDLE: The opposition will be opposing this amendment. This goes to the very heart of the issue about contracts with doctors that have been confronting the state for some considerable time. This amendment takes us back to the black old days, the dark old days, when the issues of productivity, transparency and accountability were thrown out the door. We are going back in time to deal with high-income earners with the right to enter into contracts of their own volition. It means that VMOs will again be held to ransom by the state government, as they were in the past. Contracts were entered into at common law and were held over their heads for two to three years. Premier Beattie would simply not enter into any negotiations to assist to improve them. Those VMOs stood together and they continued to work in the public health system.

Ms Fentiman interjected.

Mr McARDLE: Did anyone see that banshee? What was that screeching sound—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, I cannot hear the member for Caloundra.

Mr McARDLE: The point is that this is going back to the bad old days and this opposition will not stand for the VMOs and SMOs being held to ransom. They have a right to enter into their own contracts. They are bold enough and big enough to do so, and they want the right to do so. They want to retain the right to enter into their own contracts and this is simply a sop by the Labor government to the unions.

Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to.

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, Seenedy, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Walker, Watts, Weir.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 25—

 **Mr WALKER** (11.25 pm): These are the provisions which change the right to legal representation within the commission. It has been well canvassed by this side of the House in the second reading debate that we oppose those. It is illusory to think that a return to a situation where people do not have a right to legal representation levels the playing field. In fact, the proper way with parties with different weights behind them to have a level playing field is to allow people to have legal representation. We will oppose the clause.

Mr PITT: I do not intend canvassing the issue much more. The government's election commitment is to restore the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission to its status as a layperson's tribunal where employees, unions and employers are on a level playing field. The QIRC has a long-held status as a layperson's tribunal. Section 273 of the act clearly reflects this. It states—

- (2) The commission must perform its functions in a way that—
- (a) furthers the objects of this Act; and
 - (b) avoids unnecessary technicalities and facilitates the fair and practical conduct of proceedings under this Act.

The status as a layperson's tribunal has assisted all parties through keeping costs down and promoting swift resolution of matters, unlike other areas of law. The QIRC has to determine disputes between people who need to work together the next day. The act clearly enables there to be legal representation where there is the consent of all parties. This is fair and reasonable and it maintains a level playing field. The act also provides that in a number of matters of a more technical nature, such as unfair contracts or an unfair dismissal application, the commission itself can allow legal representation where it is satisfied that legal representation is desirable.

Division: Question put—That clause 25 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 25, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 26 to 31, as read, agreed to.

Clause 32—



Mr WALKER (11.32 pm): I move the following amendment—

2 Clause 32 (Omission of ch 15, pt 2 (Particular provisions of industrial instruments))

Page 17, lines 6 to 9—

omit, insert—

32 Replacement of ch 15, pt 2 (Particular provisions of industrial instruments)

Chapter 15, part 2—

omit, insert—

Part 2 Restriction on giving personal information about government employees

691A Restriction on giving personal information about government employees under instruments

- (1) This section applies if a government industrial instrument includes provision for giving personal information about an employee to an entity (the **other entity**) other than the employee or a government entity.
- (2) Despite the provision of the industrial instrument, the employer may give the personal information to the other entity only if—
 - (a) the employee has given express written consent to the giving of the information to the other entity; and
 - (b) a copy of the written consent has been given to the Public Service Commission.

(3) The Public Service Commission must give the other entity notice that the consent has been received.

(4) In this section—

giving personal information to an entity includes—

- (a) releasing the personal information to the entity; and
- (b) providing the entity with access to the personal information.

government entity—

- (a) has the meaning given by the *Public Service Act 2008*, section 24; and
- (b) despite the *Public Service Act 2008*, section 23(4), includes a public service office for which an application provision has been made under that section.

government industrial instrument means an industrial instrument (whether made or certified before or after the commencement of this part) to the extent the instrument applies to the employment of persons in a government entity.

industrial instrument see the *Public Service Act 2008*, schedule 4.

personal information means information about an individual whose identity is apparent, or can reasonably be ascertained, from the information.

Public Service Commission means the Public Service Commission established under the *Public Service Act 2008*.

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper: Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes to Mr Ian Walker's amendments [570].

This amendment provides that before an employee's information is to be passed on to other entities the consent of the person is to be obtained. So if the person's information is to be passed on they simply have to give their consent for that to occur. It seems difficult to see that anyone could object to that as a reasonable matter of privacy of individuals.

Mr PITT: This amendment is opposed. The amendment is part of the LNP's continued attack on workers and unions. The opposition is moving these amendments under the guise of privacy considerations for employees, and it is a sham. We have seen through the recent committee process the Queensland Privacy Commissioner confirm that information such as a public servant's name, workplace and role is classified as routine work information. This information does not touch upon the personal affairs of the individuals concerned, nor is it information of a private, intimate or sensitive nature.

Despite this, this amendment goes even further than their previous anti-workers laws. They want to provide new starter details to the Public Service Commission. Not only does this create an unnecessary level of red tape for the Public Service; but, given this amendment purports to be about privacy, what is actually happening with this provision is that the LNP want to give employees' information to an additional party. I can assure public servants that all new starters in the Queensland government are protected by privacy laws. Privacy principles apply to processes for commencing Queensland government employment.

The government has committed to restoring the rights and entitlements of government workers. This means in the most open and fairest way the repeal of those changes made by the Newman government that ripped apart industrial agreements covering these workers, taking away the agreed terms and conditions about employment security and protections against contracting out services, consultation with workers when making organisational changes and decisions about termination and redundancy, and providing information to the registered industrial organisations that protect and represent the interests of the workforce. We will be opposing the amendment.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I rise to speak in favour of this amendment. It is beyond the pale for the Minister for Industrial Relations to claim that this is innocuous, because indeed this information is going to be given to union bosses in Queensland in a readily available format which is not readily given to anyone else. This is totally different to one trawling through the various government gazettes and having to go through the effort of consolidating information.

What the Treasurer is doing here is putting information together as a part of this legislation, putting a little red ribbon on it and sending it over to the union bosses and is not giving those particular public servants the opportunity to be able to opt out either. Surely in a world where we

believe in privacy and where it is very, very difficult for anyone to be able to act on anyone else's behalf—even as a member of parliament, if we want to be able to act on behalf of constituents, we are readily reminded of particular acts of parliament and what can and cannot be given to us—I think this is wrong. The very least that can be expected is that those public servants have the opportunity to be able to opt out or to be able to opt in when it comes to having their information readily provided and readily bundled up and given to union bosses. That is what this is all about. It is basically making their job much easier so that they are then able to simply get on the phone or email that particular public servant. That is the reality.

If you believe in privacy, then there should be no problem whatsoever in giving that public servant the opportunity to be able to opt in or opt out with regard to that information being made available to them. This puts an extraordinary amount of pressure on those public servants as well, because they know that when union bosses are going to be contacting them and contacting others, particularly when there has been a process of activism in the workplace, it becomes extremely difficult for a new public servant to stand against this, particularly if they are worried about their job.

I would also ask the Treasurer: if this information is going to be bundled up and given so easily and readily to union bosses and is information that everyone can trawl through, apparently, in the *Government Gazette*, can the information be provided to the opposition, for example, in this format so that we can write to the public servants and advise them of our concerns of a range of issues of public policy or is this just a special provision that is available to unions? Surely if it is as innocuous as the Treasurer thinks then this information should be available to other organisations, not just the unions.

Mr PITT: I will make this really short and sharp. We will not be lectured on privacy by the Leader of the Opposition.

Miss BARTON: It gives me great pleasure to rise this evening to support the amendment that has been moved by the member for Mansfield and it gives me even greater pleasure to be part of a team that is concerned about the rights and the protections and the privacy of public servants in this state. I think it is an absolute disgrace that the government would come into this House and seek to completely disrespect the rights and the freedoms of public servants in this state. The opposition believes in the right and the freedom of association. In the last parliament the now Premier came in and said that she believed in the right and the freedom to associate. Conversely, the right to associate also means the right to not associate.

At the public hearing, unions were asked whether or not they would agree with public sector workers being given the opportunity to opt in or opt out, and every single union person who responded to that question said, 'We don't have an objection to people being able to opt in.' The question that I have for the Treasurer is this: why does he have a problem with public sector workers in this state being given the opportunity to make an informed decision about whether or not they want to be a member of a union? The Treasurer absolutely disregards any argument that he has made about privacy.

At the heart of the matter is the privacy of public sector workers' information in this state. The LNP will stand every single day to make sure that public sector workers in this state have the freedom to associate or not associate as they see fit. If public sector workers in this state want to join unions, that is their prerogative, but it should be their option as to whether or not their personal private information is given to unions in this state. This information is being given to a third party organisation external of government. That is not why public sector workers give their information when they enter the employ of the public sector. They come into the public sector to serve the people of Queensland, not so that their information can be given to unions so that unions can use the opportunity to expand their membership base.

Public sector workers in this state should have the right and freedom of association. They should have the right and freedom of political association. It is an overarching government—it is an egregious breach of their rights to privacy. It is an absolute disgrace that the Labor Party would come into this House and try to override the protections, the rights and the freedoms of the people who they claim to be the spokesperson of—that is, the workers in this state. It is an absolute disgrace, and I urge all members to vote for the member for Mansfield's amendment.

Ms SIMPSON: I have a question for the Minister for Industrial Relations. If this information is so innocuous, can he advise the House whether it is available in the same format for others? Is it available for the opposition? Is it available for other organisations? How is this information available? I would like him to please provide that explanation.

Mr PITT: Mr Speaker, those opposite again are trying to create a situation out of something that has not existed for two decades. For two decades, there has been no problem with this whatsoever.

Mr Rickuss: Answer the question.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Lockyer, if you are quiet the minister will answer the question.

Mr PITT: That is where we are at. Those opposite are worried about where it is going to go. They actually want to increase the number of people who see this by sending it to a fourth party, so we are talking about more red tape. That is the suggestion by those opposite.

Ms Simpson: Are you going to answer the question?

Mr PITT: If the member for Maroochydore would like to look at the document herself, she will know what the answer to that question is. We will be providing the information as it had been under a previous arrangement here in Queensland. It is no different. We are restoring it to the way it was in the previous government.

Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to.

AYES, 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.

NOES, 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.

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Walker) negatived.

Clause 32, as read, agreed to.

Clause 33—

 **Mr WALKER** (11.45 pm): Amendment No. 3 which was circulated was consequential on amendment No. 2 being passed so it no longer is appropriate. I have another amendment in relation to the same clause, amendment No. 4, but I think the Treasurer's amendment might have to come first. Amendment No. 4 is the one that preserves the certified agreements that have been entered into.

Mr PITT: Are you saying that you want to move amendment No. 4? We need to consider the earlier question before we can get to that one.

Mr SPEAKER: Has the member for Mansfield moved amendment No. 3 or withdrawn that?

Mr WALKER: I have withdrawn amendment No. 3. It was consequential upon No. 2 so it is no longer effective.

Mr PITT: I move the following amendment—

8 Clause 33 (Insertion of new ch 20, pt 20)

Page 22, after line 3—

insert—

844A Review and variation of resident medical officers' award

- (1) This section applies for the review and variation of the relevant modern award called 'Resident Medical Officers (Queensland Health) Award—State 2014' (the **RMO award**).
- (2) A pre-modernisation health award is, to the extent it covered senior medical officers, taken to be a relevant pre-modernisation award for the RMO award.

(3) The varied RMO award does not apply to a senior medical officer until an agreement is certified, or an arbitration determination is made, under chapter 6 that covers the senior medical officer.

(4) In this section—

pre-modernisation health award means—

- (a) the 'District Health Services—Senior Medical Officers and Resident Medical Officers' Award—State 2012'; or
- (b) the 'Medical Superintendents with Right of Private Practice and Medical Officers with Right of Private Practice—Queensland Public Hospitals, Award—State 2012'.

senior medical officer means a senior health service employee within the meaning of the *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011* who is employed in a position at a classification level mentioned in the *Hospital and Health Boards Regulation 2012*, schedule 1A, part 1.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr WALKER: I move the following amendment—

4 Clause 33 (Insertion of new ch 20, pt 20)

Page 23, lines 16 to 32 and page 24, lines 1 to 35—

omit.

This is an amendment which amends clause 33 to ensure that the certified agreements entered into after 1 October 2014 are allowed to run their full agreed term. The House will recall that if this amendment is not made those certified agreements that have already been entered into will need to be reviewed in the light of this legislation. The opposition does not support that and proposes this amendment.

Mr PITT: We oppose this amendment. The government is committed to ensuring that the Queensland industrial relations system is fair. This is the restoring fairness bill, unlike some of the previous legislation we saw which was about destroying fairness. Clearly, this amendment has the effect of keeping these state and local government employees trapped in agreements under the unfair Newman government's framework. Section 847, which the opposition amendment seeks to remove, is to bring these certified agreements bargained under the unfair and unrestrictive regime of the previous government to an early end. This clause will only apply to nine agreements—six in the local government sector and three in the state government. Because the modern award that underpinned these agreements will be reviewed and varied by the commission, the legislation brings these certified agreements to an early and nominal end so that the parties are able to rebargain for a new agreement where they are aware of the content of the reviewed modern award. The previous restrictions on what can be bargained for are to be removed. Indeed, this provision ensures that bargaining for a new certified agreement can proceed without delay once the underpinning modern award is varied. This is the best way to move forward to ensure that all parties are bargaining on a fair and level playing field.

Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to.

AYES, 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.

NOES, 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.

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Walker) negated.

Mr PITT: I move the following amendments—

9 Clause 33 (Insertion of new ch 20, pt 20)

Page 26, line 1, after 'matters'—

insert—

about industrial instruments

10 Clause 33 (Insertion of new ch 20, pt 20)

Page 28, after line 9—

insert—

854A Effect of repeal of ch 6A on high-income guarantee contract

- (1) This section applies if, immediately before the commencement, an employee was engaged under a high-income guarantee contract (a **continuing contract**).
- (2) From the commencement, the continuing contract continues in effect despite the repeal of chapter 6A.
- (3) The repeal of chapter 6A does not—
 - (a) constitute a termination of the employee's employment; or
 - (b) entitle the employee to a payment of money or other compensation.
- (4) In this section—

high-income guarantee contract has the meaning given under the pre-amended Act.

Division 5 Other provisions

Amendments agreed to.

Mr WALKER: I will withdraw the further amendments 5 and 6. They were consequential upon earlier amendments.

Clause 33, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 34, as read, agreed to.

Clause 35—



Mr PITT (11.52 pm): I move the following amendments—

11 Clause 35 (Amendment of sch 5 (Dictionary))

Page 30, line 2, 'employer notice, entry notice'—

omit, insert—

employee, employer notice, entry notice, excluded provisions, high-income guarantee contract, high-income position, high-income senior employee, high-income threshold, industrial instrument

12 Clause 35 (Amendment of sch 5 (Dictionary))

Page 30, after line 7—

insert—

employee, generally, see section 5.

industrial instrument means an award, certified agreement, industrial agreement, EFA, code of practice under section 400I or order under chapter 5, parts 5 and 6.

13 Clause 35 (Amendment of sch 5 (Dictionary))

Page 30, lines 10 and 11—

omit, insert—

- (3) Schedule 5, definition *remuneration*, paragraph (b)—
omit.
- (4) Schedule 5, definition *remuneration*, paragraph (c)—
renumber as paragraph (b).

These amendments are complementary to the removal of high-income senior employee arrangements in addition to other amendments in the dictionary.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 35, as amended, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

Mr PITT (11.52 pm): I seek leave to move amendments outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

Mr PITT: I move the following amendments—

14 Part 3, heading (Minor or technical amendments)

Page 30, line 12, 'Minor or technical'—

omit, insert—

Other

15 After part 3 heading

Page 30, after line 12—

insert—

Division 1 Amendment of Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011

35A Act amended

This division amends the *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011*.

Note—

See also the amendments in schedule 1.

35B Amendment of s 20 (Powers of Services)

Section 20(3), 'contracted'—

omit.

35C Amendment of s 51A (Health employment directives)

(1) Section 51A(2)(c), 'contracted'—

omit.

(2) Section 51A(2)(d)—

omit.

(3) Section 51A(2)(e)—

renumber as section 51A(2)(d).

35D Amendment of s 51C (Relationship between health employment directives and other instruments)

(1) Section 51C(1)—

omit, insert—

(1) If a health employment directive is inconsistent with an industrial instrument, the industrial instrument prevails to the extent of the inconsistency.

(1A) Subsection (1) does not apply if the terms and conditions of employment provided for in the health employment directive are more favourable to the employee than the terms and conditions of employment provided for in the industrial instrument.

(2) Section 51C(3), 'high-income guarantee contract', first mention—

omit, insert—

contract entered into with a senior health service employee

(3) Section 51C(3), 'high-income guarantee contract', second mention—

omit, insert—

contract

(4) Section 51C(4), 'high-income guarantee contract'—

omit, insert—

contract entered into with a senior health service employee

(5) Section 51C(6), definition *remuneration*—

omit.

35E Amendment of s 66 (Conditions of employment)

Section 66(3)(f), 'if the employee is a contracted senior health service employee'—

omit.

35F Amendment of s 67 (Appointment of health service employees)

Section 67(2), 'contracted'—

*omit.***35G Omission of s 69B (Relationship of high-income guarantee contract with legislation)**

Section 69B—

*omit.***35H Amendment of s 74A (Meaning of senior health service employee)**

(1) Section 74A(1), from 'position—'

omit, insert—

position prescribed by regulation as a senior health service employee position.

(2) Section 74A(3)—

*omit.***35I Amendment of s 74B (Terms of contract for contracted senior health service employees)**

(1) Section 74B, heading—

*omit, insert—***74B Basis of employment for senior health service employees**

(2) Section 74B(1), 'contracted'—

*omit.***35J Amendment of s 75 (Exclusion of certain matters from review under other Acts)**Section 75(4), definition *excluded matter*, 'or a senior health service employee'—*omit.***35K Omission of s 80AA (High-income senior employees to be employed by Services)**

Section 80AA—

*omit.***35L Amendment of s 80C (Matters and proceedings not affected by persons becoming contracted senior health service employees in Service)**

Section 80C, 'contracted'—

*omit.***35M Insertion of new pt 13, div 6**

Part 13—

*insert—***Division 6 Transitional provisions for Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2015****323 Definitions for div 6**

In this division—

amending Act means the *Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2015*.***commission*** means the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission.***interim SMO contract*** means—

- (a) a continuing contract within the meaning of the *Industrial Relations Act 1999*, section 854A(1), under which a senior medical officer is engaged; or
- (b) a contract entered into with a senior medical officer—
 - (i) on or after the commencement; and
 - (ii) before an agreement is certified, or an arbitration determination is made, under the *Industrial Relations Act 1999*, chapter 6 that covers all senior medical officers.

pre-modernisation health agreement means the 'Medical Officers' (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement (No. 3) 2012'.***pre-modernisation health award*** means—

- (a) the 'District Health Services—Senior Medical Officers and Resident Medical Officers' Award—State 2012'; or

- (b) the 'Medical Superintendents with Right of Private Practice and Medical Officers with Right of Private Practice—Queensland Public Hospitals, Award—State 2012'.

pre-modernisation health instruments means each of the following—

- (a) a pre-modernisation health award;
(b) the pre-modernisation health agreement.

senior medical officer means a senior health service employee employed in a position at a classification level mentioned in the *Hospital and Health Boards Regulation 2012*, schedule 1A, part 1.

324 Pre-modernisation industrial instruments

- (1) Despite the repeal of the *Industrial Relations Act 1999*, chapter 6A by the amending Act, a pre-modernisation industrial instrument does not apply to a senior medical officer from the commencement.
- (2) Subsection (1) applies subject to section 326.
- (3) On reaching its nominal expiry date, the pre-modernisation health agreement does not become a continuing agreement under the *Industrial Relations Act 1999*, section 827(2).
- (4) In this section—

pre-modernisation industrial instrument see the *Industrial Relations Act 1999*, schedule 5.

325 Making of order by commission to apply pre-modernisation health instruments to senior medical officers

- (1) This section starts applying on 1 August 2015.
- (2) Subject to subsection (4), a person mentioned in subsection (3) may apply to the commission for an order to apply the pre-modernisation health instruments to senior medical officers.
- (3) The application may be made by—
- (a) the chief executive; or
(b) an employee organisation, within the meaning of the *Industrial Relations Act 1999*, that is a party to the pre-modernisation health agreement.
- (4) An application may not be made under subsection (2) if section 327 has started applying to all senior medical officers.
- (5) If an application is made under subsection (2), the commission must make an order declaring that the pre-modernisation health instruments apply to senior medical officers.
- (6) However, subsection (5) does not apply if the applicant withdraws the application before the order is made.

326 Effect of pre-modernisation instrument order

- (1) This section applies if the commission makes an order under section 325(5).
- (2) From the start of a senior medical officer's first full pay period that starts on or after the day the order is made—
- (a) subject to subsection (3) and section 327(3), the pre-modernisation health instruments apply to the senior medical officer; and
(b) the senior medical officer's interim SMO contract is terminated, other than to the extent it provides for the senior medical officer's private practice and employment details.

Note—

While the pre-modernisation health instruments apply to the senior medical officer, the employment conditions under the *Industrial Relations Act 1999*, chapter 2 apply to the officer—see sections 8AA and 71B of that Act.

- (3) Clause 4.11 of the pre-modernisation health agreement does not apply to the senior medical officer despite the making of the order.

Note—

Clause 4.11 of the pre-modernisation health agreement is about private practice arrangements.

- (4) The operation of subsection (2) does not—
- (a) constitute a termination of the senior medical officer's employment; or
(b) entitle the senior medical officer to a payment of money or other compensation.

(5) In this section—

employment details, in relation to an interim SMO contract, means a matter provided for under schedule 2, items 1 to 8 (other than item 8a) of the contract.

327 Making of new certified agreement or determination

(1) This section applies to a senior medical officer if, after the commencement, a new agreement is certified, or an arbitration determination is made, under the *Industrial Relations Act 1999*, chapter 6 that covers the senior medical officer.

(2) If immediately before the relevant day the pre-modernisation health instruments do not apply to the senior medical officer under section 326, the senior medical officer's interim SMO contract is terminated on the relevant day.

(3) If immediately before the relevant day the pre-modernisation health instruments apply to the senior medical officer under section 326, on the relevant day—

(a) the senior medical officer's interim SMO contract is terminated to the extent it provided for a matter mentioned in section 326(2)(b); and

(b) the pre-modernisation health instruments stop applying to the senior medical officer.

(4) The operation of subsection (2) or (3) does not—

(a) constitute a termination of the senior medical officer's employment; or

(b) entitle the senior medical officer to a payment of money or other compensation.

(5) In this section—

relevant day means the day the agreement mentioned in subsection (1) is certified, or the arbitration determination mentioned in subsection (1) is made, as the case may be.

328 Application of amended s 75

Section 75 as amended by the amending Act applies to a decision made, or a matter otherwise arising, on or after the commencement.

329 Transitional regulation-making power

(1) A regulation (a **transitional regulation**) may make provision of a saving or transitional nature for which—

(a) it is necessary to make provision to allow or facilitate the doing of anything to achieve the transition from the operation of the pre-amended Act to the operation of the amended Act; and

(b) this Act does not make provision or sufficient provision.

(2) Without limiting subsection (1)—

(a) a transitional regulation may do anything necessary to facilitate the operation of section 326 or 327 of the amended Act; and

(b) a transitional regulation may continue the operation of a repealed provision.

(3) A transitional regulation may have retrospective operation to a day that is not earlier than the day of the commencement.

(4) A transitional regulation must declare it is a transitional regulation.

(5) This section and any transitional regulation expire 2 years after the day of the commencement.

(6) In this section—

amended Act means this Act as amended by the amending Act.

pre-amended Act means this Act as it was in force immediately before the commencement.

35N Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary)

Schedule 2, definitions *contracted senior health service employee* and *high-income guarantee contract*—
omit.

Division 2 Minor or technical amendments

These are technical amendments to amend headings.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 36, as read, agreed to.

Schedule 1—

Mr PITT (11.53 pm): I seek leave to move amendments outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

Mr PITT: I move the following amendments—

16 Schedule 1 (Minor or technical amendments)

Page 31, after line 2—

insert—

Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011

1 Section 80(1), ‘, other than a person to whom section 80AA applies’—

omit.

2 Section 80B(1)(a), ‘or 80AA’—

omit.

Hospital and Health Boards Regulation 2012

1 Schedule 5A, section 13, ‘contracted’—

omit.

17 Schedule 1 (Minor or technical amendments)

Page 31, after line 5—

insert—

1A Section 135(1), note—

omit.

18 Schedule 1 (Minor or technical amendments)

Page 31, after line 9—

insert—

2A Section 140ED(1), note—

omit.

2B Section 147A(5)(b), note, ‘142(1)(b) and (2)’—

omit, insert—

142(b)

These are minor or technical amendments complementary to the repeal of chapter 6A of the Industrial Relations Act 1999 and related amendments in the HHB Act and one minor technical amendment relating to Hospital and Health Boards Regulation 2012.

Amendments agreed to.

Mr PITT: I move the following amendment—

19 Schedule 1 (Minor or technical amendments)

Page 31, after line 16—

insert—

1A Part 4A—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Schedule 1, as amended, agreed to.

Third Reading

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (11.54 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. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (11.55 pm): I move the following amendment—

20 Long title

Long title, after 'amend the'—

insert—

Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 and the

This amendment is about changing the long title of the bill to acknowledge the amendment of the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011.

Amendment agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Mr HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.55 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 14 July 2015.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.56 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance; Kawana Electorate

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (11.56 pm): I have no doubt that the members opposite are happy that the House has adjourned. They are happy that the week is over. Look at them: they are happy to go back to their electorates, because they have had a bad week. They know that they have had a bad week. You can see it on their faces. You could see it on their faces on Tuesday. You can see it on the police minister's face now. They have had a bad week and they know it. And they ought to know it, because in the 100 days of this new government we have had controversy and bungle after bungle. Three members of the Labor Party are now subject to some sort of investigation by authorities. That is one a month, one a sitting. We look forward to the next sitting. We have about five or six weeks off. Maybe we will have a couple coming forward in the next sittings. They are running out of people to refer to the authorities.

I digress from what I intended to speak about. I intended to speak about the great electorate of Kawana and the great community volunteers of that electorate. Recently, I was pleased to participate in the Cancer Council's Relay for Life. I did it for a few reasons: not only to support my local community but also to support my mother, who is a survivor of cancer. A few years ago we nearly lost my mother to cancer, but it was found. So I support the Cancer Council at every given opportunity and do the Relay for Life. I want to thank Debbie Ayres, the chair of the Cancer Council Relay for Life team at Kawana, and also Tom Turner, the coordinator of the local Cancer Council, who organises the Relay for Life. I thank all the volunteers. I thank all the participants, particularly the schoolchildren who participated in the Relay for Life. It was cold, wet and windy, but they went out there and raised thousands and thousands of dollars to try to get a cure for cancer.

Can I also talk about Run Sunshine Coast, which is the first six-kilometre run that I have participated in. I trained hard for it. I changed my diet. I have not had KFC for about three months—all because of charity and all because I wanted to do the six-kilometre run. Since the run I have had shin splints for a month. I have now registered to participate in the Sunshine Coast Half Marathon. Run Sunshine Coast was to raise money for Wishlist, which looks after the Sunshine Coast hospital foundation to help grow the child development service. So I say congratulations to all of those participants.

The Labor government is neglecting the Sunshine Coast. The health minister is neglecting the Sunshine Coast. They have cancelled the rail duplication and the Mooloolah River interchange. When is the Labor government going to provide the roads and infrastructure that the Sunshine Coast desperately needs? Labor came into government and the first thing it did was cancel it, because it does not care about the Sunshine Coast.

Rangewood Rural Fire Brigade

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (11.59 pm): On 25 May I attended the Rangewood Rural Fire Brigade in Thuringowa. This fantastic volunteer based organisation deserves special recognition. This brigade is located on the north-western outskirts of Townsville. It services an area of over 300 square kilometres and is the first brigade to respond into the Thuringowa and, more broadly, the Townsville urban area to assist in a short time frame.

Over the past few years, the Rangewood brigade has grown dramatically, both in membership and response equipment. The Rangewood Rural Fire Brigade can proudly boast being the largest brigade in North Queensland, with a staggering 82 firefighters and support members ranging in age from 17 years to 70 years of age. This brigade has seven vehicles, from its single-cab heavy appliance to an ATV with a 100-litre ultra high pressure firefighting unit and support trailer. The brigade is well equipped to handle its all-risks role in the community and provides a self-sufficient fully equipped strike team of 26 members.

The brigade has developed a strong working relationship with the Army in Townsville, with many Defence and other emergency services personnel joining the brigade. Each year, many members volunteer to work as fire marshals at the now famous Townsville V8 Supercars event and many other community events in the Townsville area.

To keep up with the growth of the membership of the brigade, recently extensions have been completed to double the size of the station's facilities and operations areas. This extension has enhanced the brigade's ability to respond to the local community and the broader northern region, allowing the brigade to operate self-sufficiently during any severe weather event.

I would like to make special mention and congratulate Mr Jim Besgrove, who has been the first officer of the Rangewood Rural Fire Brigade for the past 12 years. Under Jim's direction and his outstanding leadership, he has ensured that this volunteer and community organisation has the direction, vision, ability and capacity to serve the greater Thuringowa community for many years to come.

I say well done to all the volunteers of the Rangewood Rural Fire Brigade. I think they are going to be incredibly busy over the next few seasons as it dries out. I offer my sincere appreciation to each of the volunteers for their dedication, professionalism and service to the community of Thuringowa.

Glass House Electorate, Shows

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (12.01 am): It is show time in the electorate of Glass House. Last weekend, we saw the amazingly successful Maleny Show come to town. For the first time in eight years—and I must admit for the first since I have been the patron—there was not a drop of rain. Thankfully, the rain has nothing to do with me being the patron. His Excellency the Governor officially opened the show and I believe that we hit record numbers. So I offer huge congratulations to president Ivan 'Hanko' Hankinson; senior VPs Monica Skerman and David Lowden and junior VP Felicity Grigor; the treasurer, 'The Lovely' Karen Lusk; and the secretary, the tireless Lois White. I also acknowledge the Show Girl, Show Princess, Rural Ambassadors and Charity Persons.

This was the first time that I have taken on the job of judging that contest, and I hope that it is the last, because I do not think I won any votes. To the Rural Ambassador and Charity Person Stacey Bentley; the Show Girl, Caitlin Powter and runner-up, Georgia Ridge; the Show Princess, Emma Scott and runner-up Jillian Green; and the other entrants, Savana White, Leonie Nichols and Lucy Price, I say well done. For those who are heading off to the regionals, I wish them all the best.

Tomorrow I have the honour of opening the Caboolture Show, and I wish the people involved in that show all the best. I wish them also very fine weather. To the president, Rick Corrie, and John Fry, the chairman of committees and their amazing team, I wish them all the best for an absolutely wonderfully successful weekend.

The week after that is the Nambour Show, and in this one I have a bit of a personal interest. My son Daniel is performing in *Anzac Dawn*, which is an original work by Glass House's own David Crewe and Paul Coppens. It is going to be a massed choir, music, action and drama to capture and commemorate the Anzac experience in this, the centenary year. It will be great to also spend a bit of time at the show with our newly selected candidate for Fairfax, Ted O'Brien, and spend a bit of time showing him around the traps.

Then, finally, on the weekend of 19 and 20 June there is the Woodford Show. Already, we have had the show ball for Woodford and, fortunately, I did not have to judge the contestants in that one. I commend Rural Ambassador, Krystle Meredith; Miss Showgirl, Zoe Hunt, who also picked up the contestants' choice; runner-up Madeline Pickering; Show Princess, Jasmine Trevison and runner-up Lilly Wease; and Most Improved, Bianca Wicks. But I must give credit to the following amazing ladies: Leigh Amos, the organiser extraordinaire; Zita Duncan, Carol Cawper and Lisa Loiacano, who were the dance instructors and the mentors for these fabulous young ladies; and also Peter Otsman, Rod Kaye and Lyle Duncan, who were the blokes' mentors and also the dance partners for the females when the blokes could not turn up. I wish president Rod Kaye all the best for the Woodford Show on that coming weekend. That will round out a great month—four shows all in and around the electorate of Glass House.

Reconciliation Week

 **Miss BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (12.04 am): Twenty-three years ago yesterday, the High Court of Australia handed down its landmark native title decision. This decision represented a turning point in our nation's history, a turning point for recognition of our country's first people, for healing and for reconciliation.

Eddie Mabo has left our country a proud legacy. Mabo Day concludes National Reconciliation Week, a week that celebrates and commemorates much in our country: National Sorry Day, the anniversary of the 1967 referendum to vote and, of course, Mabo Day. This is a time to reflect on where we have come in our reconciliation efforts and where we are heading to close the gap and ensure equality for our Indigenous brothers' and sisters' lives.

There is a group of people in my electorate who I would like to acknowledge and celebrate as this important week of recognition and reconciliation is upon us. Only last week some members of this group were in this place. I speak of students from Bray Park State School and their BRING IT ON program. They joined us for the Premier's Queensland Reconciliation Awards. They provided the opening entertainment. As always, their ukulele compilation of Aussie songs and original creations was a delight. BRING IT ON is an acronym for Building Reconciliation for Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Generations through Inclusivity, Truth and trust, Opportunities and New pathways.

Reconciliation for this generation, respect and recognition of multiculturalism is key to the BRING IT ON program. This initiative has been a success story for the past three years. It involves inclusive lunchtime activities such as art and the ukulele groups. Another component of the program is the wonderful Homework Club. Its success is attributed to the work of Indigenous volunteers.

Not only did Bray Park State School contribute to the entertainment for the evening; students also got to jam with the Premier, playing their original song *Narragunnawali*. Excitingly, the Premier also announced that the school's BRING IT ON program was the winner of the 2015 Queensland Reconciliation Awards in the education category.

It was a real pleasure to join in this experience with the school and the students. The next morning, I enjoyed immensely hosting a celebratory breakfast at the Yarning Circle—a BRING IT ON gardening initiative. Over a sausage sizzle, pikelets and apples I had the real pleasure of celebrating with students, parents and staff at the school their remarkable efforts and dedication, to which their achievements attest.

BRING IT ON's success is attributed to teacher Jo Speirs, the principal, Maree Mortlock, all of the wonderful staff at the school and parents alike. But without the children, there would not be a BRING IT ON. So I congratulate these giving children on their broader reconciliation program and congratulate them on their successes.

Robina State High School

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (12.07 am): The safety of staff, students and facilities at Robina State High School has been secured after the school confirmed this week that, following representations by the member for Mermaid Beach and me, security fencing would be installed around the school's perimeter following a series of incidents involving vandalism and trespassing. I worked hard with the school community to deliver the security fencing following this major vandalism at the school last month, which damaged five buildings and caused over \$280,000 in damage. I am pleased that we have been able to deliver a positive outcome after urgently writing to the education minister following the incident to request the fencing be installed as soon as possible. I was deeply concerned when I heard about the shocking vandalism which occurred at Robina State High School just a few weeks ago.

Robina State High School is particularly susceptible to instances of trespassing and vandalism due to its visibility and close proximity to Robina train station, Robina Hospital, Cbus Stadium and Robina Town Centre. In a series of letters since early May, the member for Mermaid Beach, Ray Stevens, and I have urged the education minister to implement the security upgrade, as I mentioned. I am pleased to have been able to deliver this much-needed upgrade to secure the safety of our school community, and I am sure that the staff and the students of Robina State High School will feel much safer as they go to school each day. I understand that measurements have already been taken and a quote has been sought from a contractor for the work to begin in the very near future.

Robina State High School parent Larissa Collins said that she was thankful a solution could be found and implemented so quickly. She stated—

Two of my children go to Robina State High School and the school community has been devastated by recent vandalism and trespassing.

The safety of my children and their learning environment is very important to me, and we are very pleased this security fencing will be installed as soon as possible.

I take this opportunity to thank Di Loddon and the members of the Robina State High School P&C for their determination in having this issue resolved. I thank Julie Warwick, our fantastic, proactive principal, for ensuring that the P&C and I had the support of the school to achieve this positive outcome. I also thank the Minister for Education for acting swiftly in this regard to ensure that the only state high school in the electorate of Mudgeeraba is now protected from further acts of vandalism.

It was great to host the school leaders of Robina State High School today in Parliament, with whom you spent some time, Mr Speaker, and I thank you for that—young Matthew Ho and Tiana Reardon, the school captains; Nicholas Boyan and Emily Forden, school vice captains; and Anna Reaburn, the student council president. I say thank you also to Mr Ben Weeks, head of department of the junior secondary school, for accompanying the students. I hope that they all had a very informative day. It was a pleasure to host some of our potential community leaders.

Palm Island

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (12.10 am): During this week in which we are acknowledging Mabo Week I would like to inform the House that I attended Palm Island last week to attend the Local Government Association of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders conference. Over 20 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils throughout Queensland turned up to Palm Island. It had a big impact on the local economy, as members can imagine, and around 60 people attended. Many stayed with relatives and with relatives of relatives and there was a lot of injection back into the local economy for the people on Palm Island. It has taken five years to get that conference over to Palm Island. It was very gratefully accepted by everyone on the island.

I congratulate Alf Lacey, the mayor on Palm Island, and all his councillors. At the welcoming on the first evening the participants enjoyed a kup murri. Those members who have had a kup murri will understand how sensational that is. Most importantly, the mayor personally went around and doorknocked every member of the community and invited them to come along to the kup murri as well. This was a celebration not only of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils but also of Palm Island itself and it was gratefully accepted.

While I am on my feet, I will take the opportunity to acknowledge the principal of Bwgcolman Community School. Many members in the House have been to Palm Island and have visited the school. The principal of that school, Jeff Jones, has invested four years of his time and life into the place and he finishes tomorrow. I congratulate Jeff on the outstanding work that he has done during those four years. Next, he will be going to The Willows State School on the mainland. He is looking forward to that and he will start semester 2 over there.

When he first arrived on Palm Island, school was the thing that kids did if they did not have anything else on their agenda that day. He would turn up and quite often kids were not in school; they would be swimming or diving off the jetty instead of attending school. So he introduced a saying that became the catchcry of the school, 'two way strong'. That means that you are strong in the school as a leader and as a learner, but you are also strong in the community as an Aboriginal member of the community.

Some of Jeff's achievements at that school include an increase in student attendance by more than six per cent since 2012, enrolment is up 18 per cent, reading levels of students have shown significant long-term improvement, improvement in 13 out of the 20 domains in NAPLAN testing from the previous year, this is a great one: year 12 outcomes with five graduating year 12 students receiving their QCE at the end of last year which is the highest proportion in the school's history—a great achievement—and introducing men and women's business, which improved attendance in the junior secondary area.

Toowoomba, Infrastructure

 **Dr McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (12.13 am): The Toowoomba CBD outer circulating road project was officially opened last Sunday adjacent to our beautiful historic Toowoomba Railway Station by the mayor, Councillor Paul Antonio. I acknowledge the attendance of all of our councillors, particularly the former member for Toowoomba South and my predecessor, Mike Horan; the member for Murrumba, Chris Whiting, representing as he did the Premier; as well as the Minister for State Development.

Toowoomba is the second largest inland city in Australia behind Canberra. Unfortunately, for many years, largely under Labor governments here in Queensland, its infrastructure needs were neglected. It took the likes of Mike Horan to recognise that congestion had become critical for both locals and visitors in our city such as it is as a centre for medical, business, retail, education, agriculture and resource industry activities and, hence, his crusade to seek appropriate plans and funding to address those very needs and pressures in our city.

As well as that congestion need, I must address the fact that in 2011 our city, like the surrounding areas on the Darling Downs and Lockyer Valley, experienced tragic flooding events with each of these areas seeing deaths as a result. It was in the months following that event as a then councillor on Toowoomba Regional Council that I was briefed on the detail of the flooding hotspots, if you like, up and down East and West creeks, which go through my electorate and our city. A key bottleneck causing some of that flooding activity, particularly in our CBD, was the confluence of those two creeks adjacent to the railway station at the very site of the now opened outer circulating road project. By early 2012 it was, therefore, a great honour to work with senior council officers Mike Horan and my colleague Trevor Watts when we were both LNP candidates for Toowoomba South and Toowoomba North to determine the funding requirements for this project and to secure \$45 million as an election commitment of the incoming LNP government. To see the project completed addressing congestion and flood mitigation needs was indeed a great honour. I appreciate the gracious acknowledgement by the member for Murrumba, whilst he was representing his government on the day, of the hard work of Trevor Watts and me, together with council, in securing the project. Such acknowledgement is, of course, very rare from this new Labor government.

What we need is a long-term planning approach throughout the state for such regional needs, and that is exactly what we have seen with this traffic management and flood mitigation project overseen by the LNP government that means so very much to my very important city.

Woodridge Electorate

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (12.16 am): Over the weekend of 30 and 31 May I was able to attend a number of community events in the Woodridge electorate. These included the Maori and Pacific Pasifika Walk for Health on

Saturday morning where our community members banded together supported by the mighty Queensland Reds. This event was organised by The Good Start Program and the Pasifika Women's Alliance. I want to thank everyone involved in creating such a great event. Both of these organisations undertake vital work to help members of the Logan, Pacific Island and Maori communities to lead healthier lifestyles.

I was proud to announce that the department of health has decided to provide \$3.36 million for Good Start to continue their program and outstanding work for the next three years. The Good Start Program targets seven communities: Cook Islander, Fijian, Fijian Indian, Maori, Papua New Guinean, Samoan and Tongan. The program began in 2012 and has been highly successful in delivering culturally tailored initiatives developed with the direct involvement of Pacific Islander communities. Originally funded by the federal Labor government, funding for Good Start was cut by the Abbott coalition government in 2014. I am pleased that the Queensland Labor government will fund the continuation of the program until June 2018. Through active community health programs that both educate and work closely with the community, lifestyle changes are adopted, resulting in longer, happier and healthier lives.

On Sunday I had the pleasure of attending the Africa Day Festival at the new African House at Morningside along with my government colleagues the member for Bulimba, Di Farmer MP; the member for Ferny Grove, Mark Furner MP; and the member for Sunnybank, Peter Russo MP. This free community event was a wonderful celebration which showcased African art, music, food and performance. Woodridge has a large African community including African Queenslanders who have migrated from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Ethiopia and the Sudan. It was a day that brought together not just members of the African community, but people from a variety of different cultures to celebrate the breadth of the many African communities in Queensland. I would like to make special mention of Elijah Buol, my friend and president of the Queensland African Communities Council, and all members of the QACC executive who did an extraordinary job to create such a memorable experience.

Last Sunday I also represented the Premier and attended as the member for Woodridge the Logan Eco Action Festival, LEAF, which raises awareness of environmental issues in Logan City. This is the biggest environmental festival for the city of Logan, with a variety of live music, workshops, children's activities and eco businesses on display. There were a number of awards announced and I want to congratulate IKEA in the electorate of Woodridge and the mighty Substation33 on being recognised as business environmental leaders in Logan. Substation33, a social enterprise operated by one of our amazing community organisations, YFS Ltd, opened its doors in January 2013 as an electronic waste recycling centre that also offers training and employment opportunities for residents of Woodridge, amongst others. I congratulate IKEA and Substation33 on their awards.

Redlands Electorate

 **Mr McEACHAN** (Redlands—LNP) (12.19 am): Tonight I rise to speak about the wonderful people in the electorate of Redlands. In my maiden speech to this House I spoke of the hardworking people of the Redlands—those who volunteer in the many community groups and volunteer organisations and those many talented people achieving outstanding results in their chosen field of endeavour. That is why I have established the Recognise Redlands sponsorship program.

Since becoming the member for Redlands I have been privileged to witness the outstanding efforts and achievements by many of my constituents making a difference in our community. Recognise Redlands, whilst modest, seeks to support these people along with those who achieve in their academic and sporting efforts. As a parent, I understand the financial pressures often placed on parents seeking to support their children in their studies or perhaps in becoming talented young sports men and women. Recognise Redlands will provide sponsorships for Redlanders to assist them in achieving further in their chosen field, whether it be a year 12 student who needs a little extra assistance to purchase textbooks or a young sportsperson who needs sponsorship to help them with entry fees to a regional sporting competition. It might be a volunteer in our community who deserves special recognition for their hard work—someone like Ada, who has been working at the Victoria Point Meals on Wheels for over 40 years, giving up her time. I want to encourage all Redlanders to nominate those hardworking people. Nominations can be made through my website or directly through my electorate office.

It has been a busy few months for me since I was honoured to be elected as the member for Redlands. I have been out and about in my community, meeting with constituents and community groups. I have been visiting schools, doorknocking, meeting with small business people and attending community events. I want to acknowledge a community event that I attended on Sunday, and that was at the Redland Bay Coast Guard. I was privileged to be there for the commissioning of its new vessel. I commend Flotilla Commander Warren Francis, Deputy Flotilla Commander Jason Boon, SES Controller Peter Gould and State President of Volunteer Marine Rescue Keith Williams for the fantastic work that they and their teams do, giving of their time to provide a volunteer service that rescues boats in distress, helps errant navigators and saves lives in life-threatening situations. Located at Weinam Creek, they work hand in hand with Volunteer Marine Rescue at Victoria Point. It is fantastic to see both these vital groups working for the benefit of those who enjoy the bay. I commend their work to the House.

Appo, Mr G; Woof, Mr I

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (12.22 am): Tonight I rise to pay tribute to two late sporting champions from my electorate—Mr Graham Appo, aged 64, and Mr Ian Woof, aged 56—both recently laid to rest within the space of a few days. Both men made huge contributions to various sporting codes in the Gladstone area and their deaths are a huge loss to our community, to their family and friends and to the many they mentored through their significant involvement in sport.

First I speak of Mr Graham Appo, a proud Indigenous man, a long-term Gladstone resident and former Valleys Rugby League chairman. His unquestionable passion for the game of league was legendary. He exhibited high standards of morals and ethics in the game and was known to always set the bar at a very high height. It is largely through his dedication that Valleys Diehards Rugby League club will be able to celebrate its 100th season next year. When the club was on the brink of folding, Graham, together with his family, commenced the rebuilding task. With the 100th season celebration in 2016 on his radar, he had a hands-on approach and, wherever he had the required skills or knowledge, he would lead by example. He committed a huge amount of guidance and general assistance to both Valleys and Gladstone Rugby League together. He was a true and dedicated mentor. He commanded respect and heavily influenced many young people involved in Rugby League. Graham and his family dedicated more than 60 years service to the club, an enormous contribution that will possibly never, ever be matched. The club logo of Valleys is a tough, diehard figure—someone who is determined, loyal and devoted, and Graham Appo earned the right to proudly wear that logo on his heart. Sadly, he hung up his beloved Valleys jersey for the last time when he passed away at home on the night of 13 May 2015. A minute's silence was held on 16 May at 5 pm before kick-off of the Gladstone Rugby League A-grade Valleys versus Brothers game in honour of the club stalwart and his contributions to the game of Rugby League. Sincere condolences are extended to Graham's wife, Debbie, to his sons, Dave, Kevin, Steve and Scott, and to the whole Appo family.

The second blow to the Gladstone sporting community was the death of Mr Ian Woof, or 'Woofy' as he was commonly known, who died at the age of 56 following a prolonged battle with kidney disease. Woofy was born in Toowoomba but in 1969 relocated to Gladstone, where he became heavily involved in cricket and hockey in the roles of player, mentor and coach. He loved the water. He was an avid fisherman and sailor as well as a high-achieving sportsman. In his late teens he was an A-grade player for the Glen Cricket Club and Sparks Hockey team. He completed school in 1973 and gained entry into a carpentry apprenticeship and followed his trade for many years. In the eighties Ian's health began to fail and when he could not play sport anymore he coached and mentored youngsters for the next 15 years. The worst of Ian's pain, however, was undoubtedly the tragic loss of his son Luke in a car accident at the age of 17½ years. Luke had followed in his father's footsteps with his love of cricket and was awarded Yaralla Senior Sports Star of the Year in 2009, the year before his untimely death.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 12.25 am (Friday).

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