

WEDNESDAY, 19 AUGUST 2015

ESTIMATES—INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE—TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PLANNING AND TRADE

Estimate Committee Members

Mr J Pearce (Chair)
Mr MJ Hart
Mr GJ Butcher
Mr S Knuth
Mrs BL Lauga
Mr LL Millar

Members in Attendance

Mr JP Kelly
Mr JE Madden
Mr SA Emerson
Ms FS Simpson
Mr TJ Nicholls
Mr AP Cripps

In Attendance

Hon. JA Trad, Deputy Premier and Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade

Mr M Collins, Chief of Staff

Department of Transport and Main Roads

Mr N Scales, Director-General

Queensland Rail Limited

Ms H Gluer, Chief Executive Officer

Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning

Mr S Johnston, Acting Director-General

Mr G Chemello, Deputy Director-General, Planning and Acting General Manager, Economic Development Queensland

Queensland Reconstruction Authority

Mr F Carroll, Chief Executive Officer

Building Queensland

Mr D Quinn, Chief Executive Officer

Committee met at 9.30 am

CHAIR: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee public hearing for the examination of the Appropriation Bill 2015. I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we are meeting today. I would like to introduce members of the committee. I am Jim Pearce, the member for Mirani and chair of the committee; Mr Michael Hart, to my left, is the member for Burleigh and deputy chair; Mr Glen Butcher, member for Gladstone; far to my left is Mr Shane Knuth, member for Dalrymple; Mrs Brittany Lauga, member for Keppel, is in the room and she will be joining us later; and Mr Lachlan Millar, the member for Gregory. We also have with us for this first session the member for Indooroopilly, the member for Ipswich West and the member for Greenslopes. The committee has granted leave for non-committee members to participate in the hearing.

Today the committee will consider the Appropriation Bill 2015 and the estimates for the committee's areas of responsibility. We will examine the estimates for transport, infrastructure, local government, planning, trade, state development, natural resources and mines in that order. I remind everyone present that any person may be excluded from the proceedings at my discretion as chair or by order of the committee. The committee has authorised for its hearing to be broadcast live, televised and photographed. Copies of the committee's conditions for broadcast of proceedings are available from the secretariat. I ask that mobile phones and other electronic devices be turned off or switched to silent mode.

On behalf of the committee I welcome the Deputy Premier, departmental officers and members of the public to the hearing. I ask that departmental officers identify themselves when they first speak and to speak directly into the microphone. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

I am going to allow three to five minutes for opening comments from the Deputy Premier and then three to five minutes for responses to questions. Deputy Premier, would you like to make an opening statement?

Ms TRAD: Yes, I would, Mr Chair, and thank you very much. Can I say good morning to all members of the committee and all members of my department who are present here today. Thank you very much for this opportunity to present myself and my budget papers to the committee for deliberation. Mr Chair, there is no doubt that the Palaszczuk Labor government when it came to office was confronting some pretty challenging economic issues. Debt was up, unemployment was up, confidence down and also household consumption had fallen through the floor. Under the former LNP government Queensland lost six full-time jobs every single day and many of those jobs were directly signed away by Mr Lawrence Springborg and Mr John-Paul Langbroek.

So, Mr Chair, we have done much to start turning things around. The budget handed down by the Treasurer last month went a long way to instilling confidence back into the Queensland economy. Of course, the centrepiece of that budget was the Advance Queensland program, a \$180 million injection into diversifying the Queensland economy to future proof it, to set up the knowledge based industries of the future. But, Mr Chair, I acknowledge that my agency, my department, does a lot of the heavy lifting when it comes to economic growth and creating jobs. That is why I am pleased very much with the allocation in this year's budget to my portfolio. What we see is more than \$59 million allocated to embedding the planning reform process throughout Queensland. We know that with good planning comes good development and that means jobs.

In the area of infrastructure there is over \$8 million that has been allocated to establish Building Queensland, which will be this government's rigorous, independent, infrastructure adviser. Across the state, \$10 billion will be spent on infrastructure projects; that mean jobs—over 27,000 jobs, in fact, right across the state. In the area of local government we have established a \$40 million Community Resilience Fund. We also have allocated \$40 million to iconic projects in Central Queensland in response to Tropical Cyclone Marcia. We also have money going into Indigenous council grants and the Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program.

In the area of trade we are allocating more than \$7 million over four years to grow one of Queensland's fastest growing export industries and that is export education. We want to make sure that export education is one of the key economic exports from the state of Queensland.

In the area of transport I am very pleased that we have allocated over \$200 million for station upgrades. We will continue the Moreton Bay Rail Link which Labor started many years ago, both at a federal and a state level. We will continue the duplication of the Gold Coast line and we are also delivering the Local Fare Scheme which was our commitment to the people of Far North Queensland to make sure they have access to good cheap local fares so that they are connected to communities.

Mr Chair, I am very conscious that this has only begun and we are determined to make sure that we continue to drive the economic growth and the job creation that this state needs and I am very pleased and proud that my agency will have a big role in that agenda.

CHAIR: I call the member for Indooroopilly.

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, Mr Chair. My question is to the Deputy Premier, or should I say Acting Premier? Acting Premier, why don't you do the right thing and stand aside Jo-Ann Miller?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Indooroopilly for the question. I think, Mr Chair, that this question was asked of the Premier yesterday and canvassed extensively. I do ask you to refer the member for Indooroopilly to the standing orders and ask him to identify exactly where in my Service Delivery Statement such a matter exists.

CHAIR: I consider the question to be an imputation anyway. I think it is not the role of the Deputy Premier to answer questions as the Premier. It is outside her portfolio. I ask you to put the question in a different way.

Mr EMERSON: She is the Acting Premier from today. She has in her portfolio issues of integrity and accountability. Surely this is an issue of integrity and accountability. Again I ask the question: why won't you do the right thing for Queensland and stand aside this police minister, Jo-Ann Miller?

CHAIR: No. I am sorry, Deputy Premier, but the question is out of order. I have just explained to you that the Deputy Premier, it is outside her portfolio, the question you are asking, and I would ask you to refer your questions with regard to the portfolio the Deputy Premier is here today to discuss.

Mr EMERSON: I refer then to the ministerial diary. A meeting between the now Acting Premier and the Premier and Jo-Ann Miller on 4 June, what was that meeting about?

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, I do direct you to standing order 181(g) which says that in relation to general hearing procedures and in relation to estimates committee processes that a member may ask any question which is relevant to the examination of the appropriation being considered. My understanding, Mr Chair, is that the appropriation of Premier was yesterday and the honourable member would have had an opportunity to present himself yesterday and ask those questions of the Premier in relation to the member for Bundamba and the police minister.

Mr EMERSON: We are seeing an extraordinary situation here. I am referring to a meeting that the Acting Premier had. It refers directly to a meeting that the Acting Premier had.

CHAIR: Member for Indooroopilly, the question is out of order and I ask you to move on and remind you that the Deputy Premier is not here to answer questions with regard to issues outside her portfolio and if you insist I will think about having a different ruling.

Mr EMERSON: Again, Mr Chairman, I ask about meetings that the Acting Premier had in her role as Deputy Premier, which surely has to be within her portfolio. This is a meeting that she attended. To say that you cannot ask a minister about a meeting that she attended is extraordinary and again this is protection of this police minister.

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, if I could just say in relation to the member for Indooroopilly, that nothing that was discussed in that meeting, I can reassure him, had anything to do with the portfolio being examined today. I can reassure him on that matter. I refer him again back to standing order 181(g) which all members should abide by when they are subjecting themselves to the committee process here today. But, Mr Chair, given the member for Indooroopilly's track record in relation to the transport portfolio I can very, very much understand why he doesn't want to ask me any questions about transport.

CHAIR: You know the rules as well as I do and I am asking you to reframe your question or put your question in a different way so that it has some relevance to the Deputy Premier's portfolio.

Mr HART: Mr Chair, can I just say the departmental overview which is covered by the SDS says that your department will focus on integrity and accountability.

Ms TRAD: Correct.

Mr HART: Surely the member's questions goes to the scope of accountability.

Ms TRAD: Let me address the honourable member's question, Mr Chair. There is nothing more honourable and transparent than referring matters to the Ethics Committee for their deliberation—an all-party committee, quasi-judicial committee, constituted under this parliament with broad ranging powers to investigate issues. Now, this matter has been referred to the appropriate jurisdiction, to the appropriate committee in this parliament, and it should not be discussed in parliament in any other committee before the House. To do so would compromise and prejudice the deliberations of that committee and every single member on this committee should understand that.

CHAIR: I am asking everybody to move on, please, to a different line of questioning. We do not have a lot of time. We are trying to give you guys a fair go. Let's get it right. Start asking questions relevant to the Deputy Premier's portfolio. It is as simple as that.

Mr EMERSON: Mr Chair, again as I point to SDS page 3, which refers to integrity and accountability, I ask about the meeting with Mr Rick Williams that the Deputy Premier attended on 3 June. Can you tell me the details of that meeting?

Ms TRAD: Again, Mr Chair, nothing that was discussed in that meeting with the member, Mr Rick Williams, had anything to do with the portfolio that is currently being examined here today.

Mr EMERSON: Deputy Premier, you just mentioned about acting with integrity and accountability. Given what you knew about Rick Williams at that meeting, why didn't you refer that to the Ethics Committee then?

Ms TRAD: Again, Mr Chair, nothing that was discussed at that meeting has anything to do with the examination of my portfolio which is why we are here today. I do say, Mr Chair, I am very, very happy to answer any single question about any of the matters covered in my SDS or any of the budget papers that you have had for over a month now.

CHAIR: I have to agree with what the Deputy Premier is saying. Out of respect for yourself, I would just ask you to move on to the next question relevant to the Deputy Premier's portfolio.

Mr EMERSON: Mr Chair, the Acting Premier—the Deputy Premier is now the Acting Premier—

CHAIR: Is not required to answer questions outside her own portfolio

Mr EMERSON: In terms of her responsibilities, when were you alerted to the fact that you would be Acting Premier today?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question. I was alerted perhaps, if my memory serves me correctly, about 10 days ago. I will have to confirm that, but it was approximately 10 days ago.

Mr EMERSON: Why was it not mentioned in the *Queensland Government Gazette* then on Friday?

Ms TRAD: It's being published today.

Mr EMERSON: It wasn't published on Friday. The last gazette on Friday.

Ms TRAD: And?

Mr EMERSON: Why wasn't that mentioned as alerted 10 days ago?

CHAIR: Time has expired. We will move on to government members' questions.

Ms TRAD: If he wants to talk about the government gazette, I am very happy for him to talk about the government gazette.

CHAIR: The first question is what is the government doing the make air travel more affordable for people living in remote communities in Far North Queensland?

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Mr Chair, and can I say it is an absolute pleasure to be talking about transport and what it means for Queenslanders, particularly Queenslanders who live in some of the most remote locations in Queensland. In fact, some of these Queenslanders in the Torres Strait live closer to PNG than they do to their own capital city. Mr Chair, what we have done is we have fulfilled our election commitment to reinstate the Local Fare Scheme in Far North Queensland. I am very, very pleased about the fact that we were able to deliver this within the first six months of government.

This is a \$5.6 million scheme which began rolling out on 20 July last month. The scheme will ensure that Cape and Torres Strait Islander residents stay connected to their communities. What it means is a discount of up to \$400 off return flights for eligible residents. The scheme will provide access to vital health, education and employment services for those Queenslanders living in these locations. It will be locals who will be eligible for these services and we know that this will mean a great deal for many families living up there.

For example, a family of three travelling from Saibai Island to Thursday Island to access services will save approximately \$1,200 based on the current price of flights. This, in fact, will help close the gap because we know that transport is a critical service that Queenslanders, Australians, all people need in order to access the services that they need. The minimum is capped, after the subsidy is applied, at \$99 per ticket. It has been strategically designed so that it will not interfere with existing airline competition.

There is no doubt that the former transport minister and member for Indooroopilly does not want to talk about this scheme and does not want to talk about transport at all, because under the former LNP government this program, which proved to be very successful and very much supported by locals in the Torres Strait and also Far North Queensland, was scrapped. The former LNP government just scrapped it without consultation, as it did throughout its entire term. It scrapped things or changed things or rammed legislation through this House without any consultation. The local fare scheme was one of the victims that fell under the LNP and it fell in the first six months. When I travelled to the Torres Strait, many members of the local community expressed deep, deep reservations and concerns about the fact that this very valuable service had been taken away from them. I am very pleased and very proud that Labor has fulfilled this commitment within six months of office.

Mr KELLY: It gives me great pleasure to be here today, questioning the Deputy Premier who, like myself, is deeply concerned about planning and transport. I refer to page 109 of the Capital Statement. Will the minister detail how the government is improving accessibility at South-East Queensland rail stations?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Greenslopes—my neighbour—for the question. I acknowledge that he has been a fantastic advocate when it comes to public transport services, better planning and better connection for people living in the inner south. It is something that we work on together locally.

The Queensland Labor government believes in providing opportunities for all Queenslanders and this includes on our public transport network. The Station Upgrade Program provides \$212 million over five years for upgrades at key stations. This program will create more than 3,500 jobs and certainty of work for the construction sector. It is going to take into account the complexities of works in and around a live rail environment. Work will include raising of platforms at accessible boarding locations, the extension of platform shelters, disability car parking upgrades, improved toilet facilities, improved lighting, CCTV installations and improved accessible signage. There will be no full station closures, which is incredibly important. We will deliver independent access for Graceville, Dinmore, Alderley, Newmarket, Nambour, Strathpine, Boondall and Auchenflower stations. Further stations will be announced in the not-too-distant future. Construction at Alderley, Newmarket, Dinmore and Graceville stations will commence later this year and will be completed in late 2016.

For the member's benefit and for the community's benefit, I think it is important that we talk about one of the tranches that was approved by the former transport minister. The budget that was allocated for the upgrades of that tranche was only \$40 million. This is actually an example of rushed decision making. It did not take into account the full scope of work, so it allocated money before the full scope of work had actually been done. What did this mean? It meant that stations would have had to be closed for months at a time. For those members of the committee who know how much local residents rely upon public transport to get to their jobs and to get home early to spend time with their family, they would also know that having stations closed would have been incredibly problematic for them.

Interestingly enough, because it was not scoped out well enough and the former minister did not ask the right questions and did not drive this process appropriately, the original scope of the project did not include raising the platform. I repeat: it did not include raising the platform. If you are a person in a wheelchair and you have accessibility issues, not raising the platform means that you cannot access the train. Why you would scope out work to provide for accessibility works at a station without raising the platform beggars belief. It is an example of how the former LNP government did business in this state and planned in terms of important infrastructure projects. They did not plan appropriately, they rushed and Queenslanders were worse off.

CHAIR: Member for Indooroopilly?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, Mr Chair. Acting Premier, what were the Premier's instructions to you in terms of riding orders in terms of Jo-Ann Miller, while you are in her role?

Mr KELLY: I question, through the chair, the relevance of that question?

CHAIR: I thank the member for Greenslopes for the reminder.

Mr EMERSON: The question is very clear: what were the riding orders from the Premier about Jo-Ann Miller while you are in her role?

CHAIR: I have just about had enough of this, to be quite frank. I am asking the member for Indooroopilly to cease the line of questioning. The Deputy Premier is here to answer questions about her portfolio and areas of responsibility. I ask you to change your line of questioning, if you do not mind doing that for the hearing today. We come here to talk to the Deputy Premier about her portfolio, not to be asking questions that have nothing to do with it.

Mr EMERSON: Mr Chair, if the Deputy Premier and Acting Premier is not willing to answer questions about Jo-Ann Miller, I am happy to move on to the DG. Director-General, I understand the fare review committee met in late July. I understand you are on that committee. Academic Chris Hale was invited to be on the committee and he declined. What reasons did he give for not being on that committee?

Mr Scales: I thank you for the question, member for Indooroopilly. To the Fare Review Taskforce, yes, I am certainly on that committee. I did not form the membership of that committee. That was done independently as a policy matter from the Deputy Premier. I have no idea why the individual concerned did or did not wish to attend the fair review committee. I am an active member of that committee and will participate fully, but the actual composition of it, being expert led, was not constituted by the department.

Mr EMERSON: DG, by how much will public transport fares rise on 1 January?

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair—

Mr EMERSON: I am sorry, Mr Chair, but my question is to the director-general.

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, I seek your guidance. The member for Indooroopilly is really asking about a policy initiative of this government. If the member for Indooroopilly wants to talk about the Fare Review Taskforce and the direction the government is taking in relation to enacting its election policy commitment, the appropriate person to answer policy questions and election commitment questions is myself, not the director-general.

Mr EMERSON: Mr Chair, we see an extraordinary situation here where the Deputy Premier and Acting Premier refused to answer questions previously and now she does not want to let her DG answer questions. This is another form of a protection racket. I have the right to ask the member questions.

Ms TRAD: If the member for Indooroopilly wants to talk about a racket, let us talk about the \$100,000 of secret donations that were publicly released yesterday. Under the LNP's list of donations, there is \$100,000 worth of donations that have not been disclosed. Maybe the member for Indooroopilly—

CHAIR: Deputy Premier, I do not think we should get into a debate about this. I would prefer you to stick to your portfolio and answer questions that are relevant to the portfolio that you are here for. It would be a good thing if the member for Indooroopilly asked questions relevant to the portfolio and the expenditure of the government under that portfolio.

Ms TRAD: And appropriately direct it.

Mr EMERSON: Clearly, the Acting Premier is getting a bit rattled this morning. She will not let her DG answer questions. She will not answer the questions I ask her in her role as Acting Premier. Again, I ask the DG in his role—and I refer to the fare review committee at SDS page 14—by how much will public transport fares rise on 1 January?

Mr Scales: Chair and colleagues, as far as the Fare Review Taskforce is concerned, the government is committed to ensuring public transport in Queensland—

Mr EMERSON: Mr Chair, I have asked the DG a very specific question: by how much will fares rise on 1 January? Could he please answer that question?

Ms TRAD: I think you are entitled to answer it in the way that you see fit, as opposed to the way that the member for Indooroopilly sees fit.

Mr EMERSON: I am sorry: I am asking the DG questions, rather than getting riding orders, as the Premier has obviously given you riding orders about Jo-Ann Miller.

Ms TRAD: I think you are being a little bit over the top, member for Indooroopilly.

CHAIR: If the DG is prepared to answer the question, I think he should be allowed to do so.

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, Mr Chair.

Mr Scales: The fare review will have to feed into this process, but the assumption is in the forward budget that there is a 2.5 per cent fare increase in the budget from 1 January 2016.

Mr EMERSON: So 2.5 per cent is in the budget for 1 January; is that correct, Mr Scales?

Mr Scales: Yes, it is.

Mr EMERSON: Deputy Premier, I note that the government has said previously that fares will only rise at the inflation rate and no more. Are you aware what the current inflation rate is?

Ms TRAD: Yes, I am, Mr Emerson.

Mr EMERSON: What is it at the moment?

Ms TRAD: It is 1.5 per cent.

Mr EMERSON: Given that the budget is for 2.5 per cent, why are fares going up 2.5 per cent when the government has said it will only increase fares at the inflation rate of 1.5 per cent?

Ms TRAD: Member for Indooroopilly, fares will only go up by what we promised at the election and that was the rate of inflation.

Mr EMERSON: In a number of media interviews given by yourself and the Treasurer, they said the fares would only go up by the inflation rate. As you have just indicated, inflation at the moment is 1.5 per cent.

Ms TRAD: Yes.

Mr EMERSON: The DG has very clearly said that fares will now go up 2.5 per cent, almost double the current inflation rate. Why are you now putting fares up on 1 January by almost double the inflation rate?

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, in relation to fare increases, I would like to advise the committee that what Labor has committed to doing is, in fact, setting up the expert independent fare review panel. It will be a task force that will look at all issues in relation to fares. That means how we deliver affordability, which is one of the areas where there has been a very low level of customer satisfaction in relation to the public transport system, and how we can make the fare system a sustainable source of revenue for the infrastructure projects that we need going ahead. I am very pleased that what this Labor government will do is that we will deliver on our promise and we will have independent experts advising government on this process. The former LNP government, when in opposition, promised to do a fare review. They had one meeting and it did not go any further. They delivered nothing for the people of Queensland. They did do a big gimmicky thing in terms of giving back the carbon tax and reducing fares by five per cent, but really that had no impact in terms of patronage.

What we will do is we will ensure that this independent task force deliberates on the terms of reference and the issues that we have referred to them in terms of advising us about what is a fair fare system going forward for the people of Queensland, particularly the south-east corner. We will take those recommendations on board. I do want to reassure the committee that the commitment that we made at the time of the election in relation to fare increases of 1.5 per cent will be honoured on 1 January this year. It will only increase by CPI.

If the honourable member for Indooroopilly wants to talk about figures in SDSs, I only need to refer him to his own SDS last year. That SDS accounted for 300,000 trips on the light rail system having actually been taken in that financial year. Unfortunately, the light rail system on the Gold Coast had yet to be opened. The minister at the time could not account for the fact that in his budget papers he had accounted for 300,000 actual trips on a public transport system that had yet to be opened. I do want to reassure the committee that public transport fares will only increase by CPI.

Mr EMERSON: Can I clarify that, because what we saw just then is a budget paper saying that fares will go up 2.5 per cent and we now hear the minister saying it will only go up 1.5 per cent. What is right: the budget that was delivered only a month and a half ago or the minister? The minister has just said that in January fares will only go up by 1.5 per cent, but we have just heard her DG say that in the budget papers they will go up 2.5 per cent. What is it? Do we have a minister who does not understand the portfolio and does not know what the budget contains? Who is right: the DG or the minister?

CHAIR: I think the Deputy Premier has already answered the question.

Mr EMERSON: No, Mr Chair, we have heard two contradictory statements here. We have just heard the director-general say that the budget papers show that fares will go up by 2½ per cent. We have just heard the Deputy Premier and Minister for Transport say that they will only go up by 1.5 per cent. Which is correct? Is the DG right or is the minister right or does the minister not understand her portfolio?

Mr Scales: The way the question was framed by the member for Indooroopilly was about the fares and ticketing task force. As I have said, it is an expert led review which will determine the optimum fair strategy for South-East Queensland that will be fair, affordable and help boost patronage and deliver a sustainable fare revenue stream to allow the network to grow. This task force is yet to present its findings to government. These findings will then be used in order for the residents of South-East Queensland to actually be consulted on identifying a way forward for fares in our public transport network.

Mr EMERSON: Can I ask you a question, rather than you just going on. I know what I asked you. The question I have for you, DG—

Ms TRAD: You should stop badgering the witness.

Mr EMERSON: You have just said, 'Here is the budget.' The Deputy Premier has just said that her view is, her election promise is that it will be 1.5 per cent. Why does the budget contain 2.5 per cent when we have just heard the Deputy Premier say it will be 1.5 per cent? Given the months you have had to prepare that budget and the clear direction from the transport minister, why does the budget contain 2.5 per cent? Surely it would be 1.5 per cent or is there some miscommunication, do you not know or does the Deputy Premier not know?

Ms TRAD: Why did you count 300,000 trips on a public transport system that was yet to be opened?

CHAIR: I think the time has expired for the member for Indooroopilly. I ask the member for Dalrymple to ask a question.

Mr KNUTH: Minister, I refer to page 14 of the SDS and note that dot point two makes a commitment to effectively managing and regulating the passenger transport industry. How does the government intend to address the serious issue of the illegal taxi service infiltrating and operating in the passenger transport industry in Queensland?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question. This is obviously a significant issue that has really occupied the thoughts of people in the personal door-to-door transport industry—taxi providers—obviously. I have met with a number of taxi drivers and people from the taxi industry. I have also met with Uber. There is no doubt that disruptive technology in whatever its form is really having an impact on various sectors throughout our economy—for example, Airbnb; in the entertainment, Netflix; and in the taxi industry, Uber.

The introduction of Uber ride share operations in Queensland has imposed significant challenges on the sector's participants—taxi drivers and operators—and it has challenged our regulatory framework. My agency—the Department of Transport and Main Roads—has spent over 11,000 hours on Uber related compliance efforts. Of those Uber drivers fined, a high percentage have repeatedly received infringements. They are repeat offenders. TMR's compliance activities up to 12 July 2015 have comprised issuing over 1,500 infringement notices to Uber drivers, with a total value of more than \$1.7 million. The former transport minister issued a cease and desist letter to Uber drivers as well.

We have in fact fined Uber up to 1,000 times since we have come into government, which compares to only 400 penalty notices issued by the former government. We do take the fact that Uber is operating a personal door-to-door transport service in Queensland without adequate licensing and registration seriously.

We made an election commitment that we would review this. We wanted to make sure that the playing field was level. Personal passenger safety is absolutely paramount in terms of any changes to the industry. That is why I am talking to the various players within the sector. That is why we are taking the opportunity, given that the Queensland taxi strategy is due to expire at the end of this year, to really have a look at this issue and for independent experts to provide some advice back to government on a way forward.

I want to reassure you and reassure everybody in the taxi industry that we are adamant that we want all personal door-to-door taxi services to be regulated in this state. They must be. But we also need to respond, acknowledge and respect the fact that consumers are also voting with their feet and using Uber at increasingly high rates. We hope that we can find a way through this. I believe that what it will mean at the end of the day is a bit of give and take by all people in the industry, including government.

Mr KNUTH: I refer to pages 3 and 12 of the SDS as they relate to public transport. How does the government intend to improve the passenger transport industry and, in particular, the experience for customers seeking to access affordable services in rural and remote communities—communities like those in the electorates of Dalrymple and Mount Isa?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question. We are very much committed to ensuring that all Queenslanders have access to affordable transport services, wherever they live. As the honourable member would know from my response to the chair's question before in relation to the local fare scheme, we are determined that where we can provide innovative programs that support Queenslanders living in remote and regional locations that supplement or subsidise their transport costs we will deliver such a program. We understand we live in the most decentralised state in Australia. As I said before, we have communities that are closer to other nations than they are to their own capital city. Transport and connecting communities is absolutely critical to the job that we do.

As the member for Dalrymple would know, we provide a number of subsidised transport services, in terms of train services, right throughout the state. The government subsidies in relation to those services really do depend on the level of patronage. In terms of long distance passenger services, we also provide coach services. I am pleased to say that we will continue to subsidise such coach services so that Queenslanders, wherever they live, can access a variety of transport modes to connect them to other parts of the state, whether that be by air, coach, train. We understand that as a government we need to provide those services. We already subsidise significant services in the south-east—bus and rail services. Queenslanders living in remote locations deserve their fair share of subsidised transport from the government.

Mr KNUTH: I refer to page 4 of SDS where it refers to the transport system investment planning and programming. Recognising the strategic importance of rail transport for rural and remote communities, what does the government plan to do to improve rail transport in North Queensland, especially between Mount Isa and Townsville? The train between those places is probably averaging speeds of around 40 kilometres per hour when the speed limit for the track is 80 kilometres per hour. The speed has been reduced significantly due to a lack of maintenance of the track?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the Dalrymple for that question. In relation to the particular speed variations, I might ask the CEO of Queensland Rail to address some of the specific technical concerns. I say to the member for Dalrymple that I know that the member for Mount Isa, through various representations personally to me as well as to my office, has a very deep interest in making sure that the *Inlander* and *Westlander* continue to provide a service to regional Queensland.

As the member for Dalrymple may know, the decision to retire the 60-year-old M class sleeper carriages operating on the *Spirit of the Outback*, the *Westlander* and the *Inlander* were made for safety reasons based on engineering advice as they had reached the end of their serviceable life. Queensland Rail is also investigating options to include a new lounge car which will provide a small number of lounge seats and tables and self-service tea and coffee facilities for those Queenslanders travelling on these services.

Queensland Rail will be conducting vigorous noise and safety testing prior to introducing the new lounge car into the fleet later this year. While the *Inlander* and the *Westlander* will continue to support regional Queensland, the economy seat service is the only travel option available to customers. I might ask the CEO of Queensland Rail to address the speed issue if she is able to otherwise we will take it on notice.

Ms Gluer: I thank Mr Knuth for the question. We very much acknowledge some of the speed issues on the Mount Isa line. During 2014-15 we spent nearly \$46 million on maintenance, very much targeting areas like rerailling. We have been replacing some life-expired rail with heavy 60-kilogram rail, been resleepering and ballast undercutting and doing train repairs and formation repairs. We have also done a full track re-lay of the Cape River Bridge, which I think Mr Katter may be aware of, that is between Homestead and Pentland. We have done a full track re-lay between Cloncurry and Marimo. It is ageing, legacy infrastructure on the Mount Isa line. It continues to be a very high maintenance system. The operating expenditure each year is about \$45 million that we actually spend on maintenance.

Some of the key issues that we are targeting so that we might be able to increase some of the speed restrictions that have been imposed through there is very much around the instability of the light rail and the steel sleepers track and the tendency for flexible and light rail structures to move with high temperature variations, which does occur in that part of the network. We are also developing a new capital plan to try to continue the resleepering and rerailling program to complete the entire system to make it heavier rail on concrete sleepers, which will improve speed through the system.

We are also going to continue to explore ways to improve reliability through technology. Because of the number of freight movements on that line some of the things we are doing will help freight movements which then will help passenger rail movements. These include weather monitoring stations at locations that have historically been very much impacted by seasonal flooding and hot box detectors throughout the network and overload and imbalance detectors as well.

In terms of the direction that we are given from the Department of Transport and Main Roads—and I am happy for the director-general to answer further on this if he would wish to—we have targets that we very much aim to meet on the Mount Isa line and indeed on all lines within Queensland. In terms of derailments, we have had a very good year. It is certainly way below the target that is set by the Department of Transport and Main Roads. We are below the number of average speed restrictions.

Whilst we are performing better than our contract asks us to, we certainly do acknowledge that, because of the nature of the soil throughout that line, there are speed restrictions on it. It remains a real focus of Queensland Rail to improve the operability through the system.

Mr KNUTH: To add to that with regard to the concrete sleepers, is that from Richmond to Mount Isa? When does that start?

Ms Gluer: I would need to take that on the notice in terms of that particular part of the network. I certainly know we are looking at the whole system, but I am happy to come back to you with that answer.

Mr KNUTH: I have a question—

CHAIR: The time has expired, sorry. Deputy Premier, are you happy to take that on notice?

Ms TRAD: Absolutely.

Mr MADDEN: I would like to begin by saying how honoured I am to be here today for my first estimates hearing.

CHAIR: We are honoured to have you.

Mr MADDEN: I would like to wish the Deputy Premier good morning.

Ms TRAD: Good morning to you, Jim.

Mr MADDEN: I would like to ask a question that is very important to the public transport commuters of Ipswich West. I refer to page 14 of the SDS. Will the Deputy Premier advise the committee what the government is doing to reform public transport fares in South-East Queensland? How does this differ from the previous approaches?

Ms TRAD: Thank you very much, member for Ipswich West. I am very pleased that you are excited about being here today. The issue of making fares more affordable in South-East Queensland, particularly, but right across the state, is something that Labor in opposition heard very clearly. That is why we made the commitment to establish the fare review task force which we discussed a little bit earlier.

Before I go into the details of that though, Mr Chair, with your indulgence I will just address the issue in relation to CPI versus the 2.5 per cent, which is articulated in Budget Paper No. 2. Budget Paper No. 2, which was where the figure 2.5 per cent is listed, I assume is what the member for Indooroopilly is referring to. That 2.5 per cent is for the financial year 2016-17. The long-term inflation rate is also 2.5 per cent. Of course inflation moves around from quarter to quarter, and we cannot change fares every few weeks in relation to CPI obviously.

The election promise that we made, which is that fares would go up by CPI, is exactly what we will be delivering come 1 January. I also note that the 2.5 per cent nominal fare rise included for January 2016 is absolutely identical to that included within the last LNP's budget estimates. So nothing has changed. I reiterate that transport fares will go up by CPI only.

We made a commitment to conduct a comprehensive fare review for South-East Queensland. We made that commitment and we will deliver it. Public transport patronage in South-East Queensland declined significantly under the former LNP government—two million fewer public transport trips on the system under their watch. What we have promised to do is conduct an expert-led fare review and that task force has been established. They will determine the optimum fare strategy for South-East Queensland.

There are eight representatives that make up the review task force. There are industry representatives, there are leading public transport experts, there are university researchers and key local user groups as well. They will consider the current zone structure and fares. They will compare it to other similar metropolitan cities. They will be considering the needs of all transport users in South-East Queensland—seniors, students, jobseekers and people living with a disability. It will aim to provide fairness and affordability and provide a sustainable fair revenue stream. But ultimately what we need to do is aim to boost patronage as well because we know that the more people who use public transport the fewer vehicles there are on the road, and that means less congestion and that means people can get home faster to spend time with their families.

The members of the fare review task force are—and it is important that we go through this list of eminent people: the chair is Mr Neil Cagney, who is the Managing Director of MRCagney; Mr Neil Scales, Director-General of the Department of Transport and Main Roads, as has already been said; Mr Trent Zimmerman, Deputy Chief Executive of the Tourism and Transport Forum; Mr Mark Tucker-Evans, Chief Executive of COTA Queensland—that is the Council on the Ageing; Mr Jarrett Walker, Consultant with Jarrett Walker + Associates, Dr Matthew Burke, Associate Professor at Griffith University; Mr Robert Dow, Administrator of Rail Back on Track. I do have to point out that Mr Robert Dow is a fierce advocate for public transport and public transport reform, as many people would know, and he does not mind giving anybody stick if he thinks that they are not performing. I think it is important to note that Mr Robert Dow walked away from the fare review committee that the former transport minister set up. He walked away from it because he said it was a farce, and it was a farce. I am determined that this task force will not be a farce and it will make some expert recommendations to government that will be sustainable in the long term. Finally, Ms Sharon Boyce, who is the Chair of the Queensland Disability Advisory Council and the Regional Chair of South West Regional Disability Advisory Council.

Mr KELLY: I refer to page 113 of the Capital Statement. Can the Deputy Premier please highlight the current works taking place to complete the Moreton Bay Rail Link and explain the benefits to commuters when the project is completed?

Ms TRAD: Thank you very much for the question, member for Greenslopes. The Moreton Bay Rail Link is a fantastic success story. As the member for Greenslopes may or may not know, the local community, the Redcliffe community, has been advocating for this project for over 100 years. I think it is important that we acknowledge one of the chief advocates and fierce fighters for this project, and that is the current Attorney-General, Ms Yvette D'Ath, when she was the federal member for Petrie—she has been advocating for this project for a very, very long period of time. There was no-one who was more supportive of this project and willing to go to the wall for it than the member for Redcliffe.

Moreton Bay is one of the fastest growing regions in South-East Queensland. Moreton Bay Rail Link is on track to be completed by mid—2016. The region's biggest public transport infrastructure project in more than a generation and it was delivered by Labor. More than 375,000 people call the Moreton Bay region home, with the population set to exceed half a million people by 2031. More than half the region's population leave the area every single day to go to work and 83 per cent of that cohort use their own private vehicle. That is the lot of cars on the road. The new train line will provide a better public transport option for those people living in Moreton Bay. Every full train on the new line will take around 600 cars off the road. Every single new train on the line will take 600 cars off the road.

This was only delivered through an innovative partnership between the Commonwealth, state and local government. The Queensland government committed \$300 million to the project, and it is supporting 800 jobs during the project's peak construction period. There are many more jobs obviously that have been created indirectly through the construction of this important piece of public transport infrastructure. It is 14 kilometres of double track from Lawnton to Kippa-Ring; more than 44,000 sleepers and more than 100,000 tonnes of ballast; six new stations including bus interchange, kiss and ride, drop-off points and bike storages; 2,850 car parks for park and ride; and a three-metre wide path for cyclists and pedestrians along the entire corridor. Twenty-two bridges will be constructed as part of this project. Planning for the new train timetable and new look local bus network is already underway. We estimate that time travel savings to the CBD from this new service will be up to 15 minutes during peak periods compared with the current comparative bus and rail journeys which is just fantastic for commuters.

As I said before, and it is important to remember, this was a project that was planned, that was funded, by federal and state Labor governments. It would not have happened without Labor in office and it certainly would not have happened if there was only one jurisdiction attempting to build it. That is pretty clear. Without federal support it just would not have happened and I want to commend the former Labor government for having made significant funds available for this significant project. We know that we confront some pretty challenging public transport issues going forward, and what we know is that we cannot confront them as a state alone. We need the federal government to support Queensland when it comes to building public transport infrastructure such as the Moreton Bay Rail Link, which we know will be incredibly important in terms of alleviating and mitigating congestion and also in terms of making sure that we can grow our economy and create jobs.

CHAIR: Before going to the member for Indooroopilly, I want to apologise to the member for Dalrymple. Apparently he had a follow-up question and I did not hear that. Sorry about that. I call the member for Indooroopilly.

Mr EMERSON: Mr Chair, 20 minutes ago we had a promise from this state government that fares would only go up 1.5 per cent in January. Twenty minutes later we had that promise broken. The 2.5 per cent was mentioned by the director-general, not by me, Deputy Premier. Deputy Premier, are you now saying that the 1.5 per cent you promised 20 minutes ago has now been broken?

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, the budget papers project or predict that inflation will be at 2.5 per cent. If it is not at 2.5 per cent then public fares will go up at the rate that inflation is come 1 January.

Mr EMERSON: Deputy Premier—

Ms TRAD: If the member for Indooroopilly does not understand that, then I am afraid he has not understood budget papers in the past either.

Mr EMERSON: Deputy Premier, you are the one who mentioned 1.5 per cent. That was your figure and you said—

Ms TRAD: You asked me what the current inflation rate was—

CHAIR: Do not talk over the top of one another.

Ms TRAD:—and the current inflation rate is 1.5 per cent. I cannot predict come 1 January what the inflation rate will be, but the budget papers, as they do around a whole range of metrics in a whole range of areas, provide modelling and predictions. They provide modelling and predictions including around employment and around economic growth. These are predictions that are modelled. We think that the budget papers, based on Joe Hockey's own federal budget papers—these are based on Joe Hockey's own federal budget papers—predict that inflation will be at 2.5 per cent. That is the forecast from the Australian federal budget which is replicated in Budget Paper No. 2. Now if that is not the case on 1 January then public fares will go up by whatever the inflation rate is come 1 January. Our commitment to the people of Queensland was that public transport fares would go up by CPI and they will go up by CPI.

Mr EMERSON: Deputy Premier, why did you mention 1.5 per cent and you said very clearly to this committee that on 1 January fares would only go up 1.5 per cent, despite your DG saying they would go up 2.5 per cent? Don't you know your own portfolio? Is it too big a job for you?

CHAIR: Order! I think—

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, would it help if we had these giant Post-it notes and I could draw him a picture.

CHAIR: Deputy Premier.

Mr EMERSON: It might help you because clearly you keep getting it wrong.

Ms TRAD: No, it would help you.

CHAIR: Deputy Premier and the member for Indooroopilly, let's show a little bit of decorum here.

Mr EMERSON: It is a very clear question here, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: We have people watching this all over Queensland—

Mr EMERSON: And they must be embarrassed by this minister not knowing her own portfolio.

CHAIR: Excuse me. Order! I would appreciate it if you did not talk over the top of me either. This committee appreciates that the Deputy Premier has answered the question on about three occasions now. I would like to see you move on and ask another question.

Mr EMERSON: Director-General, why did the Deputy Premier say 1.5 per cent when clearly in the budget paper it is 2.5 per cent?

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, given that the member is asking a question about how I answered a question, can I say for the benefit of the committee that the question the member put to me was: 'Deputy Premier, do you know what the current inflation rate is?' And I answered that question. If he had asked me what will be the inflation rate come 1 January, I would have said, 'I can't predict that.' But the budget papers forecast, according to Joe Hockey's own federal budget papers, inflation to be at 2.5 per cent.

CHAIR: I am sure the committee understands that. If you would appreciate it, member for Indooroopilly, if you would move on to the next question. If you do not want to move on to the next question, we will think of another way of dealing with this.

Mr EMERSON: Director-General, you were initially the head of TransLink when you first came to the Queensland Public Service. At the time what were the public transport fares going up by? How much were they going up each year?

Mr Scales: I thank the member for Indooroopilly for the question. I want to take direction from the chair. Is that relevant because it is not this financial year? It is not in the scope of the committee. I am happy to answer it.

Mr EMERSON: I am happy to remind you that they were going up 15 per cent every year following Labor's last fare review. Labor's fare review the last time they were in office saw fares going up every year by 15 per cent. Given the criteria in terms of the fare review committee that you are on, is there any criteria in that committee to stop fares going up 15 per cent again like happened under Labor previously?

CHAIR: If you do not want to answer the question, you do not have to.

Mr Scales: Through the chair, I think it would be wrong to actually pre-empt what the fare review committee would be giving to government.

CHAIR: Sorry, I just had a little bit of trouble understanding what you said then.

Mr Scales: The review is underway. I think it would be wrong to actually pre-empt whatever advice comes out of that independent review.

CHAIR: And you are entitled to take that position. Next question.

Mr EMERSON: Again, Mr Chair, I did not hear that. So what we are hearing from you, DG, is that there is actually no limit on how much fares could go up as part of the review being undertaken by Labor.

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair—

Mr EMERSON: The question is to the DG.

Ms TRAD: Given that this is really a policy question about how the government intends for the task force—

Mr EMERSON: Mr Chair, the DG is on the fair review committee. I am asking him as a member, as the director-general on the fare review committee, why does the Deputy Premier insist on not answering questions she is asked about Jo-Ann Miller but then wants to answer questions she is not being asked?

CHAIR: The DG has answered the question as far as I understand.

Mr EMERSON: Can I get him to clarify? It was not clear from what he said. Is there any restriction on fares going back up at the kind of rate we saw previously under Labor's last fare review?

Mr Scales: I would answer it this way, Chair. I cannot identify considerations leading to government decisions or possible decisions under consideration unless they have been made public by the minister.

Mr EMERSON: So we could see fares going up again—

Ms TRAD: No, let me say very clearly to the member for Indooroopilly and the entire committee: we gave a policy commitment to the people of Queensland in relation to this fare review that it would provide a fair and cost-effective transport fare system for the people of South-East Queensland; that it would address patronage decline which happened under the former government's watch; and that it would look at how we could obtain or maintain a sustainable revenue stream for the transport infrastructure projects that we need for the future. The member for Indooroopilly wants to pre-empt the deliberations of an independent expert review committee, which is exactly what happened under his watch when he was a member of the previous LNP government. They did not consult. They badgered Queenslanders—

Mr EMERSON: We didn't put fares up by 15 per cent; I can tell you that. That was Labor's policy.

Ms TRAD: Chair, in relation to the 2.5 per cent, in September of last year the former transport minister himself—

CHAIR: Order! Deputy Premier and member for Indooroopilly, I think we have had enough of this question. You are both trying to debate the issue to try to gain some positivity with respect to your own position. I would appreciate it, and so would the committee, if you could move on to another question, member for Indooroopilly.

Mr EMERSON: Director-General, will your review committee also examine whether to scrap the very successful free trips after nine journeys?

Mr Scales: I thank the member for Indooroopilly for the question. Again, my answer is the same. It would be wrong to pre-empt an independent review. I cannot, under the terms of my appearance as a witness, identify considerations leading to government decisions or possible decisions unless these considerations have already been made public by the minister. That is in the guidance. So I cannot answer the question because I would be pre-empting an independent review.

CHAIR: I respect your position and you are entitled to take it.

Mr EMERSON: Director-General, how many passengers benefit from the free trips after nine journeys?

Mr Scales: I thank the member for Indooroopilly for the question. For nine and free?

Mr EMERSON: For nine and free, yes.

Mr Scales: There is a table. On Monday of every week—and these are averages, for the benefit of the committee—there are 36 go cards that benefit for nine and free. By Tuesday, on average there are 674. By Wednesday, there are 2,601. By Thursday, there are 10,607. By Friday, there are 56,789. By Saturday, there are 66,878. By Sunday, there are 73,782. They are go cards that have met the nine and free threshold. The number of cards used I can also read out for the benefit of the committee if the chair wishes.

Mr EMERSON: That is fine, Director-General. My question is to the Acting Premier. Acting Premier, why are you getting feedback that trains are becoming less reliable under your watch?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question. I am not sure what the basis of his question is in terms of reliability or on-time running. We had the best month ever in June this year. I am pleased to say that Queensland Rail is continuing to break records for on-time running. The best on-time running monthly figures for the South-East Queensland network on record occurred in June 2015 with 96.6 per cent. Queensland Rail, under a Palaszczuk Labor government, is breaking records and receiving national recognition for its efforts.

Queensland won an Australasian Railway Association customer service award in 2015 for our on-time running. More than 95 per cent of South-East Queensland's services arrived on time in the 2014-15 financial year. This is the second year in a row that Queensland Rail has delivered on-time running at above 95 per cent. On-time running improvement has been achieved primarily due to an on-time running task force set up to oversee and track on-time running improvements and initiatives. I might ask the CEO of Queensland Rail, Helen Gluer, to give some more specific data in relation to on-time running.

CHAIR: The time has expired.

Ms TRAD: All right.

CHAIR: I call the member for Ipswich West.

Mr MADDEN: I refer to page 22 of the Capital Statement. Can the minister please update the committee on the progress of the new generation rolling stock project and the delivery of the planned new trains and the supporting infrastructure?

Ms TRAD: I thank member for Ipswich West for the question. Clearly, as more people choose to live and work in South-East Queensland we need to do more to meet the growing demand for public transport services. The new generation rolling stock project will support this growth. There are 75 new six-car trains to replace South-East Queensland's ageing fleet. The first trains will begin service next year. The entire new fleet is due to be rolled out by late 2018, and it will increase our current fleet by about 30 per cent, which is terrific. The new fleet will need a new maintenance centre, which is being built at Wulkuraka, which is close to the member for Ipswich's electorate—or is it in your electorate?

Mr MADDEN: It is in Ipswich West.

Ms TRAD: It is in your electorate so there you go; you are getting a brand-new maintenance centre at Wulkuraka. Hundreds of jobs throughout the construction of the maintenance centre will be occurring in your local community. Over the life of the maintenance contract there will be hundreds more jobs over the next 30 years. A large percentage of all the materials for the maintenance centre is being sourced from local suppliers, which is fantastic for small businesses. The project will be delivered through an availability PPP funding model—that is a public-private partnership funding model—and more trains will mean that we need more stabling capacity.

Earlier this year you may remember that I announced a \$116 million construction program for the new train stabling facility sites which are located at Robina, Banyo, Elimbah and Woombye. The stabling project itself will create some 700 jobs, which is terrific. These sites will allow the network to operate

more efficiently. It will improve services and reduce costs. Sites strategically have been chosen following assessment against very strict criteria. We have undertaken ongoing engagement with communities.

It is very important to understand that the new generation rolling stock project was very clearly identified by the previous Labor government. It was part of our long-term vision for better public transport services in South-East Queensland. The Connecting SEQ 2031 strategy was the long-horizon view of the public transport services and infrastructure that we needed for a growing population. This project was clearly identified in that Connecting SEQ 2031. The previous LNP government threw away that plan when it came into office because it did not believe in planning infrastructure projects, particularly public transport infrastructure projects, that our community needs for the future to accommodate the growing population.

Mr KELLY: I refer to page 13 of the Capital Statement. Can the Deputy Premier please advise the committee what the government plans to do to provide extra capacity on Brisbane's rail network?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Greenslopes for the question. This is a critical issue for the South-East Queensland region. We know that building a second rail crossing for the Brisbane CBD is vital. It will relieve pressure on the Merivale Street bridge and the inner-city rail network. The benefits would be felt right across the entire region. It is not just for our inner-city communities—not at all.

In 2012 Labor had developed the Cross River Rail plan. It was rated by Infrastructure Australia as ready to proceed. When the LNP came into government it was not satisfied with that. In fact, I recall the opposition leader, Campbell Newman, at the time making such grandiose projections that he could deliver an entire underground train system for Brisbane at a cost of \$3 billion. When they came into power the Premier set up an independent review of cross-river rail. They were not satisfied with the detailed technical studies. They were not satisfied with the resounding tick of approval it had received from Infrastructure Australia. No, they set up an independent review led by LNP mate Michael Caltabiano, who was also the head of the Department of Transport and Main Roads—another job for the boys. What did that independent review find? It found that there was no other option for the looming rail crisis or to grow our transport network, to feed economic growth, other than cross-river rail. Their own independent review said that there was no other option except cross-river rail. But they went back to the drawing board anyway. Who could forget the Bus and Train Tunnel.

Before we get onto the Bus and Train Tunnel, it is really important to understand why we are so delayed in terms of progressing this project. At the time the Queensland government, I understand, engaged with the federal Labor government around funding for cross-river rail. What the state and the Commonwealth agreed was that both parties would put up a significant amount of funds—\$715 million apiece—to start the Capital Works Program with availability payments from both the state and the Commonwealth. That is a significant issue—availability payments over the life of the program to deliver this incredibly important infrastructure project. Labor at a federal level said yes to that because they understood that as a fast-growing region—one of the fastest growing regions in Australia—we needed a second river crossing for heavy rail, and cross-river rail was the only solution on the table. Even the LNP's independent review said that was the only option available for Queensland.

There was a deal on the table. Labor came to the party with a deal on the table, with money on the table—not only up-front but in the long term. What happened? A little thing called a federal election happened. Because Tony Abbott was running for Prime Minister, and Tony Abbott has a philosophical objection to funding public transport, the Newman LNP government, including the member for Indooroopilly, ripped up the deal they had struck with the Commonwealth. They turned their back on \$715 million for this state to get cross-river rail constructed—not only \$715 million but also ongoing availability payments.

When you think about that, when you think about the fact that we are so far behind the eight ball when it comes to finding a solution for a second heavy rail crossing in Queensland in the south-east corner, there is no-one else to blame but the member for Indooroopilly. The member for Indooroopilly walked away from Commonwealth funds which would have seen this important infrastructure project up and running, construction starting, thousands of jobs, thousands of Queenslanders employed and economic growth happening right here in Queensland. Instead, they devised the ridiculous Bus and Train Tunnel. This design is to be found nowhere else in the world. Nowhere else in the world does anyone put two modes of public transport together to compete against one another—to duplicate services. Nowhere else in the world does this happen. What is more, my understanding is that as the project proceeded what became clearer is that having the trains at the bottom of the tunnel was a very bad design, because trains had a steeper gradient in which to exit out of the river. It was an incredibly

bad design, and it was something that was resoundingly rejected by independent transport experts right across Australia. It was a flight of fancy. It was more spin than substance. Even the LNP opposition leader, Lawrence Springborg, said that the LNP will not bring back BaTT. Not only will they not bring back BaTT; secret LNP sources have said essentially they were always going to walk away from it because it was the former premier's flight of fancy.

CHAIR: Thank you, Deputy Premier. I call the member for Ipswich West, and we have 2½ minutes.

Mr MADDEN: I refer to page 15 of the SDS. I note that more than six million trips have been taken on the Gold Coast Light Rail since its establishment. Deputy Premier, what are the government's plans to expand the light rail on the Gold Coast? Are there any impediments to the future expansion of this very successful Labor initiative?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Ipswich West for this question, and I really do enjoy talking about Gold Coast Light Rail. It is a fantastic public transport system. If anyone had said 10, 20 or 30 years ago that there would be a tram system operating down at the Gold Coast, people would have laughed, but what we have done—what Labor did at a federal and state level—was conceive this project and deliver this project, and it has been enormously successful on the Gold Coast.

You are right, member for Ipswich West, that there have been 6.5 million passengers on the Gold Coast Light Rail, which is just an incredible success. What we have is a whole community down there—from business to residents to commuters, everybody—saying they want more: 'This is so fantastic. We want more.' It is transformational infrastructure for our second largest city and one of the most rapidly growing areas of the country.

Stage 2 is critically important. What it will do is connect light rail to heavy rail. This is important because it will provide for a seamless transport journey for those people travelling from Brisbane to the Gold Coast and also those Gold Coast commuters travelling to Brisbane. It will be a seamless transport journey. The economic and social return—particularly in terms of the Commonwealth Games, job creation and legacy infrastructure for the Gold Coast city—is just immeasurable. It will also boost Brisbane to the Gold Coast connectivity, as I have said. As we know, with the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games arriving in less than 1,000 days, there is a significant transport task that we need to meet in order for us to make sure that visitors have a fantastic Gold Coast experience and a fantastic Commonwealth Games experience. There is a big transport task that we need to meet, and light rail—and the extension of light rail—is part of that transport task.

The Palaszczuk Labor government has wasted no time. I think it was two days after having been sworn in that I met with the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon. Warren Truss, and we had a talk about the direction of the government in terms of Transport and Main Roads projects. I said to him very clearly that as a state government we wanted to see the federal government change their mind in relation to public transport infrastructure funding, and that included the extension of Gold Coast Light Rail.

The committee members would know that I have been out there actively agitating that position publicly. It is important that Queenslanders know that in the Palaszczuk Labor government they have people who will stand up for Queensland and not roll over. We know that building stage 2 is incredibly important to the Gold Coast for job creation, for legacy infrastructure and for the travel task of the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games. We need the second stage built.

I recently announced that the expression of interest process was opened. This will finalise the cost of design and construction so that we will finalise our submission to the Commonwealth. We know it is incredibly important that we get that finalised figure so that the Commonwealth knows that we are serious about this and so there is a figure there that they can commit to. It was only through our agitation and the Premier's personal advocacy at COAG earlier this year where she took the fight up to Tony Abbott that he opened the door. He opened the door because what he needs to know is that we are a government that will not give up. He said that he will consider funding for light rail as part of the Gold Coast package.

Mr Chair, I know that it seems that I am a bit passionate about this project. Well, I am passionate about this project because the Palaszczuk Labor government is passionate about making sure that the Gold Coast gets a fair deal, because they are not getting a fair deal from any of the LNP members down there currently. None of them are standing up advocating for this project. None of them are taking the fight up to Tony Abbot to make sure their conservative colleagues help the Gold Coast in their time of need.

CHAIR: Your time has expired. I call the member for Dalrymple.

Mr MADDEN: If I can be excused, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: Certainly.

Mr KNUTH: This is a follow-up question to the CEO of Queensland Rail. You said you will take a question on notice in regard to Richmond and Mount Isa in relation to the upgrade to concrete sleepers. This is likely to be a question you will take on notice as well. Would you be able to state which section will be prioritised first, the starting times and the completion times? Does this include lengthening of rail sidings?

Ms Gluer: Thanks very much. We will take that on notice and hopefully we will come back by the time this session concludes.

Ms TRAD: I might just get some direction. Mr Chair, does the committee have a time frame in terms of replies to questions on notice? I know the standing orders say 48 hours.

CHAIR: It is 12 on Friday.

Ms TRAD: Thanks.

Ms Gluer: Thank you.

CHAIR: Did you have any more questions, member for Dalrymple?

Mr KNUTH: No, I am all good.

CHAIR: Thank you. Member for Indooroopilly.

Mr EMERSON: I refer back to the previous answer by the Deputy Premier, who said she was not aware of any feedback about growing dissatisfaction in the reliability of Queensland Rail and trains. I refer to your own TransLink customer satisfaction survey. I guess the question is why in that survey in these categories—that is, reliability and frequency, including the ability to meet departure times and frequency of services; safety and security, including safety at stops, stations and on board vehicles; and the availability of seats—customer satisfaction of train travel is now lower than in January this year before you took over? In all those categories?

Ms TRAD: I refer the member to my previous answer. The best—

Mr EMERSON: But you were not aware of anything. Do you read your own customer satisfaction survey, Minister?

Ms TRAD: The best month in terms of on-time running was in fact in June of this year, with a 96.6 per cent achievement of on-time running. There is no doubt that—

Mr EMERSON: Mr Chair, does the minister actually read her own customer satisfaction survey?

CHAIR: Member for Indooroopilly, would you mind letting the Deputy Premier answer the question.

Mr EMERSON: The question was very clear—

CHAIR: Well, let her answer it.

Mr EMERSON: She said she was not aware of any feedback, and my question is why isn't she aware of this? It is clearly a customer satisfaction survey that her department does that indicates these things, and she has told the committee that she is not aware of it. I am asking her this: why isn't she aware of her own customer satisfaction survey?

Ms TRAD: I understand the member for Indooroopilly is very keen to I guess put his point across today, but let me talk about TransLink data reporting because that goes to the heart of the question that he has asked here. Mr Chair, the Palaszczuk Labor government is committed to open and transparent government. It was one of the election commitments that we made at the time of the election—whether that is in relation to donations that are received by political parties, and as I mentioned before \$100,000 worth of donations to the LNP undisclosed—

CHAIR: Can we go back to the question please?

Ms TRAD: Or whether it is about public transport data reporting. We have made a commitment to the people of Queensland that we will ensure that we operate in an open and transparent manner. I have actually instructed my department to improve public transport data reporting for South-East Queensland. Quarterly reporting will recommence going forward. This quarterly reporting was actually cut by the former government. The quarterly reporting was cut by the former government so that Queenslanders could not accurately see trends in public transport indices. Quarterly reporting will include trends and analysis, which is important in terms of actually making sense of the data that is

presented. It will combine monthly and quarterly data which is available. Changes will ensure that reporting is more accurate and more properly reflects people's experience of the transport network. Changes will provide better data to drive continuous improvements and make public transport better for all Queenslanders. We are currently exploring options around how best to present this data and we will look at how other state authorities report public transport performance data as part of this exercise.

We are also introducing more accurate measures of performance reporting on QR to drive improvements. One of the things we are doing is tightening the definition of force majeure to bring Queensland Rail into line with other comparable businesses. We are looking at express running metrics for rail services.

But I think it is really important that we talk about the quarterly reporting, which was called the TransLink Tracker. It was really important in terms of making sure that there was an accurate presentation of the facts and data to Queenslanders in relation to the usage, satisfaction and patronage on the public transport system. The TransLink Tracker included information about patronage, on-time running, customer inquiries, go card use, customer satisfaction, passenger safety and fare evasion, and service kilometres. The previous government changed to monthly reporting of only patronage, customer satisfaction, go card data and complaints. The change from the previous minister was all about secrecy and not being open and honest with the people of Queensland. Monthly reporting data was grossly inadequate. The inadequacy of this data was noticed not only by local industry and public transport advocates but also by national organisations. Last month the Tourism and Transport Forum said in a report that Queensland has not provided key performance data about its public transport network since 2012. We believe we can do better for the people of Queensland and we are determined to do that. We will bring back quarterly reporting of this data.

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, Mr Chair. How can anyone have any faith in this government in terms of its data if, as the minister has just admitted, she does not even read her own customer satisfaction surveys? She was not aware of the feedback. I point out that, in that survey, customer satisfaction in the reliability and frequency of train services, including the ability to meet departure times and frequency of services, now is at the lowest level in more than two years and a full five percentage points less than when she took over in January/February this year. Why was she not aware of that data? Why is she not reading her own customer satisfaction surveys? Is the job just too much for her?

CHAIR: Do you have a reference to the SDS please?

Mr EMERSON: Yes, page 3 of the SDS.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Ms TRAD: I am happy to report that I see lots of different datasets every single day, particularly in the transport portfolio, as I should, because the transport portfolio operates using significant amounts of data and evidence based research. For example, as I mentioned previously, the best performance ever on record for on-time running was in June this year—that is, June 2015. In relation to customer satisfaction, I acknowledge that there are areas, particularly around affordability, that the former transport minister could not address. Even through the various programs he ran, he could not address the plummeting patronage and the affordability issues under his watch.

The former minister can sit there and throw as many stones as he likes, but the data speaks for itself. People walked away from the public transport system under his watch by the millions. In fact, can I say that in the 10 years from 2001 to 2011 Labor grew the public transport patronage in this state by 150 per cent. That was in a time of a significantly growing population and also increased services—huge amounts of increased services. Whether they are busways, additional train services or additional train lines, Labor knows how to build things, build public transport systems and grow patronage usage. I repeat: 150 per cent over 10 years.

It is very important that we have a look at the track record of the former LNP government in this respect because I think it is critical to a balanced view. The former minister himself signed away 2,300 jobs. One in five jobs were cut in DTMR and Queensland Rail under his watch.

CHAIR: Deputy Premier, I think we should just keep to answering the question. I do not want to get into a debate over this.

Ms TRAD: I am happy to take the next question.

Mr EMERSON: I will ask further questions then, Mr Chair. The question is to the DG. The budget papers show that capital infrastructure spending for Transport and Main Roads was \$2.5 billion in 2014-15. What was it forecast to be in that year?

Mr Scales: I thank the member for Indooroopilly for the question. I will wait to get a briefing note because I will not have that detail in my memory.

Mr EMERSON: I was there, so I remember what it was in the budget, Mr Scales. The forecast was \$3.9 billion, but only \$2.5 billion was the actual spend. Why was there such a difference between those figures of more than a billion dollars underspent last year?

Mr Scales: There would have been in the budget—and I thank you for that clarification, member for Indooroopilly. The issue would have been as a result of differences between NDRRA works where since 2010 there have been 16 weathers events in Queensland and \$6.4 billion worth of reconstruction has been undertaken by the department. We have actually reconstructed 8,741 kilometres of road. I am pleased to say that the budget for NDRRA, because of savings that the department made, was something like \$400 million less in that regard. Also projects jointly funded with the Australian government included in the 2014-15 capital budget were aligned with federal budget announcements in May of 2014. The federal budget outcome provided funding for projects in early development which were reprofiled to align with delivery expectations during the year. In addition, the Australian government provided a contingency reserve of \$186 million in 2014-15 which was subsequently deferred to 2017-18 in the May 2015 federal budget.

Mr EMERSON: Mr Scales, I refer to question on notice No. 10 where it mentions that \$612 million was deferred to 2015-16—deferred. Why was it deferred?

Mr Scales: Numerous changes to the Transport and Main Roads capital program throughout the out-year. Changes include the movement of funding allocations between 2014-15 and the years within the TMR capital program and changes to the overall allocation of capital funding for Transport and Main Roads.

Mr EMERSON: Given the differences between what was forecast and what actually happened of more than a billion dollars of underspend, why has that money not appeared in the future years, either 2015-16 or other years? Where is that billion dollars underspend and that deferral? Has that money just disappeared? Why have you not done that work? If that job was not done, how many people were not employed because of that \$1 billion of underspend that occurred in 2014-15?

Mr Scales: Part of the underspend was savings that had been made in the NDRRA work. As I say, we saved substantial amounts there. As to how many jobs that would be worth, I would have to take that on notice because I am not sure whether we would have actually employed anybody if we had made savings.

Mr EMERSON: Mr Scales, I make the point—

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, can I just point out to supplement the answer by the director-general, projects are deferred for a range of reasons. For example, in relation to the accessibility project, the \$212 million project I referred to before, because of very poor scoping which happened under the former minister's watch, more work needed to be done which extended the project time frame. This happens all the time.

Mr EMERSON: Mr Chair, my question is to the DG. Mr Chair—

Ms TRAD: It is important that the committee understands—

CHAIR: I understand that and I also understand that time has expired. So I will ask the member for Gladstone to ask the next question.

Mr BUTCHER: Thank you, Chair, for the opportunity today to speak for the first time on estimates. I refer the Deputy Premier to page 15 of the SDS and I refer specifically to the measurement of the performance of the public transport network. How is the rollout of real-time information changing the way services are assessed for efficiency and reliability and also the way services are planned and delivered?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question. Real-time information is, I think, part of our modernisation in terms of the public transport system. I am pleased to say that it was the Palaszczuk Labor government that delivered the final stage in terms of the rollout of real-time information across all rail, bus, tram and ferry services on TransLink's South-East Queensland public transport network. Of course, it was former Labor governments that initiated the first trials in relation to real-time running. This is absolutely revolutionising the way our South-East Queensland customers plan their public transport travel. No longer will they have to rely on static timetable departure times, which can be impacted on by various events: rain, extreme weather events and other issues such as accidents on the road et cetera.

Real-time bus information was launched in May and I can advise that real time information is now available for trains in the South-East Queensland corner. The 180 passenger information displays at busway stations and bus stops also display real-time data for customers, which is fantastic, particularly in terms of some of those congestion points like across the Victoria Bridge. The real-time system uses new technology and the real-time data for trains and trams utilises data captured from network control systems. Upgrades to more than 2,500 new driver console units on all buses and ferries on the TransLink South-East Queensland network has occurred. The MyTransLink app is being enhanced to update features providing valuable assistance to vision impaired customers, ensuring real-time information is available and is responsive to their needs. It will assist with network and service planning and it will assist customers plan their trips better.

Customers have responded well to the system already. If you can have a look at social media and some of the tweets particularly that came about after I announced the program, I think people really, really enjoy the fact that they can now access real-time information in relation to public transport. I know certainly on very, very hot summer days in Queensland you do not want to be standing out there in the sun too much waiting for the next bus. So this is a fantastic way of making sure that people go to the bus stop or the train station and get whatever mode of transport they wish at the appropriate time.

CHAIR: Member for Greenslopes.

Mr KELLY: I refer to page 169 of the Concessions Statement in Budget Paper No. 2 and the concessions provided on public transport. Will the Deputy Premier update the committee on the progress of the government's election commitment to abolish the Tertiary Transport Concession Card and replace it with a system that works?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Greenslopes for the question. I assume that the member would have very many students living in his electorate—

Mr KELLY: Indeed.

Ms TRAD:—who have made personal representations to him about the ludicrousness of the TTCC. I am pleased to say that my department has been hard at work to allow eligible students simple access to concession fares. We are accessing a technology based go card solution rather than forcing education institutions and students to engage in a complicated administrative arrangement to access another card which they would then have to carry in order to access concession fares on the public transport system. No other cohort of commuter has to carry around three different cards in order to access one concession fare. Of course, students will still need to meet all of the existing eligibility criteria and have a current student ID card issued by a Queensland institution. The go card solution will remove the need for a third card. Our aim is to commence this new, simpler system from semester 1 next year.

Of course, the Tertiary Transport Concession Card—TTCC—was another policy failure from the former LNP government. There are a few things that ignited public commentary on social media, but this was one of the ones that really did ignite a very, very big conversation about the ludicrousness and inefficient targeting of this program. It was, in fact, a solution in search of a problem. It created more red tape for education providers, the department and students. Under the TTCC all tertiary and postsecondary students in South-East Queensland carried three cards for concession fares: student ID cards, their go card and their TTC card. It was an administrative burden on the institutions and for students. Of course there were some significant lengthy processing times and many students who were still waiting for their TTC card had to actually travel full fare because the department was snowed under in terms of turning around TTCC application forms.

The former LNP government essentially declared war on students in this state as they did with so many other sectors of our population. It was, in fact, just a pattern of behaviour. The previous government rushed their decision instead of carefully considering the consequences of their half-baked policy. I think it is really important to measure what the TTCC delivered. What did it deliver, because the former transport minister said it would deliver quite a bit. Figures from my department show that the cost of the TTCC was in the vicinity of \$1.7 million over the financial year of 2014-15. It cost \$1.7 million and how much did the TTCC raise? \$1.7 million. So there was a net zero outcome for a lot of pain for many students right across the South-East Queensland corner.

The former minister said that this would save Queenslanders \$8 million. It did not. The department also estimates that the TTCC is responsible for 3.2 million fewer trips being taken on the South-East Queensland transport network. So once again what we have is a half-baked idea which was rushed through, not properly scoped out and had very limited consultation, particularly with students. What was the outcome? Net zero financial gain and lots more people walking away from the public transport system. We are determined to get this right.

Mrs LAUGA: I refer to page 4 of the SDS. Will the Deputy Premier please outline for the committee how the government is planning for Queensland's long-term transport needs?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question. As a planner herself, she would know that good planning is the key to good decision-making, not half-baked thoughts, half-baked ideas and a rushed process; you actually need to plan things to get a good outcome. As I mentioned before, it was Labor in government many years ago which planned for the additional rolling stock we will see come on to our network by the end of 2018. That is because Labor believes in a thorough and rigorous planning process in order to meet the challenges that Queensland will face into the future.

This is why Transport and Main Roads is developing a long-term transport strategy for Queensland. The strategy will provide direction for transport over a 30-year horizon. If we consider the pace of technological change that has occurred globally over the last 30 years, it is easy to see how long-term planning is incredibly important. For example, who would have known that mobile phones would have been so important and critical to our working life? Today we can use them to access information in real time, as I have already mentioned before, about where a particular bus is or if a train is running late. Today people can renew their driver's licence, renew their vehicle registration or pay fines online without actually leaving home. Working from home without the need to travel to and from work is increasing in popularity and so is the demand for information that government routinely collects. We need to anticipate and respond to these trends.

The strategy that DTMR is working on will set a framework to deliver an integrated, modern and safe transport system that puts customers at the centre. It will guide more detailed transport plans, policies and funding decisions over the short-, medium- and long-term. It will consider new technologies, changing travel needs and utilising big data to better understand how customers use the system. The strategy will be developed in consultation with stakeholders to ensure it reflects customers' needs. We have actually seen the consequences of failing to plan adequately and we do not want to see them repeated. As I mentioned before, rushed and lazy decision-making leads to bad outcomes and it leads to a waste of money, quite frankly. Queenslanders expect better than that from their government, and that is exactly what the Palaszczuk Labor government will deliver this term in office.

Mrs LAUGA: I refer to page 5 of the SDS. Can the Deputy Premier please explain to the committee the features of the government's cycling policy and how cycling is being encouraged throughout the state?

CHAIR: Deputy Premier, I would ask if you could keep your response fairly short in the interests of time.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Mr Chair, I will. I thank the member for the question. We are delivering on our version for more cycling more often. Cycling is a cost-effective, healthy and environmentally friendly mode of transportation. Under this government cycling has a bright future.

By June 2016 we will ensure that every region has a Principal Cycle Network Plan, and these plans will drive investment into the projects that will deliver the biggest benefit for people riding bikes. The south-east, the far north and Central Queensland already have cycle network plans in place, but what we are determined to do is make sure that networks are also being mapped out for Mackay, Isaac, Whitsunday, North Queensland, Wide Bay-Burnett and the Downs south-west regions. The plans will identify the most effective routes for investment to grow cycling as a mode of transport to school, places of employment and for shopping trips.

Members will also recall that in June I announced funding for three local governments to deliver significant improvements along key cycle corridors in Cairns, Bribie Island and Maroochydore. I am pleased to advise these projects, which form part of the Priority Cycle Route Improvement Program, are now underway and are further cementing our great track record in working with local governments to deliver cycling throughout the state. We have also allocated an additional \$2 million each year for cycling projects to be delivered by the Department of Transport and Main Roads on the state network from 2016-17.

Mr MILLAR: I refer to note 57 on page 34 of the SDS and ask the minister by how much the expenditure on regional freight and livestock contracts will decrease and what impact this will have on the delivery of rail freight and livestock services in the regions, with special reference to south-west and western Queensland.

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question. I do note his continued advocacy in ensuring that freight and livestock routes are subsidised by the government so that people in his community and throughout regional Queensland have access to freight transportation so their goods can get to market.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads is the purchaser of freight services from Aurizon under the regional freight transport services contract and the livestock transport services contract. Future contracts will aim to grow freight volumes and improve service reliability by including key performance indicators, with a portion of annual payments tiered to operator performance. To ensure service continuity I have approved the regional freight transport services contract to continue past the 30 June 2015 expiry date in an interim extension with Aurizon until 30 September 2015. Negotiations are ongoing between my department and Aurizon for extensions to the regional freight transport services contract and the livestock transport services contract to December 2017.

In line with community service obligation arrangements, the contracts provide non-commercial freight services on scheduled routes to and from regional Queensland communities where loading and unloading facilities are in place. Both systems, the regional freight transport services contract and the livestock transport services contract, support regional economic development and employment. This government acknowledges that, which is why we have made an allocation in the budget for its continuation.

The regional freight transport services contract provides benefits to general freight customers and producers who import or export rail containers via the Port of Brisbane. The livestock transport services contract provides benefits to cattle producers for long-distance livestock movements to abattoirs. My department is finalising its contracts review to ensure government objectives to expand the use of rail freight and ensure improved services to regional customers.

Mr MILLAR: What is the decrease? You have noted in the SDS that there is a decrease. We are talking about the Lawnton to Petrie line and the decrease in regional freight. What is the decrease?

Ms TRAD: My understanding is that, because some of the routes have become commercially viable, the subsidy I has been withdrawn. I will defer to my Director-General in relation to that decrease.

Mr Scales: Thank you for the question, member for Gregory. We are still negotiating with our colleagues in Aurizon. Once that is done, which is a commercial negotiation, we will be coming out and talking to key stakeholders.

Mr MILLAR: I look forward to that, but I would love to know what the decrease is. Here it is; it is in the budget. You talk about a decrease. What is the actual number? Is it \$20 million? Is it \$15 million?

Mr Scales: It is commercial in confidence, but once we have got to that position you will be able to see it because we will publish it. We have made savings in terms of dollar savings, but we are still keeping the amount of movements the same. We have actually made dollar savings by going in hard with our colleagues in Aurizon.

Mr MILLAR: As you would appreciate, I would ask you not to decrease it but to increase it.

Mr EMERSON: My question is to the Director-General. I table a section of a report which says that the patronage figures used by former transport minister Annastacia Palaszczuk and former TMR Director-General Dave Stewart to fund Gold Coast Light Rail were 45,000 per—

CHAIR: Excuse me, you have to seek leave.

Mr EMERSON: I seek leave.

CHAIR: Leave is granted.

Mr EMERSON: The report shows that, under the model put in place by Labor, the average predicted patronage per day was 45,000. What is the current average over 2014-15 per day for light rail?

Mr Scales: On light rail Gold Coast line 1 it is approximately 18,200.

Mr EMERSON: That is less than half of what Labor predicted in its business model going forward. That report also shows, Director-General, that the current Premier forgot to add GST, thus calculating fare revenue at \$771 million for the Gold Coast Light Rail. What was the fare revenue? How much less did we receive because of that failure to include GST in the model?

Mr Scales: Through the Chair, I do not have access to the document that the member for Indooroopilly is reading from, and that particular report I think predates my arrival.

Mr EMERSON: That report existed in 2013, but it deals with Labor's business case for Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 1. Minister, you talked about getting the Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 2 up and running. I notice you have talked about fast-tracking the expressions of interest process. Given the bungles in Labor's business case outlined in that report—the failure to include GST and estimating almost double the actual patronage—how can anyone be confident that this rushed process you are talking about now will provide value for money for taxpayers?

Ms TRAD: I take the question from the member for Indooroopilly, but I am incredibly concerned that all this opposition wants to do is trash-talk Gold Coast Light Rail. This is an opposition that has—

Mr EMERSON: We want value for money; not wasted money and bungles like we saw in stage 1.

CHAIR: Order! Let the Deputy Premier answer the question.

Ms TRAD: The member for Indooroopilly is saying very clearly that Gold Coast Light Rail was a waste of money. We have heard it here.

Mr EMERSON: We are saying you bungled your business case and you will do it again. That is our concern.

Ms TRAD: The member for Indooroopilly does not like it when he is called to account—

Mr EMERSON: I do not like wasted taxpayers' money, Minister. That is what I do not like.

Ms TRAD: Every single resident on the Gold Coast should know that the LNP in this state think that this government spending any time or money on Gold Coast Light Rail is a waste of time and money.

Mr EMERSON: We want to see good value for money.

Ms TRAD: That is absolutely outrageous. That is why when it comes to standing up for the Gold Coast, when it comes to standing up for important public transport infrastructure that is transformational for local economies and that will create jobs, the only party that you can trust is the Australian Labor Party because we build things. They want to trash-talk them and they want to tear them down.

Let me say very clearly that we will continue to advocate for stage 2 because we understand the transformational benefit it will bring to the Gold Coast like stage 1 has now. The former minister may want to keep talking down Gold Coast Light Rail and might want to keep trash-talking the Gold Coast, but we are not going to accept it. We will stand up for the Gold Coast. It is outrageous that there is a Gold Coast member on this committee who will sit there and allow the member for Indooroopilly to trash-talk the Gold Coast and Gold Coast Light Rail.

CHAIR: Deputy Premier, please answer the question.

Mr EMERSON: I find it extraordinary that the minister wants to continue to defend a bungled business case. As the Director-General has just indicated, under Labor the forecast patronage was 45,000 per day and it is in fact less than 20,000. The reality is that it has cost taxpayers' dollars. We want to see—

CHAIR: What is the question?

Mr EMERSON: Why does the minister defend the bungled Labor case that cost Queensland taxpayers more than \$300 million?

Ms TRAD: It is clear that the LNP in this state does not support Gold Coast Light Rail. They have called Gold Coast Light Rail a waste of money. A waste of money is 1 William Street. Look no further than the 'tower of power' that is going up right now. It had no business case, no cost-benefit analysis and was resoundingly criticised by the Auditor-General of Queensland.

Mr EMERSON: Clearly the minister cannot defend her now Premier's business case.

CHAIR: Deputy Premier, I would appreciate it if you answered the question.

Ms TRAD: I am answering the question.

CHAIR: You are debating rather than answering the question.

Ms TRAD: No, I am answering the question, Mr Chair. I will defend Gold Coast Light Rail—

Mr EMERSON: Clearly the minister is uncomfortable in answering and trying to defend—

Ms TRAD:—and if the former minister and member for Indooroopilly wants an answer, he should politely and respectfully allow me to answer the question. I will defend and support—

Mr EMERSON: I am happy for the minister to answer the question if she wants to defend Labor's bungled case—

Ms TRAD:—Gold Coast Light Rail any day of the week. I understand the transformational injection into the local Gold Coast economy it has provided. I understand that—

Mr HART: Did you bungle the business case? That is the question.

CHAIR: Order! Order!

Ms TRAD:—it is a piece of legacy infrastructure for the Gold Coast community.

CHAIR: No-one wants to play by the rules, so I call the member for Dalrymple.

Mr KNUTH: Minister, the previous government initiated a review on how best to encourage producers to use rail for the transport of livestock, but the moment that review was announced they ripped up the rail siding at the Dalrymple sale yards, which is one of the biggest sale yards in North Queensland. As a result of feedback from unhappy graziers and myself, they bodged up a rail line under the pretence that it is connected to the track. That has been there for two years. We are wondering when Queensland Rail is going to reconnect that rail sign so that we can continue using that facility to provide livestock by rail.

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question. He was talking about the government's 10-year plan for freight in Queensland; is that correct?

Mr KNUTH: Yes.

Ms TRAD: The strategy is supported by the industry, and a number of freight system actions have already been delivered to date. I will get the CEO of Queensland Rail to specifically address the signage issue that you refer to. There are a couple of issues in relation to the 10-year plan for freight in Queensland.

The final report and action plan delivered for the North Coast Line Capacity Improvement Project, the completion of the South-East Queensland rail freight terminal study and paths for non-coal services in the Queensland Rail network are identified and preserved in legislation. There has been finalisation of the performance based standards routes assessment program, the delivery of policy and guidelines for industry self-assessment and the publication of key freight route maps, road and rail, in Queensland under the National Land Freight Strategy. Twenty-seven actions have commenced across the program. It is anticipated that a further eight of these actions will be delivered by the end of next year, 2016.

A key action to be delivered during this period is the Heavy Vehicle Action Plan, the HVAP. It will help to improve heavy vehicle access across the state, particularly for the mining and agricultural sectors. Stages 1 and 2 of the Heavy Vehicle Action Plan have been released publicly for consultation and comment.

In relation to that specific line and the signage, I will ask the CEO Helen Gluer to address your concerns.

CHAIR: Thank you, members. The time for this part of today's hearing has now concluded.

Ms TRAD: Can I just clarify whether we should take that particular signage issue on notice?

CHAIR: Yes. The committee will now break until 12 p.m. When we resume we will examine the estimates for the areas of infrastructure, local government, planning and trade.

Proceedings suspended from 11.28 am to 11.59 am



CHAIR: The committee will now examine the estimates for the portfolios of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Trade. I welcome the departmental officers who are here. I call the member for Maroochydore.

Ms SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr Chair. Good afternoon, Minister; good afternoon, everybody.

Ms TRAD: Good afternoon.

Ms SIMPSON: Deputy Premier, you said in the estimates process this morning that there is nothing more honourable and transparent than referring matters to the Ethics Committee for its consideration. Given that you knew of the issue with the member for Bundamba at least in July, why did you not refer this matter to the Ethics Committee?

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, I refer you to your earlier determinations in relation to questioning on this subject.

CHAIR: I am sorry, member for Maroochydore, but these are issues that are outside the portfolio of the Deputy Premier and her responsibilities.

Ms SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr Chair. Deputy Premier, I refer to your charter letter and your responsibilities as a minister in the Palaszczuk government where specifically it is a key priority for transparency and accountability, and I ask in respect of your actions: what action did you take with regard to considering referring the member for Bundamba to the Ethics Committee?

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, I will say just briefly in relation to this that as a former Speaker of the Legislative Assembly the member for Maroochydore should actually understand the standing orders and standing order 181(g) is the standing order that presides over this proceeding of the estimates committee hearing today. So if the member for Maroochydore could refer to a section under the SDS

in which I should be answering this question, that would be extremely helpful. But also as a former Speaker the member for Maroochydore should also understand that the deliberations of committees of this parliament, particularly the Ethics Committee and the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee, are secret. Those deliberations are secret and the information is secret, so I am not privy to the deliberations or the information supplied—

Ms SIMPSON: And that was not the question with respect, Deputy Premier. It was about your actions. What did you do?

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair—

CHAIR: Order!

Ms SIMPSON: When did you act based on the information you had?

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, can I get your guidance in relation to continuing interrupting and frustrating the answering from witnesses present here today.

CHAIR: I just simply want the member to move on. She was obviously taking note of what happened here this morning and she would be well aware of the position of the committee with regard to questions to you that are outside your portfolio. I think it is fair and reasonable that we have a member with such experience who should know how it all operates. There is obviously an agenda here that is not about talking about the expenditure of the budget, but let us try to get back on track.

Ms SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr Chair, and with respect, Deputy Premier, I am going to table a document that is relevant to your portfolio.

CHAIR: Can you seek leave?

Ms SIMPSON: I refer to SDS—

CHAIR: You need to seek leave.

Ms SIMPSON: I seek leave to table a document.

CHAIR: Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

Ms SIMPSON: This document is your charter letter from the Premier and it relates to your portfolio and key priorities and I also refer to the SDS at page 1 where you are the minister of this department. In that letter you are clearly charged with a key priority with respect to your responsibilities of accountability and transparency. What accountability and transparency did you apply with regard to your actions with regard to the member for Bundamba? I am not referring to a committee; I am asking you as a minister of the Crown.

Ms TRAD: Sorry, Mr Chair, but for my benefit could I actually get that SDS reference?

Ms SIMPSON: It is the SDS at page 1 where you are the responsible minister and a minister in this government.

Ms TRAD: All right. So this is page 1, Mr Chair. I am not sure what the member is referring to.

Ms SIMPSON: It actually says that you are the minister and it is up to you whether you want to be accountable and transparent with respect to your responsibilities which are clearly outlined in your charter letter as key priorities from your government.

CHAIR: Member for Maroochydore, please would you mind rephrasing the question so it is relevant to why we are here today? It is just a nonsense the way that we have been going this morning. I would like to see the time used in a better way, so could you rephrase the question?

Ms SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr Chair. Deputy Premier and Acting Premier, I note that in your diary as a minister you have met with the member for Bundamba. I ask you as to what action did you take based upon that meeting and the member's actions?

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, I thank the member for the question. I have met with the member for Bundamba. I have met with the member for Mirani. I have met with the member for Keppel. I have met with the member for Rockhampton. I am just wanting to know exactly what SDS reference the member for Maroochydore has identified in relation to these meetings.

Mr HART: Transparency and accountability.

CHAIR: But it is a little—

Ms TRAD: Excuse me, but I will take that as a question, Mr Chair, because the SDS quite clearly says—

Ms SIMPSON: Your ministerial diary should be transparent as to what you were doing.

Ms TRAD: And it is transparent. It is online, which is why you can refer to it, member for Maroochydore.

Ms SIMPSON: But you have not told us what you were doing.

Ms TRAD: As I said, Mr Chair, if you want the committee to go over these issues again, then I am quite happy to give exactly the same answers that I gave earlier today. In relation to this meeting, I can advise the committee that there was nothing contained within my SDS or any budget papers that was in fact discussed at that meeting. If the member in question wants to talk to me or ask me a question in relation to my responsibilities as Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning or Minister for Trade, I am very happy to take those questions. I am even happy to take additional questions about Transport if the committee so desires.

Ms SIMPSON: Mr Chair—

CHAIR: Another question.

Ms SIMPSON: I make reference to your ministerial diary and note that it was a practice when you were in opposition to ask questions about ministerial diaries and to expect answers. I am asking you as to what you were doing in that meeting in your ministerial diary and what actions you took in respect of the now police minister, Jo-Ann Miller.

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, if the member for Maroochydore wants to talk about what happened in the last term, I am very happy to talk about what happened in the last term when she was Speaker of this House—

Ms SIMPSON: Well, you have not given us an answer about what you are doing.

Ms TRAD:—and when she was part of a government that did things like sack thousands of public servants, cut front-line services, did things like hide—

Ms SIMPSON: But you will not sack Jo-Ann Miller.

Ms TRAD:—donations.

CHAIR: Hold it, please. Order!

Ms SIMPSON: Minister—

CHAIR: No, not yet. This has become a bit of a joke. I do not know how many times I have to say sitting in this position that questions from the opposition need to be relative to the portfolio that the Deputy Premier covers, and I do not know what is so difficult about that for people to understand. We have gone through a session this morning where I think the opposition asked about three questions and wasted a lot of time not asking about issues that the people of Queensland would be more interested in. So I would ask you to rephrase the question or we shall move on.

Mr HART: Chair, every one of these SDSs mentions accountability and transparency. Surely a member has the right to ask about transparency inside government.

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, I am very happy to talk about transparency in relation to the Building Queensland program and I am very happy to talk about transparency when it comes to other initiatives that my department is undertaking.

Ms SIMPSON: Mr Chair, I do have another question.

CHAIR: As you should be, Minister.

Ms TRAD: Yes; thank you.

Ms SIMPSON: Given that ministerial diaries should be about transparency and why you are meeting with members, I do note that questions were asked in opposition about ministerial diaries and that they were taken. But my question to you, Minister—

Ms TRAD: There were a lot of questions, former Speaker, that were taken which you know well and truly about.

Ms SIMPSON: Deputy Premier, you have not answered my questions. I have a question though, Deputy Premier, with respect to your director-general and the fact that it has been six months since you have taken office and you have not appointed a permanent director-general. Why are you so slow with getting on with the job of putting a permanent head in this position?

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, again as a former Speaker of this House and a long-term standing member of this House, I am actually quite astounded at how much the member for Maroochydore is flouting the standing orders. It is actually quite incredible.

Ms SIMPSON: Asking you about why you have not appointed a permanent DG?

Ms TRAD: The member for Maroochydore may not understand this, but the appointment process of directors-general is not part of my portfolio responsibilities. The appointment process for directors-general of all departments resides with the Premier and the Public Service Commissioner.

Ms SIMPSON: You are Acting Premier today, so perhaps you can give us the answer.

Ms TRAD: I refer back to standing order 181(g). If the former Speaker had actually been listening earlier today then she would have known that I flagged standing order 181(g) and she could have looked it up and made sure she had a response for it. If the member for Maroochydore was so keen to find out why the appointment of a director-general for the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning is still outstanding, then she should have done her homework and she should have come to the estimates hearing yesterday. She has missed the boat and she is not eligible to ask those questions here.

Ms SIMPSON: Acting Premier, with respect to your leadership of your department, can I ask—

CHAIR: What is your reference to the SDS?

Ms SIMPSON: It is the SDS at page 1. I ask you: are you in agreement with the Premier about the long outstanding process to appoint a permanent head of your department?

Ms TRAD: Yes.

Ms SIMPSON: So, Deputy Premier, I ask you: given that you have been unable to take action against a bungling police minister and to sack her as part of the government—

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, I ask for your direction—

Ms SIMPSON:—why haven't you been able—

Ms TRAD:—in terms of the inference from the member for Maroochydore.

Ms SIMPSON: Why don't you do something to act to put in a permanent head of your department?

CHAIR: Order!

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, I ask for your direction in relation to the inference from the member for Maroochydore—an inference that she would not have copped as a former Speaker of this House.

CHAIR: I would like to hear the member repeat the question.

Ms SIMPSON: I am happy to rephrase, Mr Chairman. Why has this Acting Premier—

Ms TRAD: Will it take you three times? Or was it six?

Ms SIMPSON:—failed to take action in respect of a police minister who is not fulfilling their role or there are issues where they should stand aside? Why are you so slow in that regard to hold on to a minister who should be stood aside and not get on with the business of putting a permanent head of your department in place in order to get on with the business of state?

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, as I have said and as I will continue to say, I am very, very happy to submit myself to the committee and the member for Maroochydore in relation to anything that is contained within the budget papers before the proceedings of this committee.

Ms SIMPSON: Deputy Premier—

CHAIR: Order!

Ms SIMPSON:—do you have confidence—

CHAIR: Order!

Ms SIMPSON:—in your acting DG?

CHAIR: Member for Maroochydore, under standing order 115(b), questions are not to contain arguments, inferences, imputations or hypothetical matters. Would you like to rephrase your question, and I will ask you for the last time?

Ms SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr Chair. Acting Premier, do you have confidence in your acting DG?

Ms TRAD: Of course I do.

Ms SIMPSON: What actions are you taking to ensure that the process is finalised to get a permanent head of your department?

Ms TRAD: Again, Mr Chair, the process for selecting directors-general of each and every agency within government resides with the Premier and the Public Service Commissioner. I cannot say it much more clearly than that. I cannot put it any simpler than that in terms of an explanation for the member for Maroochydore. I cannot help it if she does not get it.

Ms SIMPSON: Isn't it extraordinary though to have this situation with a change of government where you take so long to put in place a permanent DG to run an important department like this?

Ms TRAD: I think what is extraordinary is there is \$100,000 worth of secret donations to your party—

Ms SIMPSON: And you cannot answer a question about transparency about the police minister?

CHAIR: Order! Order! I am going to ask a question. Deputy Premier, could you inform the committee what engagement the government has undertaken to develop the state infrastructure plan and when the plan will be released?

Ms TRAD: I thank you, Mr Chair, for a relevant question for the first time this afternoon. In fact, it has been almost 15 minutes, so I do want to commend you for getting proceedings back on track. As you would well know, Mr Chair, the development and the delivery of a state infrastructure plan was a key commitment that we gave the people of Queensland at the last election. For three years our state has not had a plan for infrastructure and our state infrastructure plan will provide a coordinated and integrated approach to infrastructure planning, prioritisation, funding and delivery. The state of Queensland under former Labor governments actually had infrastructure plans in place and this was critical—it was critical—in terms of making sure that the sector had confidence to mobilise workforces to put in bids and in fact confidence for the government to make budget allocations against long-term infrastructure planning.

Our infrastructure plan will improve Queensland's liveability and productivity. The plan will be a four-year program of construction and procurement, with future opportunities and challenges to a 15-year and beyond horizon. It is critical because, as I said, it gives the private sector confidence to invest and plan for future workforce needs. I want to go through what a couple of the stakeholders have said in relation to our infrastructure plan, because I think it is important to hear from people in the private sector about where we are going with our infrastructure plan. Scott Power, the group director of operations of BMD Holdings, said—

The direction of the proposed state infrastructure plan aligns perfectly with the needs and priorities of the civil contracting industry.

Aaron Johnson, the state director of Queensland's Cement Concrete and Aggregates Australia, said—

CCA is strongly supportive of the government's development of an infrastructure plan for Queensland. The plan improves the liveability and productivity of our state.

Mr Scott Reid, Manager of Regional Sales, Australia-New Zealand company Cisco, said—

Cisco applauds the government's emphasis on innovation in planning and delivery of infrastructure.

Catherine Pham from the Queensland Tourism Industry Council said—

QTIC supports the government's ambition to build private investor confidence and to facilitate innovation in achieving government service objectives.

Chris Mountford, the Executive Director of the Property Council of Australia, said—

The state infrastructure plan foreshadowed in the directions paper will be an important step in identifying the infrastructure our state needs in order to cater for its growing population and attract new residents to Queensland.

Michael Roth of the RACQ said—

We congratulate the Queensland government for committing to a state infrastructure plan and for establishing Building Queensland.

Quite frankly, we are getting on with the job of implementing our election commitments. Our directions paper released in June was an opportunity for industry and community to help shape our plan. Consultations closed on 1 July and workshops were held in the month of June. Eight-eight stakeholders participated in key workshops and the common message from the consultation included the importance of having a plan to show a pipeline of projects to give confidence and certainty to contractors, investors and the community. I am pleased to say, Mr Chair, that we have responded to the sector when they have said that they do not want to wait until early next year for a plan. We will be releasing a draft plan later on this year to make sure that they have an opportunity to have an input into our draft plan for finalisation early next year. Labor understands the need to plan, the need to allocate resources against infrastructure so that our communities are connected and they are liveable and they are prosperous for the future.

Mr BUTCHER: Deputy Premier, I refer to page 11 of the SDS and the delivery of infrastructure for Queenslanders. Can the Deputy Premier please explain what the state government is doing to ensure that Queensland receives its fair share from the Australian government for infrastructure funding?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Gladstone for the question. I know, having visited his electorate and having seen some of the magnificent port infrastructure in Gladstone, that it is a very critical issue for Gladstone but all of regional Queensland. That is why the Palaszczuk Labor government has been incredibly forceful in its advocacy with the federal Abbott government. We know that, in terms of much of the catalytic infrastructure, transformative infrastructure that our state needs going forward, we cannot do it alone. With every 72 cents in every dollar in tax collection from our state going to federal coffers, we know that we need more of the federal infrastructure funding pie.

As members of the committee would know, the federal government did, in fact, pull together or quarantine an infrastructure fund, but it was an infrastructure fund that was based on selling assets. We have made it clear that we are very, very committed to keeping our assets in the hands of Queenslanders. In fact, there were two elections held in this state sequentially and both of those elections returned a resounding no to selling off our income-producing assets. So not only is Tony Abbott ignoring the Queensland government but he is also ignoring Queenslanders—and so did assistant infrastructure minister, Jamie Briggs—when they say that Queenslanders cannot access the infrastructure fund without having to sell assets. Quite frankly, we are not going to cop that. We are laying claim to our fair share of infrastructure funding, including through the Northern Australia project and we have already identified projects including the Bruce Highway and key border infrastructure projects through that process.

In Townsville, we have asked the Prime Minister to match the Queensland government's commitment of \$100 million to the Townsville stadium project. Of course, what the Prime Minister said is, 'We don't fund stadiums,' but it seems that they only do not fund stadiums in Townsville; it is okay when it comes to South-East Queensland. That announcement was made recently, as people would understand. Earlier in the committee proceedings I pointed out the fact that we are still waiting for the Commonwealth to come on board in terms of the Gold Coast light rail stage 2. We also discovered earlier this morning that, in fact, the LNP just does not support Gold Coast light rail at all. We are also going to make sure that we hold the Commonwealth to account in terms of assisting to fund us with a Cross River Rail, which we know our region needs for the future.

In the February budget, which was delivered earlier this year, what we do know is that Western Australia got a special deal out of that federal budget. They did not have to sell assets—no strings attached; \$499 million for Western Australia because they were Liberal Party mates. But Queensland, when it says, 'Look, we want infrastructure dollars. We reckon you should cut us a deal similar to WA,' resounding silence; absolutely not. They will not entertain it unless we sell assets. Our commitment to the people of Queensland is absolutely rock solid. We are not going to sell our assets, our income-producing assets and, what is more, we will not roll over to Tony Abbott. We will continue to make the case for infrastructure funding for our state.

Mr BUTCHER: My second question is with reference to page 4 of the SDS. Can you please outline the benefits of the Indigenous State Infrastructure Program for Indigenous communities in Queensland?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question. The Indigenous State Infrastructure Program is aimed at capital improvements to environmental health infrastructure in 15 mainland Indigenous councils. In this year's budget—2015-16—the total estimated capital expenditure for ISIP is a little over \$7 million. The program supports upgrades to water supply, sewerage, drainage, solid waste, town roads and serviced allotments to accommodate new housing. It is a \$65 million program that commenced in 2010 and all projects in ISIP are scheduled to reach final completion by end of 2016.

The ISIP program improves environmental health conditions for people living in major communities in Indigenous council areas. As I said, it provides safe and secure drinking water, safe sewerage systems, safe solid waste disposal, reductions in vector environments and dust reduction through sealed roads. The major ISIP programs that are being progressed in this financial year include upgrades to the communities' drinking water and supply in Pormpuraaw. I am pleased to say that I met with the councillors of Pormpuraaw and they were very excited about having this project completed, and also Palm Island, where we will be upgrading the community's wastewater infrastructure.

My department continues to work closely with councils in the delivery of ISIP and to ensure that the infrastructure constructed is fit for purpose and fit for place and best value for money. This is a very important program and it is great to see that some of these projects are coming to completion.

Mr BUTCHER: And in a final question for me, I refer to page 7 of the SDS and the RACQ Get Ready program. What sponsorship and advertising arrangements have been made to promote this program in Queensland?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question and can I say that the RACQ Get Ready Queensland program is a very important program. It allows Queenslanders to get a reminder call about the approaching extreme weather season and to get prepared. It is a year-round, all-hazards disaster preparedness and resilience-building initiative. The program focuses on community resilience through a call to action in the annual RACQ Get Ready Week, which is in October—a couple of months away. There is the RACQ Get Ready Day and a media and digital campaign to support the Get Ready brand.

The aim of RACQ's Get Ready Queensland is to position Queensland as Australia's most disaster-resilient state. All three members—the member for Keppel, the member for Gladstone and the member for Mirani—will be acutely aware of why we need to remind communities to get ready and why we should have the ambition of being Australia's most disaster-resilient state. It integrates all preparedness activities year round under one brand and it engages all Queenslanders to participate. This year, funding of \$3.35 million is available for Get Ready Queensland. The focus of this year is to further educate communities on preparedness through collaboration with other government agencies, its information and education services for businesses and also engaging the school community on preparedness at home and school.

It was interesting, when I became minister I was surprised to find that the former minister, David Crisafulli, had left a considerable amount of the merchandise from the previous Get Ready program, which were wristbands for last year's program. I brought a few in for the benefit of members, particularly those new members who would not have received an allocation last year. It was quite interesting, because I asked the department when I started how many of these wristbands were still within the possession of the department. I was very disturbed to find that there were some 30,000 still lying around. That is 30,000 wristbands still lying around without any plan for distribution. It turns out that 100,000 of these wristbands were produced at a cost of almost \$350,000—\$350,000. The wristband is more than a wristband; it is actually a USB stick.

CHAIR: No props.

Ms TRAD: The USB stick is interesting in itself. You can save documents to the USB stick but there are documents that are on there that you cannot delete, like a message from the former minister and former member for Mundingburra. So it is quite interesting that you could add stuff but you could not delete it, such was their arrogance. But I think it is really important that we understand what \$350,000 could have bought in an emergency and disaster situation. It could have purchased more than 1,700 food vouchers at a cost of \$200 each, or nearly 10,000 blankets, or 157,000 bottles of clean drinking water, or 11,500 first-aid kits, or a week's worth of emergency accommodation for more than 1,000 people. Can I say that this is another example of a waste of money. They should have gone out. If the government had paid for them, they should have had a distribution method to get them out. It is quite simply another bungle, another waste of money by the former LNP government.

Mr KNUTH: I refer to page 4 of the SDS in relation to policy initiatives at a national level focused on the development of northern Australia and, further, that two million extra people are projected to be living in Queensland by 2031, with most of the growth in South-East Queensland. I ask: what action is the government taking in terms of planning to ensure that North Queensland is not disadvantaged in the delivery of important infrastructure to sustain existing communities and capitalise on the opportunities arising through the development of northern Australia?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Dalrymple for the question and I do absolutely acknowledge his very strong advocacy around developing northern Australia and ensuring that there is economic growth and job opportunities for people in his community. From the outset, the Palaszczuk Labor government has been working with the federal Abbott government to progress the Northern Australia white paper. We know that there are some key opportunities that have been articulated in that white paper or need to be supplemented by the state to that white paper process. We have engaged in that process. The Treasurer himself has advised the federal government in relation to some key infrastructure priorities, water storage priorities, that the state would like to see advanced through the Northern Australia white paper. Unfortunately, we are still yet to get details from the federal government around their \$5 billion concessional loan scheme. We have asked for details in relation to this scheme, because we think that we can articulate a way forward for many proponents in relation to their projects if there was clarity from the federal government about the use of that \$5 billion concessional loans scheme.

But it is actually interesting, member for Dalrymple, in relation to that \$5 billion concessional loan scheme and how the federal government has approached it. This is a concessional loan scheme for the entire Northern Australia initiative. So that means Queensland shares it with the Northern Territory and also with Western Australia. Recently, the Prime Minister announced that \$800 million out of that concessional loan scheme that was partitioned for Queensland would be spread across all three states. So once again, Queensland misses out in terms of the Abbott federal government for key infrastructure funding that we need to develop northern Australia, or northern Queensland.

Having said that, I acknowledge that I have had meetings with councillors from your electorate around key initiatives, member for Dalrymple, that they would like to see advanced. There are projects that we know that the state can well and truly consider in relation to some of those initiatives, water storage initiatives particularly. But what we will do is we will direct councils and proponents to our market-led proposal process, where they can put up suggestions of projects that are privately initiated but perhaps might need some public support and they can go through our market-led proposal system.

Alternatively, if it is a project that communities want government to consider, then it needs to be part of the normal CBRC process and it will be subject to Building Queensland, which I am very pleased has been already established internally within my agency but, through the course of the debate on the bill before the House, will be established as a statutory authority by the end of the year.

Mr KNUTH: Deputy Premier, I refer to page 3 of the SDS, the commitment to drive economic growth through innovative property and infrastructure partnerships and I ask: does the government vision to drive economic growth through innovative property and infrastructure partnerships include expanding and improving opportunities for local business to tender for Queensland government procurements, especially those in rural and regional Queensland?

Ms TRAD: Thank you, member for Dalrymple, for the question. Of course, my agency is always looking to partner in an innovative way with local councils or private proponents in relation to projects and I can confirm that local suppliers are always part of the mix. Of course, there are, I guess, procurement procedures that have to be adhered to, but we take very seriously our commitment to local communities in terms of being able to provide services or goods for government contracts. Of course, there are a whole range of criteria to meet in relation to those processes, but we do take seriously our commitment.

And I do want to say in relation to this matter that whilst procurement is an area that touches on all portfolios because all portfolios at one time or another procure services from the private sector, it is the Minister for Public Works and Housing, Science, Information and Technology, the honourable Leeanne Enoch, who has ministerial responsibility for the procurement process. I do know that she is having a look at the former government's procurement revitalisation program, I think it was called, so she is taking all of those issues into account.

Mr KNUTH: Deputy Premier, I refer to page 3 of the SDS and I ask: what exactly is the government doing to develop an approach to sustainable resilient funding as well as set clear investment strategies and priorities in North Queensland?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question. Can I say to the member for Dalrymple that we are doing a number of things in this space. The member for Dalrymple and committee members may be aware that at the last election we took a commitment to the people of Queensland that we would establish a \$40 million Community Resilience Fund and I am pleased to say that I have announced that that funding is now available for every single local council right across Queensland. The Community Resilience Fund will be a program that will deliver funding for important resilience upgrades, I guess, for public infrastructure in local communities. We know how important it is that we not only address the aftermath of big disasters, but that we also continue to improve essential public infrastructure so that when disaster does strike it is either not out of action or it is only out of action for a short period of time.

As one of the most disaster ravaged states—or probably the most disaster ravaged state—in the nation it is important that we take seriously our obligations around resilience and upgrading essential public infrastructure. But I do want to say our intention in relation to this \$40 million fund was to grow it to \$100 million through an innovative partnership with the Commonwealth government and also local councils. We were asking the federal government for an allocation of \$40 million, and I have written to the federal government asking for that contribution, as well as the outstanding amount from local councils.

Applications for the funding under the Community Resilience Fund will close on 10 September. I have already encouraged all councils to apply for that. Additionally, and I mentioned this in parliament not too long ago, the \$23 million Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program was also open and

I understand that closes on 25 August this year. This is a program that will allow particularly drought affected communities throughout Queensland to apply for important funding for infrastructure that will assist them during this drought period. Some of the eligible projects will include water infrastructure, town centre rejuvenation and watering stations at stock points in drought declared areas. So, we are acting now to support Queenslanders in dire need through the drought but we are also embedding the Community Resilience Fund so that communities can get on with the process of upgrading essential public infrastructure so that it can withstand natural disasters.

Mr KNUTH: You answered this question in part. How is the government helping local governments in communities like those in the Dalrymple and Mount Isa electorates to prepare for natural disasters as well as mitigating the impact of natural disasters including floods?

Ms TRAD: Member for Dalrymple, I guess it is a couple of strategies. As I mentioned before, we have the RACQ Get Ready program. That is a program about raising community awareness around the impending storm season or natural disaster season. So that is one thing around preparing communities; increasing the level of awareness and knowledge in local communities. But then there is also, I guess, the bread and butter stuff that councils do in relation to making sure that their infrastructure is ready and prepared for the upcoming natural disaster season. Part of that is through a suite of local government grants that my agency administers, but it is also around that specific new funding allocation that we have made in this budget in relation to the Community Resilience Fund. So it is about raising awareness as well as providing funds to improve infrastructure.

Ms SIMPSON: I have a question for the Deputy Premier in respect of page 44 of the budget measures and specifically where it states that the government has reprioritised the balance of the \$8 million allocated for the GraffitiSTOP program and I ask the minister: why has this important program been stopped, particularly given that it has been welcomed by a number of councils across Queensland, including Labor members?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question, Mr Chair, and can I say it is refreshing to get a question that is actually related to my portfolio. Can I say for the benefit of the members of the committee that GraffitiSTOP was a policy initiative of the former LNP government. They had allocated \$8 million over four years to deliver a phone hotline and provide funding to councils to undertake graffiti management activities. Eleven councils, either returned their annual funding allocation in full or were not able to spend all of the grant money allocated to them. Now, that is 11 councils out of 15 who actually got the grant funding. This was because the Newman government's GraffitiSTOP program was not directed to areas of need and overestimated the graffiti problem in Queensland. I will give you an example and I will give you the example of Winton. Winton is 200 kilometres north-west of Longreach. Its population is around 1,600. In 2012-13 they received \$4,000 under GraffitiSTOP but they didn't have any graffiti so they returned it to the department. Then in 2013-14 they again received a grant, this time for \$2,000. Again no graffiti; they returned the money to the department. But then again in 2014-15 they received another grant under GraffitiSTOP, this time for just under \$2,000, but still no graffiti—absolutely no graffiti—so of course the Winton shire again returned the money. Mr Chair, who knows when this cycle would have stopped because if the LNP had been re-elected you can bet your bottom dollar they would have talked up the graffiti problem and allocated more money to it.

Let us be clear, this money was not applied for, it was a grant from Brisbane without any regard to the local needs. Let us talk about the telephone hotline.

Ms SIMPSON: Deputy Premier—

Ms TRAD: I am talking about GraffitiSTOP.

Ms SIMPSON:—can I actually refer you specifically to Helen Abrahams' newsletter where she said that—

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, can I finish my answer?

Ms SIMPSON:—Council's City Colours initiative relies totally on \$55,000 from the State Government's GraffitiSTOP program. So it is a program that has been used effectively here in Brisbane as well as in other parts of the state and in this case welcomed by a Labor councillor. Do you see a need for a graffiti program at all or is this just about trashing your predecessor?

CHAIR: With respect, I believe or I understand the Deputy Premier was heading in the right direction.

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, if I could just answer the question because I think it is very important that we actually understand the waste of money here. Part of the program was the establishment of the graffiti hotline.

Mr HART: Stopping graffiti is a waste of money, Deputy Premier?

Ms TRAD: This hotline, from January 2014 to January 2015, got 212 calls. It is funded for \$250,000. That is less than one call a day and guess what? It equates to about a thousand dollars a call coming in. Now, that is a gross waste of money. Of course, where graffiti is a problem there should be a response, but quite frankly it is a local council responsibility. This was an ill-thought-out program. It was not targeted. Most councils gave back the grant money they received. This Labor government, quite rightly, said that this money could be used in a better way and we have returned the \$2 million to the Consolidated Fund.

Ms SIMPSON: Could I ask the Deputy Premier does she acknowledge though that graffiti is an issue and that there are local councils who want assistance with it, including Labor councillors who have acknowledged that they found it a very helpful program in their area?

Ms TRAD: I think I have answered the question.

Mr MILLAR: Can I refer to you the last point on page 34 of the SDS and ask the minister: will this strategy include the Growing Central Queensland initiative? Specifically I am talking about the development of an inland freight hub at Emerald and the establishment of a meatworks at Emerald?

Ms TRAD: Which page?

Mr MILLAR: That is page 34 of the SDS, the last point. What I am asking is does this strategy include the Growing Central Queensland initiative? I am talking about the inland freight hub at Emerald and the establishment of a meatworks at Emerald?

Ms TRAD: I will take the question on notice. This is, in fact, about the projects that are delivered by Economic Development Queensland. Economic Development Queensland's purview is about, I guess, encouraging residential development, urban renewal and community infrastructure for the purpose of not only communities but also the state for an economic return. I am not aware of that project being under the auspice of EDQ but I am very happy to take that on notice and come back to you.

Ms SIMPSON: Deputy Premier, if I could ask a question in regard to page 44 of the SDS and specifically in respect to the Queensland Reconstruction Authority. It has been announced that there is a review. I ask: how would this review be conducted, what are the terms of reference, the cost and who will be undertaking it?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question. In relation to the Queensland Reconstruction Authority, I am very happy to talk about where this government's direction is heading in relation to the QRA. As members would know, the QRA was established in 2011 after the aftermath of Cyclone Yasi. Since then there have been 34 natural disasters that the QRA has had to respond to. These include Yasi, Oswald, Marcia, flooding in the Lockyer Valley and in Bundaberg, Moreton Bay and Brisbane. The Queensland Reconstruction Authority is critical for individuals, local governments and government agencies during and after disasters. Essentially it was established to assist in the administration of NDRRA funds. To date it has administered more than \$13 billion worth of funding to ensure that Queensland is rebuilt after natural disasters. It is currently administering more than a billion dollars worth of claims and that will be progressed by the QRA over the coming years. The QRA ensures that Queensland receives its fair share of reimbursement from the Commonwealth under the NDRRA arrangements.

When I came to office and when I was advised that the QRA was due to be wound up, the Queensland government took a policy position that we wanted to see it as a permanent feature within the Queensland government landscape. To that effect the cabinet approved the review of the QRA and I am very happy to say that that review has been commissioned and an independent oversight committee has been compiled of Major General Mick Slater, Councillor Margaret de Wit and QUT professor Gerard Fitzgerald. This oversight committee has provided support to consultants KPMG to audit and review the workings of the QRA and to make recommendations to government in relation to the future direction. The government will be considering that review in full and will be making public both the report and our response to the report in the very near future.

Ms SIMPSON: Deputy Premier, could you outline how much that review is going to cost and the full time frame though? When do you actually expect it to come to completion?

Ms TRAD: I will take that on notice. The review has been completed. The government has just received the review. We are going through the review and will release the review and our response to the review in due course. But I will take the costing on notice.

Ms SIMPSON: Deputy Premier, I wish to ask you a question in respect of page 8 of the SDS, specifically the department's regulatory framework for local governments to manage their interests. One of the important things for local governments is their own financial sustainability, not only the grants they receive but also the costs that they have to carry. My specific question is: in respect to the review and monitoring role of the department as to legislation, does the department actually also review and monitor the cost impact of legislation across government as it applies to local government?

Ms TRAD: To the best of my knowledge, the department does not compile those aggregate figures. I am not sure if the acting director-general wants to further comment in relation to that. It has not been, I think, a policy or a practice over successive governments over a number of years.

Mr Johnston: Not for this department, Deputy Premier.

Ms SIMPSON: Deputy Premier, following on from that, given that in your government there has been legislation that has had a significant cost impact on local government, such as the industrial relations legislation, while that legislation sits in another minister's portfolio it does impact upon local government. That is why I ask whether your department undertakes such briefings and makes representations, because this is an issue. I put it to you that when your other departments and other ministers are legislating to have a huge cost impact on local government, such as with IR, there needs to be consideration in your regulatory framework. Is this something that you take on board?

Ms TRAD: I am very happy to talk about the cost impacts of successive governments' policies in relation to local government, but I will start by actually telling the committee what the Local Government Association of Queensland says about this government and our budget. I quote—

Local communities have done well out of the Palaszczuk Government's first Budget, with more funding for road projects and a solid commitment to boosting local jobs—

Ms SIMPSON: With respect, my question is specifically in regard to the cost impact of legislation, because the LGAQ has also been critical—

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, I seek your guidance in regard to relevance.

Ms SIMPSON: My question was in regard—

CHAIR: Order! I would like to hear the Deputy Premier answer the question and her lead-up to answering the question as put.

Ms TRAD: Thank you.

Ms SIMPSON: It is to the cost impacts of legislation that you have passed.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Mr Chair. I will inform the committee about what local councils are saying about the cost impact, the state budget and this government in relation to their operations. As I said before I was interrupted—

Local communities have done well out of the Palaszczuk Government's first Budget, with more funding for road projects and a solid commitment to boosting local jobs training programs and infrastructure programs.

Vital programs to help build and maintain local roads has received an important funding boost after being pared back under the previous government.

Ms SIMPSON: With respect, Mr Chair, that is not answering my question. This is not an opportunity for the Deputy Premier to filibuster.

Ms TRAD: I do believe I am entitled—

Ms SIMPSON: The question was quite specific in regard to the cost impact of the legislation of your government on local government.

CHAIR: Order! I believe and I am hoping that the Deputy Premier is getting around to answering the question, despite the lead-up.

Ms TRAD: Yes, and part of the question was about cost impact and I am talking about government decisions—

Ms SIMPSON: Mr Chair, with respect, the LGAQ was critical of the cost impacts of this government on their business.

Ms TRAD: Yes, let me talk about cost impacts from the decisions made by this government. Let me address that, as I have done before being repeatedly interrupted by the member for Maroochydore. I will continue. In relation to cost impacts from decisions made by this government, Margaret de Wit from the LGAQ has said—

All in all, this Budget has shown a welcome commitment to local projects such as road building and community infrastructure.

That is Margaret de Wit, the President of the LGAQ—

Ms SIMPSON: With respect, Mr Chair, this is about the legislative cost impacts of this government and whether this department will review the impacts of its legislation on local government.

CHAIR: Member for Maroochydore—

Ms SIMPSON: That was a criticism by the LGAQ of this government.

Ms TRAD: I am happy to keep repeating these quotes, because they are gold.

Mr HART: We just want an answer to the question.

Ms SIMPSON: The LGAQ also said that it could cost up 1,500 jobs in local councils throughout Queensland.

CHAIR: I wish some people had some manners.

Ms SIMPSON: Specifically, Deputy Premier, my question is: in regard to the cost impacts of the legislation that you and your government pass, will you take responsibility, as the minister for local government, not just for the legislation under your permit but across government to make sure that those impacts are actually measured and released?

CHAIR: I hope that you will let the Deputy Premier answer the question without interruption.

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, what local councils are saying to me is that the fact that this government has made policy decisions that have positively impacted on jobs growth in their local communities is applauded and well embraced; things such as increasing TIDS funding, the western roads package and the Community Resilience Fund. If those members opposite want to talk about the impact of government policies on local councils, I am more than happy to talk about that.

Ms SIMPSON: And government legislation.

Ms TRAD: I am more than happy to talk about the millions of dollars ripped out of the Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program by the former—

Mr HART: We are waiting.

CHAIR: Order! The time for this session has expired. I move on to government members.

Mrs LAUGA: Deputy Premier, I refer to page 46 of the SDS and the administration of Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements funding. What does the temporary exemption to the day labour rule for the NDRRA in Queensland mean for local governments?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question and I acknowledge that the member for Keppel played a significant role in relation to getting her community back up on its feet after the devastation of Tropical Cyclone Marcia. In a word, day labour is all about jobs and keeping jobs in local communities. We heard those members just now talk about the impact of industrial relations changes on jobs. The hide of those members opposite to talk about jobs when they sacked more than 14,000 public servants. The hide and the hypocrisy knows no bounds! Fundamentally, under the NDRRA arrangements day labour hire, the use of a council's own workforce in the reconstruction program, has been prohibited in the past. Exemptions have applied in the past as well, so the Commonwealth has come to the party to allow for trials to take place so that both the Commonwealth and the state could assess whether or not the use of a council's own day labour was more efficient and cost effective for local councils. Without a doubt it is, because we know that for many councils actually getting in contractors and third parties is more expensive and does not represent value for money. In fact, Queensland conducted an independent review of the day labour issue and found that councils delivered projects faster and with savings of approximately \$160 million. Not only is it about keeping jobs in local communities, but also it is about making sure that there is value for money in terms of the reconstruction task ahead.

When I came to government and this position and Tropical Cyclone Marcia had just come across the coastline, I made personal contact with the Commonwealth minister, Minister Keenan, in relation to lifting the restrictions on day labour. I have subsequently written to him, I think, on four occasions in relation to this matter. I am pleased to say that through very strong advocacy of the Palaszczuk Labor government, as well as the LGAQ and a number of local councils, we were able to get the Commonwealth to relax the restrictions around the use of day labour for the financial years of 2014-15 to 2017-18. Unfortunately, they did not include the financial year of 2013-14, which means that for Tropical Cyclone Marcia and Tropical Cyclone Nathan, which affected Cooktown, the council's workforce for the reconstruction task around those two disasters is not eligible under the NDRRA arrangements. I have again written to Minister Keenan to explain that the decision not to include 2013-14 in the exemption would have significant impacts for the communities of Central Queensland, as well as Far North Queensland. He has responded to me, wanting further information.

I want to reassure the committee that the issue of day labour is one that this government will not roll over on, like the previous Newman government did. We absolutely understand fundamentally what it means for local councils, what it means for local jobs and what it means in terms of building stuff back faster at a better cost.

Mr BUTCHER: I refer to page 43 of the Budget Measures document. Can you please provide further information about the government's support for the state's second largest services export sector, the Queensland international education and training industry?

Ms TRAD: International education and training is a significant export sector for Queensland. It brings in about \$2.5 billion to the economy. Its growth is accelerating quite quickly. In fact, it has doubled in the past 10 years. It is our fourth largest export sector and our second largest service export. It is predicted to become No. 1 in terms of service export by 2020, which is only five years away. Deloitte Access Economics identified it as a one-in-five super growth industry for Queensland and Australia. This sector, which drives jobs growth, is estimated to create over 20,000 jobs, that is, jobs created here as well as jobs created abroad, for example, at James Cook University in Singapore, which I visited on my first trade mission as Minister for Trade. Unfortunately, Queensland is losing market share to New South Wales and Victoria. Year to date growth as of May 2015 saw Queensland's growth at only seven per cent when compared to New South Wales at 12 per cent and Victoria at 13 per cent.

Under the Palaszczuk Labor government, we are not going to ignore this very important sector. We understand how important it is, not just for the south-east corner but also for the entire network of regional education institutions. We have allocated \$7.7 million over four years to stimulate the export education sector. I will be a champion for the industry. The government will provide long awaited advocacy and we will be promoting our Study Queensland strategy and brand abroad. I will be partnering with Ministers Jones and D'Ath, who both have responsibilities in this space, to finalise that strategy, which will be released for public consultation.

This sector contributes \$700 million annually to Queensland's regions, so it is really important that we get this right and we make sure that regional Queensland shares some of this pie. Unfortunately, when we left office in 2012 funding to ensure the continued promotion was curtailed by the former LNP government. In fact, export education or trade was not even one of their four pillars, which says a lot in terms of the future focus of the former government. When I became Minister for Trade, I was advised that there was, in fact, no continued funding in the export education part of Trade and Investment Queensland. I am very pleased that there has been a significant allocation in this budget to make sure that we can promote and elevate export education as a key sector within our trade agenda for Queensland.

Mr BUTCHER: I refer to page 61 of the SDS and the promotion of investment opportunities through Trade and Investment Queensland. How is Trade and Investment Queensland's overseas network assisting Queensland businesses in facilitating attraction to much-needed foreign investment?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question. I understand how important export and trade is to your community. The port of Gladstone is one of Queensland's best export ports, so I do understand how important trade and investment is to your community, member for Gladstone.

Mr Chair, if I could, I want to correct something in relation to the exemptions of day labour. I was incorrect: Marcia and Nathan are covered under the exemptions that the Commonwealth has recently advised. It is cyclone Ita that will not be. I wanted to correct the record for the benefit of the committee.

In relation to the Trade and Investment Queensland global network, it is strategically located across a number of areas of investor markets from Asia, Europe, North America and the Middle East. TIQ worked with a range of investors, for example, institutional companies, sovereign wealth, private equity and state owned corporations. Its important investor market examples include the UK for the gas supply chain, and I met recently with investors at a QIC London event; Asia for regional and northern Queensland opportunities; and North America for seed venture capital for innovation and start-up. Through Advance Queensland, which is our government's budget centrepiece in relation to futureproofing the Queensland economy and building a knowledge based economy of the future, TIQ will only be further advantaged. TIQ will work with Queensland investment proponents and a variety of stakeholders going forward. They will do this to vet projects that are put up by councils or economic development organisations or professional services. In 2014-15, TIQ identified 58 investment projects and pre-qualified projects are promoted to international investors. TIQ further facilitated 29 investment deals, which is a pretty good track record. International clients assisted by TIQ to invest include Japan Bank for International Cooperation in resource projects, the Singapore based Banyan Tree group into hotel services and the Dalian Wanda group of China into tourism infrastructure, which I have recently

seen on the Gold Coast which is fantastic. TIQ business services to international investors include providing detailed industry and market knowledge, helping to organise in-bound visits, introducing local companies and service providers, identifying partners for joint ventures, and assisting in dealing with government and local organisations. TIQ's global network is an integral part of our investment attraction strategy. This strategy will be firmly on this government's agenda. We do not just believe in four pillars; we believe in the whole economy.

CHAIR: Order, Deputy Premier, it is time to break for lunch. We will resume at 2 pm.

Proceedings suspended from 1 pm to 2 pm



CHAIR: The committee will resume its examination of the estimates for the portfolio areas of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Trade. I welcome the departmental officials. I call on the opposition to ask the first question.

Mr NICHOLLS: Good afternoon, Deputy Premier.

Ms TRAD: Good afternoon.

Mr NICHOLLS: I see you are sporting a new haircut. It is very Premier looking.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, member for Clayfield. You are not looking too bad yourself.

Mr NICHOLLS: They always say the last dance is the best one, Deputy Premier. I would like to ask you again about whether in the interests of openness and transparency you will say whether you were aware of issues surrounding the police minister and whether you should have referred her to the Ethics Committee like your parliamentary colleagues have done? I would like to ask you that question, but I suspect you will not answer it and the chairman will say something about it. So I will not ask that question again and let you deny the police minister for the third time—

CHAIR: I was all fired up because I was going to take a different approach this time.

Mr NICHOLLS: Unlike St Peter, I will not allow you to deny for the third time.

Ms TRAD: I am happy for you to keep talking about it if you are not going to ask a question.

Mr NICHOLLS: No, I am very happy to move on to the next question. I will not ask you that question and give you the opportunity not to answer it again. I refer to the SDS at page 3 where you refer to setting a clear infrastructure investment strategy and priorities across the state and also the answer to question on notice No. 14 which refers to a major part of the infrastructure plan directions paper being funding and finance and debt and portfolio optimisation. You have also recently been quoted in the *Australian Financial Review*. The headline of the article reads—I will table that article—'Sunshine state may borrow to pay for infrastructure: Trad'. There is a photo of you with the old haircut.

CHAIR: Are you seeking leave to table that document?

Mr NICHOLLS: I am seeking leave to table that article.

CHAIR: Leave is granted.

Mr NICHOLLS: Quite clearly in that article you put increasing debt on the table as a possible way of funding infrastructure. Are you still of the view that Queensland will need to borrow more in order to deliver infrastructure for Queensland?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the Clayfield for the question. The member for Clayfield is very well positioned to talk about increases in debt because when he was the treasurer of this state general government debt increased from \$25 billion to \$38 billion. We understand that there are constraints in terms of the state budget which is why the last state budget, which is being examined here today, brought with it a lot of stability in terms of the debt position that Queensland faces. In fact, this is the first budget in a long time that has a debt reduction path clearly articulated that does not include the sacking of hundreds of thousands of public servants or the axing of very important community services for Queenslanders right across this state.

In terms of funding infrastructure going forward, we know that we have to look at a range of options—innovative funding models. What we are doing is tasking Building Queensland with that job. We know in terms of building some catalytic infrastructure or much needed infrastructure that will drive economic growth and also deliver jobs generation in this state that we need to look at innovative funding models, including the innovative position of getting the federal government to change its mind in relation to allowing Queensland to access the federal Infrastructure Fund without selling assets.

Mr NICHOLLS: That is the asset recycling incentive. You do not seem to put those three words together.

Ms TRAD: I think it has been renamed. For the benefit of the committee, let us be clear because I think the member for Clayfield has forgotten what happened on 31 January this year when, after spending—

Mr NICHOLLS: I am still pretty clear on it. The question was about increased debt to fund infrastructure.

Ms TRAD:—tens of millions of taxpayer dollars to fund mates to prepare a communications strategy around the Strong Choices campaign that was resoundingly rejected by Queenslanders. Why was it rejected? It was rejected because all of our income producing assets were going to be sold. Queenslanders have had a say on two occasions at two state elections in relation to asset sales.

Mr NICHOLLS: We can engage in argument over the relative merits of truthfulness.

Ms TRAD: Or Tim you could just let me answer the question.

Mr NICHOLLS: Or the minister can answer the question.

Ms TRAD: Be a gentleman and let me answer the question.

CHAIR: I would like to see the minister answer the question.

Ms TRAD: I am going to answer the question. We know that innovative funding models include getting the Commonwealth to change its position in relation to funding infrastructure for Queensland that does not rely on asset sales. We know that we can do things in partnership with the Commonwealth government as well as with the Gold Coast City Council to fund projects like Gold Coast Light Rail stage 2 without increasing debt.

Mr NICHOLLS: Presumably that is predicated on asking for the money. Will you be borrowing further funds? Do you support the position that was reported in the *Australian Financial Review* where you said that the state may borrow more to fund infrastructure? Is the report right or wrong, or is it a position that you have resiled from or is it a position you still maintain?

Ms TRAD: I cannot predict the future. What I can do is put in place a conversation with Queenslanders, with industry, with the construction sector around how we build the essential infrastructure that we need for the future. We will be looking at innovative funding models.

Mr NICHOLLS: Presumably at some stage you will have to pay for it?

Ms TRAD: Quite clearly—

Mr NICHOLLS: Normally that is the case, unless there is some new plan for nationalisation.

CHAIR: Let the Deputy Premier finish answering the question.

Ms TRAD: In relation to the member for Clayfield's obsession with debt, if only he had had the same level of due diligence when he was in charge of Treasury. As I said, general government debt increased from \$25 billion to \$38 billion under his watch. This budget actually lowers general government borrowings by \$7.5 billion. It will be \$7.5 billion lower by 2017-18. Compare this with what the member for Clayfield, when he was treasurer, predicted in the LNP government's last budget. We are not afraid of that. We are unashamed of that. We will lower debt and we will continue to agitate with the Commonwealth to ensure that they give due consideration—

Mr NICHOLLS: I think you are agitating the Commonwealth.

Ms TRAD:—to allocating Queensland funds from the Infrastructure Fund to build the infrastructure that we need.

Mr NICHOLLS: Obviously the Deputy Premier is not willing to stand by the article in the *Australian Financial Review* where she flags increasing debt to pay for infrastructure. Let me clarify on the record that her own budget for 2015-16 shows total state debt—that is, the total amount payable by the state of Queensland—at \$75.5 billion, actually \$10 billion less than her colleagues last predicted the last time they were in office.

Turning now to the next item of business, which relates to page 34 of the SDS, land sales. There you refer to realising sales of up to \$44 million in industrial land at various places and also developing and implementing a strategy that identifies opportunities to deliver innovative projects and so on. Do you now support the sale of surplus government land to facilitate infrastructure projects or to utilise the proceeds of those asset sales to reinvest into infrastructure projects?

Ms TRAD: The member for Clayfield is referring to activities that are undertaken by Economic Development Queensland which is a component within my portfolio. Economic Development Queensland is very much based on its predecessor, the Urban Land Development Authority. What both

of these organisations did is engage in significant large, urban renewal projects, particularly in areas of Queensland that were under-utilised or not used at all. This is land that could have been used for a variety of purposes in the past but was essentially not being used now.

I draw the honourable member's attention to Northshore Hamilton, for example, which I understand is in his electorate. The Northshore Hamilton development is a project that started under the former Bligh Labor government, continued under the previous LNP government and is continuing today. This is about partnering with the private sector to deliver accommodation and community facilities that our population needs as it continues to grow. The upshot of that is that developers have an opportunity to provide an important mix to the accommodation needs of the future while we provide some of the important community infrastructure. In return the state gets money. This has been happening for quite a period of time. This is about partnering in an innovative way with the private sector to meet the challenging needs of a rapidly growing population into the future.

Mr NICHOLLS: I am fully aware of the Northshore Hamilton development back to its initial stages—2000, in fact, when the whole project was kicked off. I go back to my question: do you support the sale of surplus government land? You referenced some land owned by EDQ. What about the Herston redevelopment project? Do you support the sale of land for projects like that and the funds from that being invested into health services, for example? Do you support the sale of land in order to invest in new infrastructure or provide further services to the community?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question. State governments of every political persuasion have been engaging in land that is surplus to requirements transactions that will allow for development or for councils to utilise under-utilised state land. That is not going to change. Where we need to upgrade public housing stock, for example, we will sell it in order to build new public housing tenements. We have made no secret of that.

The distinction that the former treasurer needs to be aware of is that, in terms of the Strong Choices campaign that he put to Queensland and that was resoundingly rejected—and we all know where this is going—the former LNP government had a list of significant public utilities that returned a profit, a dividend, to the state which they had slated for sale. Queenslanders voted on that list. They voted on the Strong Choices campaign and they resoundingly rejected it. The member for Gladstone knows full well how strongly people in his community rejected the proposed sale of the Gladstone port. They rejected it outright. We will hold firm to our commitment not to sell these income producing assets.

Mr NICHOLLS: We have had the diatribe and the answer to question. Perhaps I could ask another question rather than chew up time on clock given that we have the grand total of 1½ hours and I only have a certain portion of that.

Ms TRAD: It is a bit sad, isn't it Tim.

CHAIR: Unfortunately, you have run out of time. I call the member for Dalrymple.

Ms TRAD: I also think that is a bit of a reflection on the committee.

Mr NICHOLLS: My point being made very adequately, Mr Chairman. Thank you very much.

Ms TRAD: I think that is a bit of a reflection on the chair and the committee as well, which is very disrespectful.

Mr KNUTH: How does the government intend to improve local government practices, skills, resources and knowledge? I refer to page 3 of the SDS.

Ms TRAD: I am sorry, could you repeat that question?

Mr KNUTH: I refer to page 3 of the SDS. How does the government intend to improve local government practices, skills and knowledge in rural and regional Queensland?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question. The local government agency within my portfolio takes very seriously its responsibility in terms of partnering with local councils to improve capacity across-the-board when it comes to new mayors, new councillors and local councils across-the-board.

In last year's budget just over \$1 million was allocated, with actual expenditure just under \$900,000. This delivered capacity-building programs right across the state. Last year, in 2014-15, 61 scholarships were approved by the local government for local government employees to undertake the Local Government Association of Queensland, the LGAQ's, accredited diploma level programs in various locations including Brisbane, Cairns, Burketown, Charters Towers, Winton and Charleville. It provides specific in-house training for local governments and it also improves local councillors' understanding of very important financial reporting requirements.

I know that with the changeover of local councils—and we do have an impending local council election due early next year—there will be some significant concerns about the capacity of new councillors and also new mayors in relation to some of those statutory requirements. I am advised that my local government agency will be conducting training programs for those people who want to be candidates at the upcoming local government elections, to assist them to make their final determination based on the requirements in terms of what they will need to provide in their responsible roles as councillors or potentially as mayors and to outline in great detail the statutory requirements on those roles. Then post election I understand that that level of capacity building and understanding awareness will continue by the Department of Local Government.

Mr KNUTH: Minister, in regard to QRA I have two matters. The first is about ensuring that locals are able to tend for local contracts including councils. Also, what is the government doing in regard to day labour in rural and regional Queensland?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Dalrymple for the question. I have referred to this previously. I will just say a few words but I might ask the CEO of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority to add any commentary if I do not cover it in this address.

I know that for many regional Queensland members it is incredibly important for local councils to be able to utilise their own workforce, their day labour, for reconstruction efforts in their local community. In fact, they know their community best. In many instances they have been working these roads and bridges for a very long period of time. So when disaster strikes they know where to go and they know essentially what to do to clear roads or close roads. These workforces are the best workforces to deliver the work in their local communities.

QRA commissioned a review of the use of day labour for reconstruction activities. Previously day labour had been exempt for payment under the NDRRA arrangements. There was a trial that was conducted where that restriction had been lifted. Unfortunately, under the previous Newman LNP government, that restriction came back into place. When I became the minister responsible for the Queensland Reconstruction Authority and it was brought to my attention that these restrictions were still in place and that councils like Cooktown, Rockhampton and Livingstone, for example, could not use their own day labour workforce to fix things up after Tropical Cyclone Marcia or Nathan, I corresponded with the Commonwealth minister about relaxing these restrictions so that these councils could use their own workforce. It is incredibly important in terms of making sure that jobs stay in local communities.

The Queensland Reconstruction Authority commissioned an independent review of the use of day labour and value for money and found that in many instances it was incredibly important for local communities to do it and it presented a very good value for money proposition to government. In fact, the estimated savings in relation to local councils using their own labour for reconstruction activities was in the vicinity of \$160 million. That was the finding as a result of the day labour trial on 2011 and 2012 works alone. That represents significant savings. I do not know if there is anything else to add, but if there is I might invite the CEO of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority to come to the table.

Mr Carroll: I think the Deputy Premier has covered off on the savings in relation to the trial. The point to note I suppose is that 2014 works are still not eligible under the NDRRA Commonwealth determination. There has been a relaxation of the rules for 2015 works. That relaxation takes us to the 2016-17 financial year works. The Deputy Premier has corresponded with the Commonwealth government in relation to trying to extend that relaxation for the 2014 works as well. But unfortunately we are still waiting on a reply from the Commonwealth.

Mr KNUTH: So councils can now plan in regard to their workforce and if we have a natural disaster, and we do have many, there is an opportunity for those councils and council workers to receive that work.

Mr Carroll: Absolutely, if it is in relation to disasters that occur in 2015 and onwards. But if it is in relation to disasters that occurred in the 2014 financial year, that restriction is still there. But for any future disasters up to the financial year 2016-17 the Commonwealth has given a relaxation at the moment.

Ms TRAD: I draw the committee's attention to the fact that I think I said 2017-18 before, but it is 2016-17 in terms of the out year.

CHAIR: I call the member for Keppel.

Mrs LAUGA: I refer to page 10 of the SDS. Deputy Premier, this is an issue very close to my heart. Can you provide further information to the committee about how government is planning to deliver better planning for Queensland?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question. I acknowledge that the member for Keppel is a qualified town-planner herself and I understand that she is very passionate about planning and good design bringing great outcomes for Queenslanders and communities. I do acknowledge her work in this space and I also acknowledge her attendance at the planning summit last month. The member for Keppel and the member for Gladstone attended, and also the member for Clayfield, who is using the scribble pad, attended. I thank you all for your interest in this planning reform journey.

As members know, the planning reform process is an important part of our plan for Queensland. Planning reform can improve the quality of places and spaces and deliver a stronger economy and jobs and make housing much more affordable. On 25 May I released the *Better planning for Queensland: next steps in planning reform directions paper*. This paper charts a course for the next steps in planning reform, focusing on the introduction of a new planning bill this October. I acknowledge that this builds on the work of the former LNP government and I look forward to continuing discussions with the member for Clayfield to progress a reform agenda. We are committed to planning reform that delivers a more efficient system that supports investment and jobs, but we do not believe that this must come at the expense of community participation. Our reform agenda will deliver fair and practical improvements to planning processes and make things much more straightforward for applicants.

To deliver planning reform we have said that we will introduce a new planning bill in October. We know planning reform must mean more than just legislative change, however. So we are committed to working with councils to deliver better planning schemes and cultural change. We are also examining how to improve processes within the State Assessment and Referral Agency, better known as SARA, and how we can ensure state interests are better captured within the state planning policy and the state development assessment provisions.

Part of our reform journey and part of our reform process could not have been possible unless the Palaszczuk Labor government had made a funding commitment in this budget to continue that ongoing. The amount of \$59.4 million has been allocated over the forward years to ensure that we can embed the planning reform process and that we can also assist councils in that transition process. But importantly, however, Mr Chair and committee members, that budget also represents a continuation of employment within the agency.

When I came to government I found that there was no funding allocated to keep workers within the State Assessment and Referral Agency or in the planning reform unit. So these workers were going to have their contracts expire on 30 June. That means that the planning reform process would have fallen over. I am very pleased that this budget allocation will not only make sure that we can get the planning reform process finalised and embedded and get councils working with us but it will also mean that Queenslanders keep their jobs.

Mrs LAUGA: I refer to page 10 of the SDS and the government's better planning for Queensland objective. What were the key outcomes of the recent planning summit?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question. As I said previously, I do acknowledge her participation, the member for Clayfield's participation and the member for Gladstone's participation. It was held on 28 July not too long ago, and there were over 550 participants both in person and streamed online. Participants included state and local governments, the development and planning sector, individuals, and legal, community and environment groups. It provided the platform for the government to discuss the latest research on topics that planning must consider now and into the future as we build our communities to accommodate future growth but also how we connect communities in such a large decentralised state such as Queensland.

The summit investigated a number of topics including global mega trends and their Queensland context, the new planning bill that creates the foundation for the system, urban design principles and opportunities for Queensland, best practice community engagement, how Queensland can create a knowledge economy to drive jobs, the provision and management of infrastructure, and also how we can plan for a changing planning culture across Queensland which is important. I wanted all stakeholder groups to hear directly from me about my vision for the future of planning in Queensland and I wanted to reshape the discussion around planning reform and highlight our priorities for a more transparent and accountable planning system that values community engagement and input.

The summit was a success, with a valuable buy-in and contributions from both industry bodies and community groups. The feedback to date has been incredibly positive, with stakeholders very excited to be part of our planning reform journey. I am confident that we can work together to achieve our goal of having the best planning system in Australia. Prior to its consideration by parliament, the department will make sure that the draft bills are released for community consultation.

Mrs LAUGA: I refer to page 10 of the SDS. Can you provide more information about your plans to deliver a user-friendly electronic DA lodgement system?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question. Of course information technology systems have been quite an issue of controversy of late, can I say. The system that the State Assessment and Referral Agency, or SARA, uses is called MyDAS. The system was rolled out by the member for Callide, the former minister for planning, in July 2013. MyDAS is used by planners, developers and the community to lodge development applications for assessment by SARA. I do not know whether the member for Keppel has actually used MyDAS.

Mrs LAUGA: I have.

Ms TRAD: Perhaps you have your own personal experience in relation to the user-friendliness of the system. It is a really important system because it deals with thousands of applications each year. Unfortunately, the MyDAS system was rushed by the former planning minister to meet an arbitrary start date. As a result, the system is seriously flawed. MyDAS was built in less than six months to be operational for July 2013. Its shortcomings mean that it actually does not do the job. SARA customer satisfaction surveys in 2013-14 and 2014-15 show that it just does not meet user needs. In 2013-14, just 12 per cent of those surveyed said that they were satisfied with the system. The system was so flawed that we had to bring in IT experts just to change the name from DSDIP to DILGP following the change of government.

Poor scoping at the start, along with bug fixes and other variations, have meant incredibly big cost blow-outs. The original contract supplier was Appian and it was for three weeks at a cost of \$491,000. The contract has been varied some 14 times and it has now blown out to \$5.8 million—so from \$491,000 to \$5.8 million. As well as poor useability, it has meant that we have had to boost staff on the help line to assist customers who cannot get the system to perform for them. The system is so bad that, rather than invest heavily in correcting and enhancing the existing MyDAS system, the decision was taken to redevelop the whole platform, and we are renaming it MyDAS 2. So some of the \$59 million that I mentioned before, member for Keppel, will be used for building the new system.

Mr BUTCHER: I refer to page 10 of the SDS and better planning for Queensland. What is the Department of Local Government and Planning doing to consult with stakeholders on the proposed changes to planning legislation?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question. Obviously our directions paper started the conversation in relation to the planning reform agenda. As I mentioned, we will also be consulting on the draft bills when they are finalised and released by the department. In terms of extending the hand of friendship to the member for Clayfield, I have also written to him and said, 'Let's get together and talk about planning reform for the future,' and I hope he takes me up on that offer.

In terms of direct engagement so far, we have had 550 people participate online in terms of the planning summit. There were 42 submissions received to date to the directions paper, and we have had 11 targeted local government workshops across the state. It is just the beginning, and I hope we get a lot more feedback on the draft bill so that we make sure we deliver a planning system and planning legislation in Queensland which all of the state feels they are part of which can be developed in their community so they can use it in their community.

Mr BUTCHER: I refer to page 11 of the SDS and the delivery of high-quality infrastructure policy and planning activities. What planning grounds were used as the basis for partially approving the Cedar Woods development?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question. Like government IT systems, this has been a bit controversial of late. The development in Upper Kedron is a significant development. For such a significant development, it did attract a lot of community concern. On 31 July I announced that I partially approved the development of 480 residential lots on the site and signalled my intent to direct council to update its planning scheme. My decision was based on comprehensive independent expert advice which found that council's original approval of 980 lots was in clear and significant conflict with the planning framework under the local scheme. In fact, independent expert advice from well-respected town-planner Mr Greg Ovenden—and I will quote it because it is important that the committee hear this—states—

I do not believe it can be demonstrated that Brisbane City Council acted reasonably in their assessment of the application in accordance with the IDAS process. In particular, I believe the infrastructure agreement should not have been used as a ground for approval as it pre-empted the development application and was never assessed against all of the relevant planning instruments. It was also not subject to any public consultation. I also believe that by council entering into this agreement before the development application was even lodged undermines the integrity of City Plan 2000 and City Plan 2014.

From a first principles perspective, I have also acknowledged that further development on the site may be appropriate. The site has been fully included with the urban footprint under the SEQ Regional Plan since 2009. That means that council has had six full years to update its local plan and to provide an amendment to the city plan and it has chosen not to do that. What it chose to do is enter into a secret infrastructure agreement and then assess the application against that infrastructure agreement, not against their own local plan or the city plan. We all have a responsibility to ensure that we plan and build for the growth that the south-east corner and all of Queensland will experience over the next 15 years. We cannot do that if local councils abrogate their responsibility in relation to updating their planning schemes and ensuring there are good local plans in place that local communities have confidence in and they know exactly where the development is going.

CHAIR: I call the opposition.

Mr NICHOLLS: Talking about Cedar Woods, I might ask the acting director-general a question referring to the government's decision to call in the Cedar Woods development at Upper Kedron. Acting Director-General, did the department itself undertake an independent analysis of the Brisbane City Council's approval of that project?

Mr Johnston: Mr Chair, can I refer that question to our deputy director-general of planning?

Mr NICHOLLS: Sure.

Mr Chemello: The department did look at the issues raised in the development application. There were, in essence, three somewhat different decisions of council made within a 12-month period. The infrastructure agreement that was struck between the council and the former owner of the site indicated a development capacity of 1,350 lots. The council development decision was 980 lots indicatively, but, as the Deputy Premier pointed out, the local area plan, the neighbourhood plan, zoned only a portion of the site as appropriate for development, which is approximately 480 lots. Our assessment of that site said there were three fundamentally different views expressed by the local government on the same piece of property.

The independent advice we received from Mr Ovenden said that we were obligated to go back to council and say the approval ought to be done in accordance with the city plan or the neighbourhood plan, which is the indicative 480 lots, as per the Deputy Premier's decision, and then a direction from the Deputy Premier to instruct the council to plan and consult with the community appropriately.

Mr NICHOLLS: What did your assessment—not Mr Ovenden's assessment—of the plan, the process and the approval granted by the Brisbane City Council say as opposed to Mr Ovenden's?

Mr Chemello: I understand the question. We did not reach a definitive conclusion on the exact number of lots that would be developable on the site, but it is very clear to the department that there is additional capacity in that site for development. We did not put ourselves in the position of council to make their decision for them in that respect. The onus is on council to make its decision and its assessment. We would be providing as part of a direction our research which would indicate the traffic studies and environmental studies—the same sort of work that council should have done—and that will drive them, I would think, to a decision about the total development capacity.

Mr NICHOLLS: Is it the case, then, that your departmental advice, not Mr Ovenden's advice, was that the council decision was not outside the bounds of the local plan?

Mr Chemello: Sorry, could you repeat the question?

Mr NICHOLLS: Is it then the case that your advice—that is, the advice of the department—in relation to the approval that Brisbane City Council had given was not outside the bounds of the local plan—that is, it was within the capacity of the Brisbane City Council having considered what it had considered to give the approval that it gave?

Mr Chemello: I understand.

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, if I could address this question—

Mr NICHOLLS: We have the departmental expert here who can explain it. I think it is appropriate that we do that. I am not comfortable with the Deputy Premier doing it. My question is directed to the deputy director-general.

CHAIR: The question was to the deputy director-general.

Ms TRAD: Yes, but can I just say in terms of my announcement—

CHAIR: Well, you may say it after he is finished.

Ms TRAD: Right.

Mr Chemello: I think your view is incorrect. The decision of council to approve a development that is beyond what the city plan and the neighbourhood plan indicate—the neighbourhood plan and the city plan indicated a development of only a portion of the site. A portion of the site was zoned for potential future development. The two other portions of the site were zoned for rural land and environmental purposes. The city plan very clearly—

Mr NICHOLLS: It was about 40 per cent, if I recall correctly.

Mr Chemello: I think that is correct. The city plan very clearly says that in the current thinking of council in accordance with the city plan and the neighbourhood plan only a portion of the site is potentially appropriate for urban development. That is different from the view of the DA and different from the infrastructure agreement that was struck, but the city plan supports at this point in time the level of approval that the Deputy Premier echoed in terms of the call-in decision.

CHAIR: Deputy Premier?

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, in relation to this line of questioning I did say in my earlier statement that part of my direction was for council to update its plan to accommodate where that development may occur in the future. I have absolutely said that further development can occur on this site. Quite clearly, it was included in the South East Queensland Regional Plan since 2009 because there were development opportunities on this site. No-one is trying to suggest otherwise, but the problem exists when councils refuse to update their local plans.

That infrastructure agreement was struck five months before the city plan was released. The council had ample opportunity to engage with local councils to say that they had entered into an infrastructure agreement with the owner of the land to provide for 1,300 lots and that they were going to upgrade their local plan and the city plan. It is a policy of this government that local plans and local planning instruments have to mean something to local communities.

Mr NICHOLLS: Mr Chair, this is beginning to eat into the time. I have some more specific questions. I understand what the Deputy Premier is talking about. I haven't asked a question of the Deputy Premier. While the deputy director-general is there, I put this to you: isn't it the case that an infrastructure agreement is not a development approval and in no way overrides the legal planning process? An infrastructure agreement of itself does not constitute an approval to construct or build however many parcels or lots or houses it might be. The planning approval process is not overridden by an infrastructure agreement.

Mr Chemello: That is correct. An infrastructure agreement does not grant any development rights per se.

Mr NICHOLLS: So the existence of an infrastructure agreement does not mean or contemplate an approval to build up to 1,380 houses. It is simply an agreement that is put in place that says, 'This is how much infrastructure is needed for this amount of time or this amount of development'?

CHAIR: Just a reminder, member for Clayfield, that your question has to go to the DG and he can refer the question.

Mr NICHOLLS: I am sorry, to the acting DG if he wants to refer the question to the deputy DG. Acting Director-General, is it the state's own planning legislation that allows council to enter into these types of agreements and sets out the requirements? Is it not the case that entering into that agreement does not constitute a planning approval? Planning approval still has to go through the normal planning processes.

Mr Chemello: It is correct that an infrastructure agreement does not grant a development right. The issue in this instance is that the infrastructure agreement was struck to a fundamentally different level of density that is indicated through the neighbourhood plan and the city plan. The infrastructure agreement was not subject to public opinion. People were not aware of the existence of the infrastructure agreement. Notwithstanding that, development approval again differs from the infrastructure agreement in any case.

Mr NICHOLLS: This infrastructure agreement, for example, protected ecological and waterway corridors and transferred 90 hectares of bushland to council as part of any future proposal. That is the infrastructure agreement in relation to this one?

Mr Chemello: Again, I do not think that is quite the way to put it because an infrastructure agreement is predominantly about the infrastructure provision. It is not necessarily an instrument that you would say protects the environment and have attributes of a potential development approval that would apply to it.

Mr NICHOLLS: I will move on.

Ms TRAD: I do have to say, Mr Chair, that infrastructure agreements before development applications are approved is highly unusual. Normally development applications are submitted, assessed and approved, and then infrastructure agreements follow. The question here is why did council enter into a private or secret infrastructure agreement with the former owner of the land and not tell the locals when they consulted on the city plan or the local plan? This question has been unanswered by Brisbane City Council, and I think the local community deserves better than that. It is a policy position of this government that local planning instruments need to mean something. I am heartened by the fact that Cedar Woods has released to the stock exchange that it is very optimistic about this decision. In fact, it means it can start constructing next year in relation to the 480 residential lots.

Mr NICHOLLS: Twelve months later.

Ms TRAD: Well, your mates should have got it right.

Mr NICHOLLS: I beg your pardon?

Ms TRAD: Your mates should have got it right at City Hall.

Mr NICHOLLS: They did get it right.

Ms TRAD: No, they didn't.

CHAIR: Next question, please.

Mr NICHOLLS: Let me ask another question of the acting director-general. Acting Director-General, are you aware of any time in the past where the state has used its call-in powers to review a decision to approve a plan or a DA where the council has already gone through that full process? It is often the case that call-in powers are used if there is a conflict or if something needs to be moved along, but are you aware of any prior call-ins where a project has been put on hold after it has gone through the process?

Mr Johnston: Through you, Mr Chair, can we take that question on notice? To clarify, when you say 'in the past', what period are you talking about—at all?

Mr NICHOLLS: Well, the past.

Mr Johnston: Okay.

Mr NICHOLLS: The question is: can you advise of any previous planning decisions that have been approved by a local government that have been called in by a planning minister in those circumstances?

Mr Johnston: The deputy director-general has indicated that he can answer that now.

Mr Chemello: Yes, there are previous development approvals that have been issued by a council. Occasionally these are taken to court, and in those instances there has been a call-in made.

Mr NICHOLLS: But this has not been taken to court.

Mr Chemello: No, but the decision had been made by council—

Mr NICHOLLS: That is a different circumstance, isn't it?

Mr Chemello: The answer to your question is that if there are development approvals that have been issued by a council and then subsequently called in, yes, there are precedents to that. I will take it on notice and provide a list.

Mr NICHOLLS: Where they have not been challenged in court, because they are challenged in court for a variety of reasons.

CHAIR: Deputy Premier, are you happy to take that on notice?

Ms TRAD: Yes.

Mr NICHOLLS: Just while we are on the planning regime, and this question is again to the acting director-general: referring to the *Better planning for Queensland* directions paper released on 25 May, can you advise us when work on that directions paper started within the department? For example, how long before it was released on 25 May had work on that directions paper started? Was it a week, a month?

Mr Johnston: Can I once again refer that to the deputy director-general.

Mr Chemello: It really was the end result of some work that we started after the change of government. It was an explanation to the new government about the essence of the planning reform agenda of the previous government, and taking on board the policy positions that we were aware of with the new government and translating those and saying these are the directions we thought of the new government, and this was a paper that was going to go to the Deputy Premier. So that started February, March.

Mr NICHOLLS: Perhaps I might be a littler clearer in my question. When was the decision to say, 'We will now issue a directions paper,' and how long did you have between being given that instruction and it being issued on 25 May?

CHAIR: Who is that question to?

Mr NICHOLLS: Again to the acting director-general.

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, if I can just say, he cannot answer that question because it was initiated by my office.

CHAIR: Fair enough.

Ms TRAD: The deputy director-general is right. We had long periods and briefings in relation to the planning reform process and what we were thinking about doing in that space. The decision to issue the directions paper was made by my office and developed largely by my office.

Mr NICHOLLS: So was it done by your office or was it done by the department?

Ms TRAD: The department had input but we largely controlled the directions paper development.

Mr NICHOLLS: So it was out of your office?

Ms TRAD: Yes.

CHAIR: Time has expired. I call the member for Gladstone.

Mr BUTCHER: I refer to page 34 of the SDS and the significant works underway within the Northshore Hamilton priority development area, including the Civic Park. What is the Queensland government doing to support this development?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question and I know it is an issue that is very close to the member for Clayfield's heart so I am sure he will be—

Mr NICHOLLS: It would have been nice if you had invited me down to the announcement.

Ms TRAD: I am sorry, Tim. I will do better next time. Obviously, this is a project that has existed across a variety of governments. It is very important in terms of meeting the urban growth challenges of Brisbane and the South-East Queensland corner. On 26 May 2015, I announced that Leighton Properties would be the preferred private developer for two hectares of state owned land at the Northshore Hamilton PDA. This is the next exciting stage of the transformation of the underutilised state owned land and Queensland's largest waterfront urban renewal project. The development of Hamilton Northshore was first initiated by Labor through the ULDA, as I mentioned previously, and since then the project has won numerous awards, including the 2015 Property Council of Australia/Rider Levett Bucknall Innovation and Excellence Award.

Leighton's \$400 million proposal will deliver more than 700 one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments across five towers. The design team consists of notable Malaysian architect Ken Yeang, whose firm has received over 70 awards in 25 years, including the Prince Claus Award in the Netherlands and the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in Geneva. Mr Yeang's design intends to deliver a world-class, subtropical eco master plan of buildings in the park. Importantly, the project will open up approximately 200 metres of prime river frontage not previously accessible to the public and feature a vibrant waterfront civic space. This project will support approximately 500 jobs during the construction phase and create space for new businesses in retail and service as part of the mixed use development. This precinct will become one of the key civic spaces in Northshore from project revenue and at no cost to taxpayers.

The government is also investing \$20 million for the construction of the public realm and community infrastructure, which will also include a 25-metre public swimming pool and parkland. Overall, the government will invest a total of \$400 million into the infrastructure within the Northshore Hamilton PDA. Northshore is a significant development for Brisbane as well as Queensland. As I said, spanning more than two kilometres along the Brisbane riverfront and covering 304 hectares, this is a \$5 billion development that will become an iconic place in our river city.

CHAIR: Deputy Premier, I refer to page 44 and NDRRA funding. Can the Deputy Premier please outline for the committee what the federal government's proposed changes to NDRRA funding would mean for Queensland communities?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question. Mr Chair, I understand that you are no stranger to natural disasters in your local community. The NDRRA was put under review by the Productivity Commission by the current Abbott government. There were some significant recommendations that were made—severe recommendations, rather—to the NDRRA funding arrangement, including significant decreases in the funding allocated from the Commonwealth. This was obviously very concerning not only to us as a state government but also to many local councils right across Queensland. In fact, some of the modelling that we have done shows that, if all of the Productivity Commission's recommendations had been implemented, Queensland would have had to have found an additional \$5 billion for the disasters that have occurred from 2010 to 2014. That is \$5 billion that Queenslanders would have been out of pocket, and that is not just to be picked up by the state but also by local councils in terms of the reconstruction effort.

Even a five per cent reduction in the Commonwealth contribution would be significant for many local councils. For example, in 2010, floods hit St George in the Balonne Shire Council. If a five per cent reduction in the Commonwealth funding under NDRRA had been in place at that time, then St George would have had to have found \$6 million from their entire rate base to basically reconstruct the town after the floods. That \$6 million actually represents one year's revenue from rates collection for the entire Balonne shire, so any reduction in the NDRRA will have a significant impact, particularly for local councils. I want to assure the committee, as I have done in parliament in the chamber, that the Palaszczuk Labor government will advocate very strongly against any position in relation to changes to the NDRRA that will see Queensland worse off.

CHAIR: Thank you. I refer to page 34 of the SDS. Can you please provide further information about the work being undertaken by Economic Development Queensland?

Ms TRAD: I thank you, Mr Chair, for the question. Economic Development Queensland promotes economic growth through its development activities across the residential, urban renewal and industrial sectors. EDQ was established by the former government, the LNP government, but it was built largely on the success of Labor's Urban Land Development Authority. EDQ undertakes development activities and infrastructure provision for the sale of land that is de-risked, is appropriately serviced and has certainty of infrastructure and development rollout.

In 2014-15, EDQ achieved a \$137.2 million figure in land sales and as a result generated \$449 million in private sector investment, creating more than 1,100 job opportunities. The regional and residential arm of EDQ settled over 300 residential lots across its eight projects in the south-east and regional Queensland, generating \$63.1 million of revenue and \$123 million of private sector economic development and supporting over 300 job opportunities. This included projects in Moranbah, Blackwater, Fitzgibbon, Townsville, Gladstone, Mackay and Roma.

EDQ is also managing four key urban renewal projects at different phases throughout South-East Queensland. These projects generate \$9.5 million in revenue, \$200 million of private sector economic development and supported 500 job opportunities. Now, \$64.7 million in revenue was also generated by the industrial team, attracting industry to Queensland and creating and retaining jobs. This enabled private sector investment of \$126 million and supported 337 job opportunities.

EDQ has also continued the implementation of a number of activities in the Regional and Resource Towns Action Plan, including the delivery of trunk stormwater and sewer works in the Maranoa Regional Council area and the progression of the resolution of native title across areas of Isaac, Western Downs and Central Highlands regional councils to support regional Queensland. EDQ, and the ULDA before it, have received numerous awards for planning and development excellence. Moving forward, I want EDQ to continue playing an important role in delivering exemplary development, showcasing great urban designs, sustainability excellence and innovative housing products.

Mrs LAUGA: I refer to page 11 of the SDS and the establishment of Building Queensland. Can the Deputy Premier please explain how Building Queensland will support economic development?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question and I am very pleased to be able to talk about Building Queensland, which was a key election promise by the Palaszczuk Labor government. Building Queensland will be an independent agency to advise government objectively on best infrastructure projects and investments. It will ensure only projects that demonstrate clear economic fiscal or service delivery benefits or those that have regional significance will be considered. It will ensure that

investment is well directed in infrastructure projects, making sure that there is significant economic benefit in the form of increased productivity, jobs generation, training and skills development opportunities. Building Queensland will be a key mechanism in the realisation of these benefits.

I am pleased to say that the Acting CEO of Building Queensland, Mr David Quinn, is here. We have moved quickly to establish Building Queensland. The bill is currently before the House, so I will not talk about it at all, but I will say that it is the government's intention that this bill passes the House by the end of the year so we can ensure that Building Queensland is up and running as a statutory organisation.

Some of the key activities that have been completed or well progressed by Building Queensland already include: drafting of the bill and undertaking tasks to support subsequent consideration by the parliamentary committee; identification of suitable office accommodation, relocation and set up of office; finalisation of the budget, organisational structure; the commencement of resourcing of personnel; and the significant level of consultation with agencies, statutory bodies, industry associations and interstate peers in the private sector. They have also been drafting and consulting on the business case cost-benefit analysis, social benefits and prioritisation frameworks of some projects already. They have ensured the establishment of the necessary statutory body requirements. They have also ensured the establishment of guidelines and a project governance model to assist in managing the engagement between Building Queensland and the relevant agency for assisting or leading the projects.

The establishment of an advisory board is progressing, and I have to say I am very heartened by the fact that we had over 190 applications for some four positions on the advisory board to Building Queensland. I think that indicates there is a significant interest out there in terms of the private sector on what we are doing in this space. There has been a big tick of approval around our Building Queensland model. We are very, very keen to make sure it is up and running by the end of the year—because when Building Queensland is up and running hopefully we can mitigate against projects of vanity like the former premier's tower of power, No. 1 William Street, that had no business case and was resoundingly criticised by the Auditor-General. We need to make sure that when we invest taxpayers' funds they are invested for the benefit of Queenslanders in terms of economic growth and job creation and not for the vanity of politicians.

CHAIR: Thank you, Deputy Premier. I call the opposition.

Mr NICHOLLS: Thank you, Mr Chair. I will just return quickly to the Cedar Woods planning issue that we were discussing previously in relation to *Better planning for Queensland*. Deputy Premier, having released the advice from Mr Ovenden, will you commit to releasing the advice you received from the department in relation to the Cedar Woods project?

Ms TRAD: Member for Clayfield, thank you for the question. Under the Sustainable Planning Act, I am required to table in parliament my decision and all of the reasons associated with my decision, and I will be doing that within the legislated time frame.

Mr NICHOLLS: Just for clarity, will that include then the independent advice that we were talking about from the deputy director-general to you?

Ms TRAD: Of course. The advice from my agency will be referenced, as well as the independent expert advice.

Mr NICHOLLS: Referenced? Or will the report itself be provided?

Ms TRAD: All material will be tabled.

Mr NICHOLLS: All material will be provided?

Ms TRAD: Yes.

Mr NICHOLLS: Okay, I take that. I turn now to Building Queensland and the activities that are being proposed there and Mr Quinn's position. Chair, this might be appropriate to the acting director-general or perhaps Mr Quinn. How many staff does Building Queensland currently have? How many projects is Building Queensland, which has been established since 20 April, currently working on?

Mr Johnston: Through you, Mr Chair, I can answer the first part of that question. Currently Building Queensland has 14 staff out of a potential final number of 30. In terms of the projects, I will defer to the interim CEO of Building Queensland.

Mr NICHOLLS: Sorry, defer to—

Mr Johnston:—the interim CEO of Building Queensland to answer that question.

Mr NICHOLLS: Yes. How many projects have been referred to him and is the department working on them?

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, can I just say in relation to the referral of projects to Building Queensland that Building Queensland has not yet been established as a statutory organisation. We will start referring projects when they are actually established as a statutory organisation. Building Queensland has been doing some work in this space in relation to identifying projects that are currently within the government's various agencies' portfolios that they are leading. Building Queensland has already started doing some of the desktop work associated with those projects. In terms of actual referrals, they are yet to happen because the agency has not been established as a statutory organisation.

Mr NICHOLLS: In light of that response from the Deputy Premier, perhaps I can put this to Mr Quinn. This comes from a transcript of Monday's committee hearing. Mr Hart, the current Deputy Chairman, stated—

Mr HART: I want to get this absolutely clear in my mind. I understand that you are going through the process of setting up, but if the minister were to direct you to get involved in a project today there is nothing to stop you from getting involved in the project; is that correct?

Mr Quinn: No, I do not believe there is.

That repeated an earlier statement made by the acting CEO that there was nothing to prevent Building Queensland, established under administrative orders, from having a project referred to it. Mr Quinn, is it the case that you have had no projects referred to you, yet you have 14 staff?

Mr Quinn: That is correct. We have 14 staff.

Mr NICHOLLS: Okay, that is fine.

Mr Quinn: We are preparing to establish—

Ms TRAD: But can I say for a fulsome answer, what Building Queensland has been asked to do is to assess projects that are currently, as I said before, across Queensland government agencies to start desktop assessment and advise my office. Can I say to the member for Clayfield I think that it is a very long bow for you to be drawing that this agency has been doing nothing. What they have been doing is working at my direction to assess, to have a look at those projects—\$50 million plus, \$100 million plus—and to bring some advice to me as infrastructure minister.

Mr NICHOLLS: In fact, the aspect of it doing nothing was not actually what I was going to raise, Deputy Premier; those are your words. You might have asked that question had I been in that position, but I was not. It is the case that now you have been—Mr Quinn, if I can—through you, Mr Chairman, through the director-general to Mr Quinn—

CHAIR: Through the director-general.

Mr NICHOLLS:—that you have been established since 20 April, but to date the government has chosen not to refer any projects to you such as, for example, Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 2 for you to run your eye over in relation to that project or, for example, something like the duplication of the Sunshine Coast rail? Those projects have not been referred to you in the formal capacity to cast your eye over them and do a cost-benefit analysis?

Mr Quinn: That is correct.

Ms TRAD: I might add in terms of a fulsome response to the committee—

Mr NICHOLLS: Can I ask—no, that is all I wanted to know—

Ms TRAD:—that the Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 2 business case—

Mr NICHOLLS:—Mr Chairman. I have got more questions.

Ms TRAD:—has been finalised and completed.

Mr NICHOLLS: I have more questions. I only have a limited amount of time, Mr Chairman.

CHAIR: Deputy Premier—

Ms TRAD: No, for a fulsome response, it is very important—

Mr NICHOLLS: The government had its day on budget day. This is parliamentary estimates.

Ms TRAD: No, it is actually important that there is a fulsome response to this question. The Gold Coast Light Rail 2 business case has already been dealt with.

Mr NICHOLLS: I have asked the right person, Mr Chair. I have another question to ask. I think it is really about the scrutiny of the government.

CHAIR: The question was—

Mr NICHOLLS: The question is about the scrutiny of the government.

Ms TRAD: It is all about providing—

CHAIR: Order! Next question.

Mr NICHOLLS: I do have another question, yes.

Ms TRAD:—a fulsome answer to the committee.

CHAIR: Next question, thank you.

Mr NICHOLLS: Noting the reference to coordinate Queensland input into national infrastructure forums and initiatives on page 11 of the SDS in relation to Building Queensland, can I ask the acting director-general whether the department, via Building Queensland, has written to the federal government providing input or outlining potential projects to access the \$5 billion Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility?

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, for the benefit of the committee I do not have lead on that; the Treasurer has lead on that. As I advised the committee previously, the Treasurer has written to the federal Treasurer in relation to the number of projects under the government's Northern Australia white paper that we have identified for Northern Queensland. I have already advised the committee of that and I advise the committee that the Treasurer has taken the lead in relation to infrastructure and the Northern Australia white paper response.

Mr NICHOLLS: Mr Chairman, if I can take you to page 11 of the SDS and the 2015-16 service area highlights, coordinate Queensland input into national infrastructure forums and initiatives, my question remains—this is an area covered by the SDS—has Building Queensland had any input into outlining potential projects to access the \$5 billion Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility, which has been on the table since May?

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, can I answer?

Mr NICHOLLS: My question is to the—

CHAIR: You never put it that way so I—

Mr NICHOLLS: My question is to the director-general. It was, in fact, to the director-general.

Ms TRAD: I am very happy for the acting director-general to supplement my response. In relation to the federal government's infrastructure audit and their infrastructure plan which has been brought forward, of course there has been engagement from my agency with theirs in relation to projects that have previously been identified that have been delivered, that are still on the Infrastructure Australia infrastructure list. So there, of course, has been engagement between my agency and the Commonwealth agency. I also understand that what will happen in the future is we will finalise that engagement and there will be a public release of the infrastructure list for the whole of Australia, and we are in the process of finalising that. I think the member for Clayfield misunderstands here. It is not Building Queensland that will determine the whole-of-government infrastructure plan going forward. They will be the independent infrastructure adviser to government around specific cases and they will provide a ranking or a prioritisation in terms of the pipeline. At the end of the day in terms of engagement with the Commonwealth it is the Queensland government that will continue to engage around infrastructure projects.

Mr NICHOLLS: I take it from that then the answer is no, that the government has not written to the federal government to coordinate or to access the \$5 billion for the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility?

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, again I will repeat my answer, which I have already given twice in relation to this issue. The Treasurer, Mr Curtis Pitt, has written to Mr Joe Hockey and outlined a number of key infrastructure projects to respond to the Northern Australia white paper. He did that in consultation with me. For the third time, we have written formally to the federal government in relation to our aspirations and our priorities for Northern Queensland under the Northern Australia white paper.

CHAIR: The question has been answered.

Mr NICHOLLS: Moving on, in terms of Gold Coast Light Rail—and you have made an announcement in relation to that—has that undergone a full cost-benefit analysis?

Ms TRAD: Yes.

Mr NICHOLLS: Will you release that, as you committed to do in your Building Queensland policy paper prior to the election?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question. The development of stage 2 of Gold Coast light Rail was developed by the Department of Transport and Main Roads. That business case has been finalised and I do not have plans at this stage to release it. What I have released—

Mr NICHOLLS: So it is a project of over \$100 million, it is a significant investment and you are not proposing to release the cost-benefit analysis?

Ms TRAD: What I have released, member for Clayfield, is the expression of interest process, which will finalise the dollar amount for design and construction of stage 2. This finalised dollar amount will go into the finalised EOI process and it will update it and ensure that our submission to the Commonwealth has a firm final cost in terms of delivery of stage 2. What the member for Clayfield is continuing to do, as his colleagues did earlier this morning, is to trash Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 1 and now stage 2.

Mr NICHOLLS: Mr Chairman, I am asking a question—

Ms TRAD: The LNP have never supported public transport.

Mr NICHOLLS:—in relation to a direct item of policy from the Deputy Premier's own policy paper and that is quite clearly where she says that they will 'prepare business cases and manage tender processes and contract negotiations' including the public release of a cost-benefit analysis before construction proceeds. Will the Deputy Premier release the cost-benefit analysis in relation to Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 2 in compliance with her own policy commitment and the avowed intent of the Building Queensland legislation, which she says will be brought before the House and passed before the end of the year? If not, why not?

Ms TRAD: I just do not know why they do not support Gold Coast Light Rail, Mr Chair. I just do not know why they do not support it.

CHAIR: I think you had better move on to the next question.

Mr NICHOLLS: I am sorry, I did not hear the answer. Did you say you did not support it?

Ms TRAD: No—

Mr NICHOLLS: I did not hear you.

Ms TRAD:—you did not support Gold Coast Light Rail.

Mr NICHOLLS: I am asking are you going to release the cost-benefit analysis for stage 2 of the Gold Coast Light Rail in compliance with your own policy commitment, or are you not?

CHAIR: I think the minister has answered the question.

Mr HART: What did she say?

CHAIR: Under 2.2 she can answer the question in any way she likes and I think the question has been answered.

Mr NICHOLLS: In terms of the directions paper that you issued in relation to the infrastructure plan, you talk about the plan being aspirational. Does that give any confidence or certainty to anyone that anything you promise or propose is going to be done, given that they cannot rely on you in relation to the cost-benefit analysis and the release of the documents that you committed to?

Ms TRAD: Let us be clear about confidence in the private sector in relation to infrastructure, because it was under the watch of the former Treasurer and the member for Clayfield that there was not one single infrastructure plan developed for Queensland. While the member for Clayfield was in government and was a senior member of the Newman government, the LNP—

Mr NICHOLLS: Mr Chairman, we can have an argument about those sorts of aspects of things—

Ms TRAD:—not one single plan.

Mr NICHOLLS:—or the Deputy Premier can seek to answer the question rather than avoid it.

Ms TRAD: In fact, the irony is that the former government ensured that there were statutory provisions making local councils develop local government infrastructure plans when they would not even develop one for the state themselves. In terms of infrastructure, we make no bones about the fact that we need to plan over a long-term horizon. Of course there is the four-year time period that I mentioned before and then the longer horizon view of 15 years and more. We know that when it comes to planning infrastructure, many of these projects take a long-term view such as Northshore Hamilton, as the member for Clayfield already identified—2000 he said and we are now in 2015. We know that big projects take time to deliver. That Northshore Hamilton may have been aspirational back in 2000,

but it is certainly being delivered now. If the member for Clayfield wants to assert that that level of planning, that level of prioritisation and thinking is not warranted, then he need only look in his own backyard to see the benefits of that long-term vision and that long-term planning.

Mr NICHOLLS: Mr Chairman, again through you, we have spoken about Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 2 and the non-release of the cost-benefit analysis by the government. Can I say in relation to Cross River Rail is it proposed that it be referred to Projects—sorry Building Queensland. I was harking back to happier days. Is it proposed that it be referred to Building Queensland for an analysis and a delivery of a cost-benefit analysis in relation to it, and will that cost-benefit analysis be released? That is another matter that the Deputy Premier has spoken about for which we have not seen a cost-benefit analysis.

Ms TRAD: Sorry, what are you talking about? What project are you talking about?

Mr Johnston: Cross River Rail.

Ms TRAD: Honestly, I am very happy to take the question from the member for Clayfield. If he wants to talk about the Cross River Rail and all of the planning and technical studies and all of the cost-benefit analyses associated with Cross River Rail, I am very happy to talk about that, because as we know—and the member for Clayfield probably should have been here this morning to talk about all of these transport issues. Let me say quite clearly that whatever happens in the space of Cross River Rail will certainly go to Building Queensland, and we have made the commitment that for those projects assessed by Building Queensland and their cost-benefit analysis, a summary will be provided on the website so that Queenslanders can see exactly what the benefit to the infrastructure spend we have committed to these major projects will be. That is unlike No. 1 William Street, which the former Treasurer and the member for Clayfield signed away. It was a dodgy deal, quite frankly, in relation to this. The Auditor-General found that it returned nothing to the people of Queensland. If the member for Clayfield wants to talk about a cost-benefit analysis, I would like to ask the member for Clayfield where was a cost-benefit analysis for No. 1 William Street? It did not exist. It did not exist.

Mr NICHOLLS: I will take the opportunity to ask another question. The member's colleague did ask questions about the 1 William Street project, and I did notice the conga line of ministers who lined up to say what a wonderful thing the Queens Wharf development is. The only way that the Queens Wharf development can go ahead is because of 1 William Street and the net savings to taxpayers of \$60 million a year in rent. There is a lot of information available out there. I also note that an RTI request to the government in relation to their own review of 1 William Street was refused on a lot of very interesting grounds. But let me move on.

Ms TRAD: Are you harping back to the good old days?

Mr NICHOLLS: No. I like infrastructure, but I particularly like seeing cost benefit analyses.

Ms TRAD: You should have developed one for 1 William Street. It was your responsibility.

Mr NICHOLLS: It was a hell of a lot better than the one that saw the Lady Cilento Hospital decision being made.

Ms TRAD: Oh, really?

Mr NICHOLLS: Yes, absolutely. What did the Auditor-General say about that?

CHAIR: Order!

Ms TRAD: There is more social return for those kids in Lady Cilento than there is in 1 William Street.

CHAIR: Order! You two may be having a lot of fun, but I would like the member for Clayfield to get on with his questions and I would ask the Deputy Premier to reply.

Mr NICHOLLS: I will return to a number of other issues in relation to the operation of Building Queensland. In your policy document at page 7, in relation to Building Queensland it says that 'the cost-benefit analysis will not be hidden from public scrutiny'. You mention there a summary of the cost-benefit analysis. Will you release the full cost-benefit analysis of the projects referred to Projects Queensland, or will it only be a summary?

Ms TRAD: No, of course we will, but we will not reveal any matters that breach the commercial-in-confidence aspect. Our commitment to Queenslanders is that cost-benefit analyses will be released, but we will not be providing details that compromise commercial-in-confidence arrangements.

Mr NICHOLLS: I understand that. The commitment is clearly that cost-benefit analyses, excluding commercial-in-confidence or intellectual property, will be publicly available—not just summaries, summations of it or anything like that?

Ms TRAD: Correct.

Mr NICHOLLS: For all projects that are referred to it: \$50 million for the advice and over \$100 million for the lead agency position?

Ms TRAD: For those projects that Building Queensland leads.

Mr NICHOLLS: That is only for those over \$100 million. This question is directed to the Deputy Premier or the acting DG. Looking at the total staffing level for the department on page 18 of the SDS, there has been an almost 20 per cent increase in staff compared with 2014-15; however, when you look at the employee expenses in the table on page 20, they have increased by 125 per cent. There is a 20 per cent increase in employee numbers but a 125 per cent increase in expenses for employees. Also the line item 'supplies and services' in the table at page 20 shows a 169 per cent increase when compared with 2014-15. Are we seeing consultants? What is that paying for?

Ms TRAD: In terms of an overview, it relates to a number of issues including MoG changes and also ensuring that there are provisions for continuing staff in the area of planning, for example.

Mr NICHOLLS: When you say MoG changes, the question on notice says there were no costs involved in the MoG changes.

Ms TRAD: No. In terms of staffing increases.

Mr NICHOLLS: You are just talking about the transfer of staff?

Ms TRAD: Yes. You mentioned staffing increases as well as money, but I will defer to the Director-General.

Mr Johnston: The increase in staff, as note 4 on page 18 indicates, is to do with the staff in the planning reform area. In one of her earlier answers today the Deputy Premier alluded to the fact that there are a number of planning staff that were not funded as permanent employees and that the funding for those employees ran out on 30 June. That is reflective of the fact that those employees now have funding and they have been secured for the next two to three years. In terms of the increase—

Mr NICHOLLS: Those are contract staff whose contracts were coming to an end, I assume, for a particular project?

Mr Johnston: Well, yes and no—

Ms TRAD: For planning reform and SARA.

Mr NICHOLLS: For the planning reform project.

Mr Johnston: And MyDAS. There were three components to that. In terms of employee expenses I will just need to refer to notes 9 and 14. I may need the assistance of the finance manager to answer this. Nine talks about the planning system and also the MoG. As the Deputy Premier alluded to, I think that is probably the answer. The old Department of Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience was a department of about 120. We are now a department of around 500. I will double-check.

Mr NICHOLLS: But that does not explain the increase in expenses. You have taken the costs over as well.

Mr Johnston: I will double-check that with the CFO and back to you by the end of session.

Mr NICHOLLS: It goes from \$20 million to \$46.3 million, but your staff numbers have only gone up by 20 per cent, or 66 people.

Mr Johnston: I will take it on notice.

Mr BUTCHER: I would like to refer to page 5 of the SDS and local government elections. Can the Deputy Premier please outline for the committee what your department has been doing to prepare for local government elections that are going to be held next year?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Gladstone for the question. As the member for Gladstone has already identified, and as I have referred to earlier in committee proceedings, local government elections are due on 19 March next year. As the member knows, they will be conducted by the Electoral Commission of Queensland, which was a reform that we brought in to make sure that the same standard

of administration around elections was conducted at a local council level as they are at state and federal levels in terms of having an independent statutory authority conduct those elections and not the CEO of local councils.

My Department of Local Government will be conducting seminars in October and November this year for people who are considering nominating as candidates in next year's local government elections, as I advised the member for Dalrymple earlier. These seminars will explain the role of councillors and mayors to assist them in making an informed decision as to whether or not they would like to nominate. The department has also allocated \$70,000 to conduct the seminars and develop interactive learning resources, including modified web pages, reference materials supporting 'in' sessions and remote online learning environments.

The government is committed to ensuring local government elections are run at the same high standards of independence and efficiency as state and federal elections. I know that a lot of local governments are concerned about the cost of running elections, and many have made representations to me in relation to the cost of elections conducted by the ECQ. But I am committed to ensuring that the state works with the Electoral Commission of Queensland and local councils to maximise cost savings in preparation for the elections.

We have already established a working group to identify opportunities to reduce costs and direct savings back to local governments. Representatives of the Electoral Commission of Queensland, Local Government Managers Australia, Queensland and the LGAQ are all participating in this working group. I am also aware the Electoral Commission of Queensland has invited all local governments to assist in identifying potential cost-saving options including, for example, reducing the number of polling booths and using council facilities for the establishment of polling booths. I look forward to that working group concluding its work, hopefully soon, so that local councils can get some clear direction in terms of costs that might come about through the Electoral Commission conducting local council elections.

Mrs LAUGA: I refer to page 44 of the SDS. Will the Deputy Premier please outline the plans for iconic projects in Central Queensland, and what amount of category D NDRRA funding has the Abbott government committed to since Tropical Cyclone Marcia struck the Central Queensland region in February?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question. I acknowledge the significant effect that Tropical Cyclone Marcia had on the local community and that the work that the government has done, in cooperation with the local community, the member for Keppel, the member for Rockhampton and Central Queensland councils Mirani and Gladstone in terms of responding to Tropical Cyclone Marcia, has been very important. I acknowledge that the work is still ongoing, and we are still committed to standing with the community and working to make sure that it is reconstructed and that people feel like their community and their lives have picked up and are going forward.

As the member identified, we moved quickly to establish a submission to the federal government around category D funding after Tropical Cyclone Marcia because we know that there are a number of areas that do not fit into the hard and fast categories A, B and C, and category D is a much more flexible funding category for items such as iconic projects. We know that, when communities are devastated by natural disasters, often it is the case that if you can coalesce around an iconic project—something that the community knows will leave their community a better place once it has been constructed—it has a big morale-boosting effect on the local community and it also has a galvanising effect around economic activity.

That is why, when we put together the submission in relation to category D, we were very keen to work with both the Rockhampton City Council and the Livingstone Shire Council. We know that both of these councils have some great projects in the pipeline that would have very much fitted into this category: the Yeppoon foreshore redevelopment, which is in the member's electorate, and the Rockhampton riverfront renewal project. Both of these projects came in at a significant amount of money and were part of our category D submission to the Commonwealth. Unfortunately, the Commonwealth decided to ignore those particular projects in the category D application. In fact, out of an entire category D application of \$198 million—which would have been fifty-fifty funded, 50 per cent by state and 50 per cent by Commonwealth, and the state was prepared to put up that 50 per cent—the Commonwealth came back and said they were only prepared to fund 50 per cent of \$27 million, so they were only prepared to fund \$13 million out of the category D submission for these Central Queensland communities.

I am proud that this state Labor government is responding to Central Queensland's needs, and we have made an allocation of \$40 million: \$25 million for Livingstone Shire Council to commence work on the foreshore redevelopment and \$15 million for the Rockhampton riverfront renewal project.

CHAIR: The time allocated for consideration of the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of Deputy Premier and Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade has now expired. Deputy Premier, do you have any questions taken on notice that you wish to answer now?

Ms TRAD: No, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: Do you have any comments in conclusion?

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Mr Chair. I will ensure that all of the questions taken on notice will be submitted to the committee within the time frames that the committee has determined.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the people who have been part of this process, starting with you, all of the committee members and all of the substitute members who were here today, including the member for Clayfield. I also acknowledge all the guests. I acknowledge the very hard work of all of the Public Service officials who have been part of this process. Absolutely hundreds of them have been assisting in the estimates process, and I want to put on record my thanks to each and every single one of them. I know that they have been working long and hard around the estimates committee process.

Can I particularly thank my acting Director-General who is with me here today, Stephen Johnston. Can I also thank the Director-General of Transport and Main Roads Neil Scales, who was here earlier today; the CEO of Queensland Rail Helen Gluer; CEOs Mr Frankie Carroll from the QRA and Mr David Quinn from Building Queensland; and Mr Greg Chemello, the Deputy Director-General of local government, infrastructure and planning. I acknowledge all of their efforts. I also acknowledge the work of Andrew Tulloch, who is the CEO of Trade and Investment Queensland. To the parliamentary chamber staff and Hansard: thank you for the work that you do; I very much value it. I particularly want to thank my chief of staff Matt Collins, Mark Bellaver, Erin Fentiman and all of my staff members who have worked so hard to prepare me for today.

CHAIR: The committee has resolved that answers to questions taken on notice must be provided to the committee secretariat by 12 pm on Friday, 25 August 2015. Thank you, Deputy Premier and departmental officers, for your attendance here today.

The committee will now take a break. The hearing will resume at 4 pm with the examination of estimates for the portfolio of the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines.

Proceedings suspended from 3.29 pm to 4.00 pm

ESTIMATES—INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE—STATE DEVELOPMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINES

In Attendance

Hon. AJ Lynham, Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines

Mr A Noon, Chief of Staff

Department of State Development

Mr M Schaumburg, Director-General

Mr B Broe, Coordinator General

Business Solutions and Partnerships

Mr M McKee, Chief Finance Officer

Mr R Alcorn, Director, Policy, Legislation and Coordination

Integrated Resort Developments


Mr D Edwards, Projects Chief Executive

Department of Natural Resources and Mines

Mr J Purtill, Director-General

Ms K Platt, Executive Director (Finance & Corporate Operations) and Chief Finance Officer

Mr P Harrison, Deputy Director-General, Mine Safety and Health and Acting Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health

 **CHAIR:** Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee public hearing for the examination of the Appropriation Bill 2015. I want to introduce members of the committee. I am Jim Pearce, the member for Mirani and chair of the committee. Mr Michael Hart, the member for Burleigh, is the deputy chair. Other committee members are Mr Glenn Butcher, the member for Gladstone; Mr Shane Knuth, the member for Dalrymple; Mrs Brittany Lauga, the member for Keppel; and Mr Lachlan Millar, the member for Gregory. The member for Hinchinbrook has joined us here today as well. The committee has granted leave for non-committee members to participate in the hearing. Today the committee will consider the Appropriation Bill 2015 and the estimates for the committee's areas of responsibility. I remind everyone present that any person may be excluded from the proceedings at my discretion as chair or by order of the committee. I ask that mobile phones or other electronic devices be turned off or switched to silent mode. On behalf of the committee, I welcome the minister, departmental officers and members of the public to the hearing. I ask that departmental officers identify themselves when they first speak. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Minister, if you wish, you may make an opening statement of up to five minutes.

Dr LYNHAM: Thank you, Mr Chairman, and thank you to the members of the committee. I want to share with the committee my passion for Queensland and the commitment of this government to drive the economic growth and prosperity of this state. This is why there has been \$620 million allocated in this budget to the portfolio. I know we have said it time and again, but we are about jobs. The importance of employment to Queenslanders cannot be overstated. Jobs provide incomes for families, jobs enable Queenslanders to throw off their economic disadvantage and allow Queenslanders to strive towards their aspirations. By providing jobs, we are directly assisting families and indirectly assisting communities and there are a number of exciting projects happening in Queensland right now across a range of industries which will fulfil this mandate.

Obviously some of the biggest projects in the state right now are centred on the integrated resort developments in Brisbane and the Gold Coast. Our \$5 billion tourism industry employs around 10 per cent of Queenslanders. My department has a strong focus on developing projects in the tourism industry which will add benefit to the economy and support much needed jobs throughout the state. The biggest

example of this is the recently announced Queens Wharf Brisbane development. This project, spanning nine hectares on the banks of the Brisbane River, will provide massive economic development opportunities for Queensland and create around 2,000 jobs during construction and 8,000 ongoing precious jobs. While some of the finer details are currently being negotiated with the proponent, this iconic development will feature five new premium hotels, including Brisbane's first six-star hotel, around 50 food and beverage outlets, a riverfront moonlight cinema and a Queensland hotel and hospitality school run in conjunction with TAFE Queensland. The ASF integrated resort development on the Gold Coast will boost tourism and economic development on the Gold Coast and generate thousands of new jobs during construction as well as long-term jobs and training opportunities. It is also an example of this government's commitment to temper economic development with environmental sustainability.

We are not just focused on projects in the south-east corner of the state or on the tourism industry in isolation. This government recognises that Queensland is the most decentralised state in the nation and understands the important contribution Queensland's regions make to the prosperity of this state. For that reason, we recently opened application for funds in our new Building our Regions program. This infrastructure bonanza will pump \$200 million over the next two years into regional State Development and Natural Resources and Mines projects, supporting around 600 jobs across the state and funding critical economic infrastructure such as flood mitigation projects and community infrastructure such as water treatment facilities. The importance of the regions to our state's economy cannot be overstated, and that is why we have made the decision to bring forward funding of \$100 million to this financial year instead of commencing in the 2016-17 financial year.

Manufacturing is also a priority industry for the state, contributing almost \$20 billion to the state's economy in 2013-14 and directly employing about 165,000 people. This is why my government is establishing an industry and manufacturing advisory group which I will chair. It will help position Queensland businesses so they can maximise their domestic and international opportunities in the manufacturing sector. Mr Chairman, my Department of State Development is well placed to help shape the business environment of Queensland and to expand and move into new industry sectors, creating new jobs and supporting existing ones. This will help to ensure a growing, balanced and diverse economy that creates jobs into the future.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The first item for consideration is the estimates for the portfolio of State Development.

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, one of the founding concepts of our Westminster parliamentary system is the concept of collective ministerial responsibility, also known as cabinet solidarity. Minister, as a member of the cabinet, do you have confidence in your colleague the Minister for Police?

Dr LYNHAM: That is a matter—

CHAIR: Excuse me, Minister. I want to clear this point up. This morning we had two members attempt to raise the same issue and go about it in the same way. I have had a look at the documentation where members are attempting to link issues outside the portfolio responsibilities of the person who is sitting on that side of the table. I have had a look at the documentation and I have to say that in my view it is a broad statement of the way that ministers and staff go about doing their work when they have the responsibility of a minister. There is absolutely no link between where the opposition is trying to draw on comments in a letter to a portfolio of the minister. The question is outside the minister's portfolio and just because you reference the SDS does not mean your question is relevant. I would appreciate it if you would think about rephrasing your questions so that you are talking about the responsibilities of the portfolio of the minister.

Mr CRIPPS: Very well, Mr Chairman. Minister, I refer to page 3 of the SDS with one of the service area objectives of your department being to boost business development, increase economic growth and stimulate job creation. Some of the nominated service area highlights include the Building our Regions program, which I note is a shorter, smaller and narrower version of the LNP's Royalties for the Regions initiative, and master planning processes for the ports of Gladstone, Hay Point-Mackay, Townsville and Abbot Point, which of course commenced under the former LNP government. Minister, can you please nominate any initiatives in this area of your department which have actually originated under the Palaszczuk government since 16 February this year?

Dr LYNHAM: Thank you very much for your question. I note that you have claimed a lot of initiatives as your own and I could get two very valuable public servants and have them spend a week or two looking at how many initiatives you have claimed as your own that are Labor initiatives that have been pushed through under your government.

Mr CRIPPS: Well, I have just nominated the ones in the SDS.

Dr LYNHAM: I am not prepared to waste that valuable time of public servants, whom we appreciate and value their work. I can tell you that this government is one of economic development and economic development through growth. Firstly, the Coordinator-General has declared three new coordinated projects: the White Horse Group Lindeman Great Barrier Reef resort proposal to revitalise the island; APT's Northern Territory link from Mount Isa to Tennant Creek to connect the northern and eastern gas markets—a valuable piece of infrastructure for those in the north-west, especially to those in Mount Isa; and Stanbroke's Three Rivers Irrigation Project to grow cotton for export and use cotton by-product for cattle feed—again, a valuable project to stimulate economic development in Northern Queensland.

Mr CRIPPS: Okay. I just note that they did not make the SDS. That is all.

Dr LYNHAM: The measure of a successful economy is the way it performs for its people. The Queensland government has jobs as our primary focus. The \$1.6 billion Working Queensland package is the centrepiece of our efforts to drive and support job creation across our state, providing people with the means to support themselves and their communities. Do not forget the government's \$180 million Advance Queensland initiative not only introduces a comprehensive suite of reforms designed to create jobs now and for the future but also will help support the diversification of our economy and enhance Queensland's global competitiveness—very important initiatives. Both Working Queensland and Advance Queensland provide economic foundation for the state by promoting levers to create jobs in a globally competitive environment.

This government also recognises the importance of regional Queensland, which powers the Queensland economy with more than 70 per cent of all commodity exports by value loaded at regional Queensland seaports in 2013-14. However, regional Queensland is now facing mixed global economic conditions, as you know, with resource projects largely off the boil due to reduced international demand. Drought has spread to more than 80 per cent of our state, significantly impacting on western and northern regions, while Central Queensland works its way through the impacts of Cyclone Marcia. On the other hand, the lower Australian dollar, down to around the US74 cent mark, which is a six-year low, is providing opportunities—

Mr CRIPPS: Mr Chairman, the Australian dollar is getting away a bit from the SDS.

Dr LYNHAM:—and better results for tourism and other exported industries.

CHAIR: Yes.

Dr LYNHAM: I am pleased to advise the committee that the government is bringing forward, as I said before, the Building our Regions program from 2016-17 to 2015-16. This will allow the government to fast-track its jobs agenda in regional Queensland—

Mr HART: Mr Chairman, I think the question has been answered.

CHAIR: Yes.

Dr LYNHAM:—and deliver much needed jobs to regional Queensland.

CHAIR: Minister, I think that you have covered the question.

Mr CRIPPS: We might just move to a different part of the SDS if you like, Minister, and page 6 of the SDS covers another core service area objective of your department being to assess, facilitate and deliver major projects that stimulate economic growth and job creation. Some of the nominated service area highlights in the SDS include the 2018 Commonwealth Games at the Gold Coast, the Abbot Point State Development Area and the North Galilee rail project and the Queens Wharf integrated resort development. Minister, aren't there any projects that have originated in Queensland under the Palaszczuk government since 16 February this year that were worthy of being mentioned in your department's service area highlights for the coming financial year?

Dr LYNHAM: The Coordinator-General has assessed and approved 19 major projects through environmental impact statements with a combined capital expenditure of \$82.6 billion and the potential to create 76,000 construction and operational jobs should they all come to fruition. The Coordinator-General currently has 15 active coordinated projects under the environmental impact assessment with a total capital value of more than \$24 billion and the potential to create more than 32,000 construction and operational jobs.

The Coordinator-General is leading a number of key processes supporting the Galilee Basin development, including a land acquisition program and assessing development applications in the Galilee Basin State Development Area. This includes tracking all approvals and facilitating the project.

As I said, three new projects, Lindeman Island, Stanbroke's rivers and the gas pipeline; they are all very important projects. I would not devalue these projects at all. This reflects confidence on the part of the proponents and investors in Queensland.

Mr CRIPPS: Thanks. Since we have mentioned the Coordinator-General's approvals process on a couple of occasions can I go to a question relating to page 9 of the SDS and the discontinued measures associated with the number of statutory decisions made by the Coordinator-General? The stated reason for discontinuing this measure is that it is a measure of activity measure and not a measure of effectiveness or efficiency. It has been replaced with a new measure on pages 6 and 7 of the SDS that reports the average percentage reduction in assessment time frames, which I quite agree is a relevant measure. However, percentages can, of course, be misleading in the absence of understanding the quantities being measured. Measures of activity at least indicate how much of something is actually happening. Will the minister please advise how many of the 98 statutory decisions by the Coordinator-General for the 2014-15 financial year were made between 16 February 2015 and 30 June 2015?

Dr LYNHAM: I take your point that the efficiency of projects is extremely important.

Mr CRIPPS: I agreed with that.

Dr LYNHAM: The efficiency of the Coordinator-General's office is extremely important.

Mr CRIPPS: I agreed with that.

Dr LYNHAM: That is why we have the new estimate measure. I also take your point about rough figures. I have had a lot to do with statistics over my time. I would like, if I may, refer that question to the Coordinator-General.

Mr CRIPPS: Certainly.

Mr Broe: In terms of statutory decisions that I have made since February 2015, it is 59 and we are still tracking a decision rate of over twice the historical rate. So the decision rate has been maintained. The fact that it is not in the SDS is not an indication that it is not important or we are not measuring it. But the measure of assessment times is equally important and we have reduced the EIS assessment times by 57 per cent for EISs and that progress is being maintained as well.

Mr CRIPPS: I quite agree that the measure of efficiency is important in terms of time frames. I could not agree more with that. But I would also point out, as I did in my question, that the measure of activity indicates the amount of activity actually occurring and that percentages can be misleading if you do not know the raw numbers involved. Perhaps the Department of State Development might take that on board for next year's Service Delivery Statements, because I do not think actual numbers of statutory decisions being made is unhelpful or irrelevant, as the Coordinator-General just said in his answer.

Dr LYNHAM: In the past 18 months under your watch there were hardly—I could not recall any coordinated projects under the Coordinator-General.

Mr CRIPPS: No, my question was around why the measurement of raw numbers of Coordinator-General statutory decisions had been discontinued and the effectiveness of those measures for openness and transparency and accountability of the government, which I understand is the constant refrain of the Palaszczuk government.

Dr LYNHAM: As you also know we have a very close relationship with the Coordinator-General. We have a weekly meeting where we discuss these issues.

Mr CRIPPS: My next question—

CHAIR: I am sorry, time is expired.

Mr BUTCHER: I refer to page 6 of Budget Paper No. 5. How is the government continuing to facilitate the Abbot Point Growth Gateway Project?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Gladstone for his question and I am pleased to have a question where I can talk again about important economic development in Queensland, of which the Abbot Point Growth Gateway Project is one. Ports and ports development are integral to Queensland's economic development and it should be noted that they have existed in the Great Barrier Reef for well over a century. It is a fact that the port of Abbot Point must be expanded to meet future export demand, including from proposed Galilee Basin coalmines.

Our government supports the development of the Galilee Basin and the jobs that this will create. But we will always seek to balance—and that is an important word, balance—economic and social benefits with environmental impacts. It has been estimated that Adani's Galilee Basin projects, including

the Carmichael project, could potentially provide an investment of up \$21 billion in Queensland and create approximately 9,500 jobs and thousands more indirect jobs. Expansion of the port is proposed under the Abbot Point Growth Gateway Project, which involves dredging 61 hectares of the nearly 35 million hectares that make up the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage area. To put the dredging into context, the proposed dredging area is 19 kilometres from the nearest coral community. A full environmental impact statement is being undertaken to identify and address potential impacts for the dredging works and onshore placement of dredge material required for the Abbot Point expansion. The Commonwealth government will assess the environmental impact statement in accordance with the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. The EIS will consider all potential impacts, including those associated with social and economic development, marine and terrestrial ecology and management of cultural heritage with the Juru people—a very strong and proud people whom I had the pleasure of meeting. Very soon we will be releasing the draft EIS for the full 20 days public consultation, as the Premier committed in March. Any works will only begin at the port once environmental and financial approvals have been received.

On 11 March 2015 our government announced an environmentally sound and financially viable solution to the issue of capital dredge material disposal associated with the port of Abbot Point. Where the previous government did not see any alternative to dumping the dredge material at sea other than disposal in the Caley Valley Wetlands, the Palaszczuk government came up with the solution to place the dredge material on unused industrial land next to the existing coal terminal. The previous government did not want this solution. They much preferred the idea of dumping dredge material in the wetlands or in the reef area. This is because the LNP did not appreciate the importance of the wetlands to the Great Barrier Reef or the environment in general. Our solution also meant that we could easily honour our election commitment to ban sea dumping of capital dredge material and disposal in the Caley Valley Wetlands.

I also want to reiterate here that taxpayers will not pay to expand the port. These costs will be met by the Galilee Basin developers. This is another key policy difference between the LNP government and the Palaszczuk government. The Palaszczuk government will not provide funds to deliver the rail infrastructure from the Galilee Basin.

CHAIR: Minister, I refer to page 3 of Budget Paper No. 5 and sustainable job creation. What has this government done to meet its election commitment to restore the rights of landholders to object to resource development to ensure that any economic development opportunity is sustainable?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the chair for his question. I know that he has invested in ensuring that all of the Labor Party's election commitments are implemented. This was an explicit election commitment that the Labor Party took to the people of Queensland at the last election. The Queensland government is committed to restoring community objection rights to mining developments in Queensland that had been removed by the previous government via the Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Act 2014, known as the MERC Act. In September 2014, last-minute amendments, not consulted on, to the Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Bill were introduced with the intent of removing rights to make an objection to the Land Court about a mining project. We have already taken the first step in delivering on our election commitment to restore objection rights by repealing section 47D of the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971. Introduced by the previous government, this section had the effect of preventing an objection being lodged in the Land Court against an application for an environmental authority if the proposal had been through a Coordinator-General assessment process. Commencing on 24 October 2014, section 47D was applied to all existing and newly declared coordinated projects from the commencement date.

The community called for the restoration of objection rights to mining developments, which this government heeded. The member for Hinchinbrook pointed out during the debate that, as outlined by member Smith of the Land Court at paragraph 330 in *Hancock Coal Pty Ltd v Kelly & Ors*—

... it is beyond doubt that this Court cannot recommend conditions which are inconsistent with Coordinator-General conditions.

It is not disputed that under the Environmental Protection Act 1994 the Land Court cannot recommend conditions which are inconsistent with the Coordinator-General's conditions.

It is not disputed that, under the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Land Court cannot recommend conditions that are inconsistent with the Coordinator-General's conditions. What the member for Hinchinbrook conveniently omits, however, is that under the Environmental Protection Act 1994 the Land Court can recommend additional conditions that are not inconsistent with the Coordinator-General's conditions, recommend that additional conditions added by the administering authority under the Environmental Protection Act 1994 be amended provided they are not inconsistent with the Coordinator-General's conditions or, most importantly, recommend that the EA not be granted.

Furthermore, in *Hancock Coal Pty Ltd v Kelly & Ors* in paragraph 414 on page 145 member Smith recommended either that the draft environmental authority—that was a mining lease—non-code compliant level 1 mining project permit for the Alpha Coalmine be refused or granted subject to a number of conditions related to obtaining licences to take, use and interfere with water. Amendments to the draft environmental authority related to additional water monitoring points and entering into make-good agreements with affected parties.

Land Court member Smith also quotes President MacDonald in *Xstrata Coal Queensland Pty Ltd & Ors v Friends of the Earth* at paragraphs 71 to 80 and quite clearly states that the Land Court has the power under the EP Act to recommend conditions for the EA on the same subject matter as the Coordinator-General's conditions provided they do not contradict or lack harmony with the Coordinator-General's conditions.

The member for Hinchinbrook also quoted selectively from the Land Court proceedings related to the case of *RTA Weipa Pty Ltd v The Wilderness Society (Qld)* and Department of Environment and Heritage Protection where Land Court member Cochrane said at paragraph 33, when referring to the act—

The consequence of those two sections read together is that any condition contained within a Draft Environmental Authority which is a condition required to be inserted by the Coordinator-General's report is immune from objection.

It should be noted that this statement by member Cochrane is based on a provision of the Environmental Protection Act that was removed in 2013. Therefore, this statement is not relevant to the current statutory regime under the EP Act. In this particular case, the orders do not include the recommendation of additional conditions, principally because in the findings of the Land Court the matters had been dealt with appropriately, including compliance with the Environmental Protection Act 1994.

What these cases clearly demonstrate is that the Land Court can consider objections to mining developments and recommend additional conditions that are not inconsistent with the Coordinator-General's conditions, recommend that additional conditions added by the administering authority under the Environmental Protection Act 1994 be amended provided they are not inconsistent with the Coordinator-General's conditions or recommend that the EA not be granted.

The repeal of section 47D commenced on 22 July 2015. There are other provisions in the MERC Act that have not commenced that would also limit Land Court objection rights. This includes the removal of community objection rights to environmental authority applications, the removal of community objection rights to mining lease applications and the narrowing of grounds for objections. These provisions will be addressed by the government in due course.

Mrs LAUGA: I refer to page 4 of Budget Paper No. 5 and port related commitments in the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan. There has been lots of talk that the port of Cairns is not a priority port. What are you going to do to ensure that the port of Cairns has an economic future?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Keppel for her question regarding the Cairns shipping project and what the government is doing to ensure that the port of Cairns has a viable economic future. There has been conjecture in the community that without the Cairns port being a priority port it will not be allowed to ever expand. That has been in the press. We have all seen it and members of the opposition have expressed their views. I wish to start by saying that it is simply not true. What we are doing is ensuring that the correct type of development occurs in the port of Cairns. Cairns is a wonderful port. It is a wonderful area of Queensland. Cairns primarily is internationally renowned for its natural beauty and being a gateway to the Great Barrier Reef. The tourist trade is the bread and butter of this region. Unlike the previous government, the Palaszczuk Labor government is committed to protecting the Great Barrier Reef whilst also protecting the economic future of Cairns, which is intrinsically linked to its tourist trade. A study by Deloitte Access Economics in 2013 estimates that the value added economic contribution of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage area to the Australian economy in 2011-12 was \$5.68 billion and it generated almost 69,000 full-time equivalent jobs. These figures speak for themselves. It would be a travesty to place this at risk.

The government's election commitment is not to allow the project to proceed unless there is a financially responsible plan for disposal of the dredge material. The commitment does not necessarily rule out alternate proposals within the port of Cairns that would be consistent with government policy and were financially and environmentally responsible. The original project, may I remind you, included capital dredging of up to 4.4 million cubic metres to widen and deepen the existing Trinity Inlet shipping channel. A number of options were investigated for disposal of dredge material on land and at sea. Sea disposal of capital dredge material for this project is not consistent with the Reef 2050 Long-Term

Sustainability Plan this government prepared with the federal government—together with the federal government. The Coordinator-General released the draft environmental impact statement for the project for public consultation from 20 April 2015 to 1 June 2015. A total of 193 submissions were received. The lapsing date for the coordinated project declaration was recently extended by a further nine months to 31 March 2016. On 28 July 2015 the Coordinator-General advised the proponent of the outcomes of the consultation and what additional information and therefore project changes would be needed to complete a satisfactory environmental impact statement to meet government policy. The proponent is now reconsidering the proposal with less dredging and assuming land based disposal or beneficial re-use of dredge material within port limits.

CHAIR: I call the member for Dalrymple.

Mr KNUTH: Minister, I refer to page 6 the SDS, dot point 4, which relates to the North Galilee Basin project, and I ask: will the government initiate a cost benefit analysis of building and owning the rail system in the Galilee Basin in consideration of job creation, royalties and transport haulage profit returns to the state?

Dr LYNHAM: Thank you very much, member for Dalrymple, for your question on whether this government, let me get this right, would perform a cost benefit analysis of a government owned rail line?

Mr KNUTH: Yes.

Dr LYNHAM: Let me make it clear that this government had a firm commitment in the election campaign that we would not be paying for the rail line in the Galilee Basin. We took a firm view that the rail line will be provided by private enterprise. It is up to private enterprise, therefore, to make their own decisions on the rail line and they obviously will be performing a cost benefit analysis themselves which is obviously within their own remit. We have no plans to perform a cost benefit analysis of a rail line simply because we will not be building a rail line for the proponents of the Galilee Basin.

I would like to remind you also, member for Dalrymple, that the proponents are well advanced in settling their approvals for the rail line and also in the south of the Galilee Basin, near the wonderful community of Alpha, there exists a rail line already which can transport coal into the port of Gladstone. So there already is a rail line in the Southern Galilee Basin. The rail line for the proponents I know is well advanced with most of the approvals in place with very few to go, that is the case Coordinator-General?

Mr Broe: Yes.

Dr LYNHAM: I hate to use a cliché, but it is full steam ahead as far as we are concerned. There are currently five proponents. There is still plenty of interest with private funding so we can only see this project going ahead.

Mr KNUTH: Minister, I refer to page 2 of the SDS and note the paragraph stating that the Queensland economy is currently in a period of transition. It mentions the increase in exports of LNG and I ask: recognising the strategic importance of LNG to the future of Queensland industry, jobs and economy will the government commit to investigating a gas reserve policy to promote growth for our state?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Dalrymple. Look, I understand that we are moving away from construction to production and I understand the importance of gas to a number of Queensland industries. I can state that Incitec Pivot in Mount Isa is a large gas user and the Northern Territory connector into Mount Isa will be of great benefit to that part of the state. In terms, with respect, also to the question, I would be very pleased if I could respond to that question in the next portion of this when it is the Department of Natural Resources and Mines. I would be happy to respond at that time and I can provide you with further details. Obviously the question is leading towards issues around gas reservation. I can happily discuss this with you at that time, but at this time, restricting ourselves to state development issues, the project in Gladstone is now exporting. It is going well by any standard. It has been a significant achievement. One of the greatest initiatives of the previous Labor government is the coal seam gas industry and the export industry that we have developed. We have \$60 billion plus investments. We have delivered 4,000 gas wells over 17,000 square kilometres of tenements, three pipelines, three LNG facilities at Curtis Island, \$29 billion already invested in Queensland businesses and \$550 million made available for community projects, roads, health, schools, affordable housing and training. I can certainly see where you are coming from as we move towards production. I have been out west as well and seen and toured these areas. The mayors and communities in those areas also reflect these views as we move into production.

We are looking at other areas to open for gas, the Surat Basin opening, and we have also got the Santos environmental approvals process being well advanced to add to gas supply for Queensland, also adding jobs for Queensland which will add more economic development for those regions as well. The gas story is a great story for Queensland and will continue to deliver as we enter into the operational phase. Even in the operational phase it does mean still long-term jobs for Queenslanders for the next 20 to 30 years; an ongoing investment for upstream fuel development and maintenance operations of over \$1 billion a year until 2020. We have generated over 30,000 jobs across three CSG-LNG projects. The peak construction workforce for Queensland Curtis LNG was 14,500, more than twice the forecast number of 6,700. Also in local regions as well we are supporting gas infrastructure and we are supporting the Bundaberg gas pipeline. We have committed \$15 million of funding over three years for construction of the Bundaberg gas pipeline in recognition of its importance to supporting industry and new jobs growth in the Bundaberg region. Economic modelling commissioned by Bundaberg Regional Council in 2014 estimated the regional economic impact of \$195 million and 765 full-time equivalent jobs. The Bundaberg gas pipeline will enhance the existing gas network and integrate with the Wide Bay gas pipeline.

My department, the Department of State Development, is funding the development of the pipeline and is working with Economic Development Queensland and Australian Gas Networks Limited to achieve a value for money outcome and provide for future growth of the Wide Bay gas network. Pipeline construction is expected to commence in early 2016 and be operational by January 2017 to support the planned commencement of operations at the Knauf Australian factory. My department is working with—

CHAIR: Minister, I am sorry, but I think you have moved a long way past the question. You are getting papers handed to you all the time.

Dr LYNHAM: It just shows, as we are moving from production to construction, there are still valuable gas initiatives by this government in Queensland.

Mr KNUTH: Minister, you sounded very excited by these gas developments, but we are talking about a gas reserve for the benefit of this state and the benefit of business and domestic use. So you are not ruling it out?

Dr LYNHAM: Look, I can go into Natural Resources and Mines if you like, Mr Chair, and I do know the member for Dalrymple and I am happy to take a little bit of this time with your permission.

Mr HART: We are happy with it. It is up to the chair.

Mr KNUTH: I will ask the Minister another question and he can save it for the next one. Otherwise I will miss out on my other questions.

Dr LYNHAM: I am happy to go ahead with it. I am happy to address the policy.

Mr KNUTH: Yes.

Dr LYNHAM: The Eastern Australian gas market, as you know, is undergoing a period of rapid growth and structural transformation and you have identified this. The most significant of these changes is the linkage of the Eastern Australian gas market to the Asia Pacific liquefied natural gas market. Obviously our domestic market is now intrinsically linked with the export market. Because the gas is starting to flow to its highest value use, domestic gas prices are likely to gravitate towards prices that the dominant domestic gas suppliers, the Queensland LNG producers, can afford to pay for their gas. Generally speaking, there is likely to be a tad higher prices than domestic gas producers have traditionally paid in the past when there was not that level of competition for supply. At the same time, you must remember that the easy-to-get gas—the traditional gas where we used to put a bore down in Roma and the gas would come out—that gas is gone. We cannot get that cheap gas any more. The cost of extracting a gigajoule of gas in Queensland is now estimated at \$5.50 per gigajoule. This is up from an estimated 85 cents per gigajoule back in the good old days when we had natural gas supplies available readily here in Queensland.

There are a number of commercial policy and regulatory reasons for this increase. Some large gas domestic industrial customers are concerned that they are not getting gas supply offers that are acceptable both in terms of price or in terms of contract. The Queensland government is acutely aware of the importance of stable supplies of competitively priced gas for our local power generation, agriculture, industrial and manufacturing industries, as you are. The opening of the gas market has led to a shift in gas pricing and contracting arrangements. Some stakeholders are calling for this reservation policy. But reservation strategies as in Western Australia do not guarantee lower gas prices and may lead to reduced exploration and investment in the longer term. Given the community and political problems as we are aware of in New South Wales and Victoria exploiting their gas reserves,

Queensland has an opportunity to consolidate its position as a lead east coast jurisdiction on gas supply, market development and demand issues and actions. Now, we are developing a gas action plan in consultation with industry and community stakeholders. It has a vast array of terms of reference, characterising the Queensland gas sector in terms of fully understanding our gas endowment, the economics of the endowment, identifying barriers to achieving least cost supply, be they regulatory, technical or other factors that we can drop the cost down, such as capital access, social licence or infrastructure issues, ensuring that markets have transparent market mechanisms—it is very important for the customer to be able to understand through a transparent market this is why the gas price is this—ensuring that Queensland capitalises on all possible demand opportunities such as more LNG plants, gas to liquids applications or as feedstock in the manufacturing operations. The Northern Territory pipeline is going to be a bonus as well because increased supply of the gas should have price implications where the price should come down. I am striving to get as much gas as I can into Queensland for the export market and also for domestic use of gas. If we are successful with the Northern Territory gas line I think the first town that will see that benefit will be Mount Isa.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. You have done a great job. I will go to the opposition.

Mr CRIPPS: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Minister, I refer to the answer to question on notice No. 12 in which the minister outlined some of the outcomes, results and improvements from the assessment bilateral agreement which was signed between the Queensland government and the Commonwealth government on 18 December 2014 and I note that some of these include outcomes focused conditions, fit for purpose impact assessment reports and improvements in EIS assessment time frames which currently stand at 57 per cent. Minister, would you like to take this opportunity to put on the record your congratulations to the member for Callide and the member for Glass House for their hard work in achieving these outcomes?

Dr LYNHAM: The Queensland government is committed to ensuring that the development of Queensland occurs in an environmentally responsible manner, especially in actions to the Great Barrier Reef and other World Heritage areas.

Mr CRIPPS: Go on!

Mr HART: You have run this one already, Minister.

Dr LYNHAM: I am very supportive of any steps to improve the rigour and transparency of Queensland's development assessment processes. I am saying that there is more than just approving development; you have to take into account the environment and the community—all those words that probably you are not familiar with, but we are familiar with. We do not support the one-stop-shop approach for Commonwealth government approvals and the draft approvals bilateral agreement proposed by the former LNP government. We believe matters of national environmental significance should be decided by the Commonwealth. However, improving the development assessment process with the Queensland and Australian governments working together will provide greater confidence and certainty to all stakeholders and will ensure high environmental standards are maintained. The Office of the Coordinator-General continues to work closely with the Commonwealth Department of the Environment to streamline processes and remove duplication and red tape, while maintaining the robustness of the assessments.

Mr CRIPPS: Thank you, Minister. Even if you will not congratulate Jeff and Powelly, I am sure that the Coordinator-General does. Minister, I want to take you to a project that you mentioned earlier, which is the Three Rivers Irrigation Project. I refer to page 6 of the SDS in relation to the department's role in facilitating and delivering major and coordinated projects that boost the state's economic growth. On 6 July you announced that the Coordinator-General had declared Stanbroke's proposed Three Rivers Irrigation Project in the Flinders catchment a coordinated project and that project is seeking 122,000 megalitres. A month earlier, on 4 June, you announced that more than a quarter of a million megalitres would be released for tender in the Flinders catchment in the fourth quarter of this year. Minister, can you explain the relationship between those two processes and, in particular, if you consider the water being sought by Stanbroke to be inclusive or exclusive of the water to be released later this year?

Dr LYNHAM: That is a very easy statement to make. Stanbroke will be tendering for their water, as will people on the Flinders River be tendering for the same amount of water; that is true. That is a tender process with the Flinders River. It is true that on 29 June the Coordinator-General did declare the Three Rivers Irrigation Project a coordinated project. It is the nitty-gritty, but as you are aware water allocations come under the Department of Natural Resources and Mines. I am happy to continue to talk across agencies, Mr Chair, if you would like me to continue?

Mr CRIPPS: Yes, but this is about the coordinated project that is under the Coordinator-General's office, which is your responsibility as Minister for State Development. My question was: is the water in the coordinated three rivers project inclusive or exclusive of the water that will be released through a tender process in the Flinders catchment later this year?

Dr LYNHAM: It is included. They will be going for a tender, the same as the others.

Mr CRIPPS: It is inclusive; thank you very much, Minister, for clarifying that point. That is all I wanted to know. Minister, how can it be that there can be water released in the Flinders at the same time as a coordinated project is undertaking an EIS, while the previously proposed release of the water in the Gilbert catchment has been suspended pending the finalisation of an EIS for a coordinated project, being the IFED project?

Dr LYNHAM: You would realise that the IFED project is a separate project. The IFED project commenced under your government with a secret MOU. You will also recall that we renegotiated the IFED project with another MOU that was not secret. We tabled that MOU in parliament and we also agreed to table the secret MOU in parliament, which we have done. Also, with the IFED agricultural project, we have certain safeguards that do more than the EIS. We have an independent review of the water before that can go ahead as part of the MOU, as well. You have probably read the MOU process. There are different water demands in the two catchments. That was taken into consideration as well. The demands of the Flinders are much greater than those of the Gilbert. We took the option of allowing the IFED project to have the MOU signed. They have to now progress to the EIS.

Mr CRIPPS: How do you know that there is a different demand for water in the Gilbert as opposed to the Flinders, Minister?

Dr LYNHAM: There are different allocations in the Gilbert and the Flinders, different demand for water, just on traditional water use of the Gilbert and Flinders.

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, my question actually goes to the inconsistency in the position of your department—

Dr LYNHAM: It is the Department of Natural Resources and Mines.

Mr CRIPPS: No, it is not. It is about the fact that there are two coordinated projects. Coordinated projects go through the Office of the Coordinator-General and that statutory officer is sitting on my right and your left and he is at the hearing for the Department of State Development. My question to you is: why is there an inconsistent position that the Queensland government adopts for a parallel process between an EIS for the three rivers project and the release of water in the Flinders catchment later this year, while there is a current EIS process for the IFED project in the Gilbert catchment and you have suspended and deferred the release of water that was due to occur in the Gilbert catchment at the same time later this year? Both the Flinders and the Gilbert catchments are in the Gulf water resource plan. Why is there an inconsistent approach to simultaneous EIS processes and water release processes under your government in two catchments within the same water resource area?

Dr LYNHAM: Why was there an inconsistent process in your government as well, then? Why would you sign the MOU for IFED? Why did you sign the secret MOU for IFED?

Mr CRIPPS: There was not an inconsistent approach. We intended to release that water—

CHAIR: Excuse me, Minister and member for Hinchinbrook: there is a little bit of a debate going on here.

Mr CRIPPS: Not at all.

CHAIR: That is not the way that it should be. If you want to—

Mr CRIPPS: I am trying to ask about the facts, Mr Chairman.

CHAIR: I want you to stop talking over the top of me for a minute. Minister, continue to answer the question.

Dr LYNHAM: Sure, I will. Mr Chair, these matters will be assessed through the appropriate EIS process that is being carried out, and an independent assessment process of the water, as well, with the EIS. It is not a permanent stop to the Gilbert River allocation; it is just a stop while these processes are being carried out. It is just through the MOU process that you commenced and we tidied up, plus we had an independent assessment of the water.

Mr CRIPPS: That is certainly a matter of opinion. My point is, if you can have an EIS concurrent with the release of water in the Flinders catchment, why can't you have the release of water in the Gilbert catchment concurrently with an EIS—

Dr LYNHAM: I could ask the same question of you.

Mr CRIPPS: Why?

CHAIR: You have been asked the question, Minister.

Mr CRIPPS: It is a totally inconsistent decision.

Dr LYNHAM: And hypocritical.

Mr CRIPPS: Why? I was preparing to release that water in the Gilbert catchment and I would have done so. Why won't you do it? Why are you prepared to allow an EIS to proceed in the Flinders at the same time as releasing water in the Flinders, while you are not prepared to allow an EIS and a release of water in the Gilbert? It is two contradictory positions.

Dr LYNHAM: There is an EIS happening in the Gilbert. There will also be a review of the water in an independent review of the Gilbert. These are stronger—much stronger than any MOU that you had. Our MOU is open, transparent and there for everyone to see. It is a temporary stop to the allocation while this process is underway.

Mr CRIPPS: We will move on then. I cannot get an answer out of the minister. He does not understand why his position is contradictory.

Dr LYNHAM: In your water development options you would have had stops to every river—

Mr CRIPPS: I would like to move on to the Queen's Wharf project.

Dr LYNHAM: It is absolutely hypocritical, Mr Chair; absolutely hypocritical.

Mr CRIPPS: The Queen's Wharf project is referred to on page 6 of the SDS in the department's role, particularly around assessing, approving, facilitating and delivering major projects. One of those projects is referred to, the Queen's Wharf project, which was described by the Premier in a press release, jointly with the minister, as a city changing project that would provide iconic infrastructure that would enhance Brisbane's place on the international stage. Yesterday afternoon the Treasurer and this morning the Deputy Premier attacked the 1 William Street project. Minister, can you explain to the committee how the Queen's Wharf project would be able to proceed without the 1 William Street project?

Dr LYNHAM: As the Premier was rightly saying and as I was rightly saying, the Queen's Wharf project is a transformational project for Brisbane. It will be a wonderful project for Brisbane. It will provide an extensive precinct with public spaces, 60,000 people during events, 2,000 to 3,000 construction jobs, 8,000 operational jobs, 1,100 hotel rooms with five luxury hotels, 2,000 apartments, 50 food and beverage outlets, 60 retail outlets, a bridge to South Bank. It has to be realised that Brisbane has—I do not know—pretty high vacancy rates in the CBD.

Mr CRIPPS: How would the Queen's Wharf project proceed without the 1 William Street project? To simplify it for you, what would you have done with all the people who work in the Neville Bonner Building, 80 George Street and 100 George Street if you did not have 1 William Street?

Dr LYNHAM: 1 William Street is a fact of life. We cannot go back. You made that decision. It is a fact of life. There was no business case for it, no nothing. It is the tower of power. You made that decision. We cannot turn back the clock. Let us not look retrospectively. We have to move ahead and we have moved ahead with Queen's Wharf. And haven't we done it well!

Mr CRIPPS: You could not have this city changing project without the 1 William Street project, could you, Minister?

CHAIR: Order! Time has expired.

Dr LYNHAM: I think with the depression in the economy and the vacancy rate that you have created, we probably could.

CHAIR: Time has expired. I call the member for Gladstone.

Mr BUTCHER: Thank you, Chair. I refer to page 3 of Budget Paper No. 5 and the role of facilitating private sector investment by the department. Considering the Surat rail project went nowhere under the previous government, please explain how this government is facilitating the resurrection of this vitally important project for jobs and economic development?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Gladstone for this very important question to the member's home electorate, as the Surat Basin rail will transport stock to Gladstone, be that coal or other stock. Surat Basin coals feature good energy content at low ash levels. They are a high quality thermal product

that comprises low ash, low levels of trace element impurities, often low sulphur and nitrogen contents, and generally display excellent burn-out characteristics. There are several promising major coal projects under development in the Surat Basin, mainly awaiting more attractive medium-term pricing to proceed. These projects include those being developed by Glencore, New Hope and Stanmore.

Critical to the success of the Surat Basin being successfully developed is the completion of the so-called southern missing link rail line between Wandoan and Banana. There is also an additional option to reconstruct the old Wandoan to Miles line, enabling coal companies in the West Moreton, as well as the Surat Basin, to consider the port of Gladstone for export through a connection of the existing western railway and the Moura railway systems. State development areas are declared under section 77 of the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971 to facilitate development, promote economic development, build wealth and generate jobs.

Declared in November 2011, the Surat Basin Infrastructure Corridor State Development Area is a 214 kilometre rail corridor between the towns of Wandoan and Banana. The route was chosen following an analysis of a range of geographic, social, cultural, environmental and engineering design criteria. Unfortunately, the Surat Basin rail largely was forgotten under the previous government. In December 2013, the previous Surat Basin rail joint venture partners, ATEC Rail Group, Glencore and Aurizon, announced that they had mutually agreed to terminate their exclusive mandate. In recognition of the unique nature of the exclusive mandate arrangement, private landholders and leaseholders along the proposed SBIC SDA were eligible for a one-off special ex gratia payment of up to \$10,000 for the inconvenience and disruption caused. An ex gratia payment did not affect landholders' existing rights to claim compensation in relation to the discontinued acquisition program. Compensation has been settled with 20 of the 120 properties impacted by the project, with the Office of the Coordinator-General continuing to negotiate compensation with the remaining landholders in relation to the discontinued acquisition program. In December 2013, the SBRJV announced they had mutually agreed to terminate the exclusive mandate. When the exclusive mandate was terminated, the parties entered into a memorandum of understanding that provides a limited range of rights to the joint venture, or the members individually if the joint venture is disbanded, for five years. The SBIC SDA remains in place in readiness to facilitate future development of a rail corridor.

Since coming to power, I have instructed my office and departments to hold informal discussions with all key players in the Surat. We stand ready to facilitate development of this high-quality thermal coal basin. Several of the projects are well advanced with their environmental and other approvals, and I understand are now back in preliminary commercial discussion with potential rail providers, as well as the port, including the new private Wiggins Island coal export terminal. I encourage those talks. I have been encouraged with what I have seen and our government stands ready to act to facilitate reinvigorating the export potential of this region, creating jobs and prosperity in Queensland.

CHAIR: I refer to page 6 of Budget Paper No. 5. Minister, can you please outline the progress made on the Nathan Dam and pipelines coordinated project?

Dr LYNHAM: The status of this vital water infrastructure is an important topic for discussion at this hearing, as you know. The Nathan Dam and pipeline project was originally declared a coordinated project in 2008. The SunWater project proposes the construction of an 888,000 megalitre dam on the Dawson River, 35 kilometres north east of Taroom. The power is intended to provide a long-term, reliable supply to mining, power, urban and existing agricultural customers in the Surat Basin and the Dawson-Callide subregion of Central Queensland. The project includes a 149-kilometre underground pipeline that will extend from the proposed dam through the Surat Basin to Warra. The proponent has been preparing additional information for the environmental impact statement since 2012.

The key issue preventing progression of this project is potential impacts on the boggomoss snail. I can advise that the Australian government has commenced a review of the national species recovery plan for the snail. The review was initiated after SunWater conducted further field studies as part of the EIS process on the population, its distribution and habitat. It requested the review in light of this information.

This is another project that will benefit from the resurrection of the Surat rail line. As mentioned in the previous answer, the Surat rail line project will increase the economic viability of mines in the Surat Basin, which will also strengthen the economic viability of the Nathan Dam which has been earmarked as a source of a reliable water supply to the mining industry. They go hand in hand. The government will continue to work to facilitate these important projects to ensure jobs and economic growth for regional Queensland, while striking that fine balance between economic development and the environment.

CHAIR: I refer to page 2 of the SDS at dot point 2 of the departmental overview. How is the government building confidence and certainty in the resource community?

Dr LYNHAM: In Aurukun?

CHAIR: You know what you are talking about. So do I, but I am just testing you.

Dr LYNHAM: I visited Aurukun last Saturday at the invitation of the mayor, Dereck Walpo, to participate in a community meeting on the Aurukun bauxite project. The meeting was chaired by the mayor. As well as me, other prominent speakers were the chair of the Ngan Aak-Kunch, NAK board, Mr Jonathon Korkatain, and my new DG, Mr Michael Schaumburg. The meeting was well attended. The NAK board was in attendance as well as several elders and traditional owners. I am determined to work cooperatively with Glencore, the NAK board and the Aurukun traditional owners to deliver the Aurukun bauxite project and the economic opportunity and jobs it will provide.

The history of restricted area 315 is long and checkered one, going all the way back to 1975 with, firstly, Pechiney and then Chalco. I really valued the opportunity on Saturday to hear directly from the community and to assure the community face to face that the government wants to see them gain immediate and continuing benefit from the development of Aurukun's bauxite. I also wanted to tell the community that the government has had independent legal advice. The competitive bid process will not be reopened. Glencore will proceed.

As I told the meeting, consultation and communication is critical and the government is also prepared to assist the NAK board to build its capacity to represent traditional owners. I want to continue to talk to the community about what they want from the project. I have committed to returning to Aurukun to maintain that dialogue. It is important that the community asks for what they want of this project and has control of this project.

One of the clear take-outs I got from Saturday was that the people of Aurukun are now ready and very keen to move forward. The government recognises the challenges in developing the Aurukun bauxite project and Glencore is well placed to deliver this important project. The next stage for the project is for the Department of Natural Resources and Mines to consider Glencore's application for a mineral development licence. Lodging this application is the first of a number of milestones that Glencore must meet.

Other binding milestones in the Aurukun development agreement will ensure that Glencore continues to progress work on the feasibility studies and environmental impact assessments. This work will have positive benefits for the wider community and the state as the project proceeds. Glencore must also work with the Aurukun Shire Council and local service providers to develop business and employment opportunities for the local community during the mine development phase.

My highest priority will be to ensure that this development delivers genuine outcomes for both the community of Aurukun and the wider region. The government is also working closely with the Aurukun Shire Council and traditional owners to ensure that the Aurukun community is ready to take advantage of the economic opportunities that development of the resource will bring. As with any other mining project, I expect that Glencore and the native title parties will negotiate in good faith to reach an agreement.

Mr CRIPPS: Earlier in the estimates hearing you mentioned the legislation that you rushed through the parliament during the budget sitting in July where you amended the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act to remove section 47D.

Dr LYNHAM: At least we had a debate. That is more than what I can say when you rushed it through.

Mr CRIPPS: Despite the fact that you rushed it through—declared it an urgent bill and declined to have it referred to a committee for scrutiny and all the other things which are in the interests of accountability and transparency, which is your constant refrain—

Dr LYNHAM: Do you want to read a statement or something like that?

Mr CRIPPS: It was a response to an interjection. On a serious note, I note the minister's public statements subsequent to that bill being urgently fast-tracked through the House, notionally to satisfy the urgent demands of a number of petitioners in a non-conforming petition that was tabled the same day, including one Mr Broccoli Broccoli, that he would like to see time limits placed on objections to the Land Court. That was reported as your public statement. Minister, are you able to advise the committee if it has dawned on you what has happened here and what you have done? Do you regret your actions in the parliament during the July sitting?

Dr LYNHAM: We regret the actions that the previous government took to restrict people from having objection rights. Stripping away people's objection rights is not the way forward. Taking away their objection rights simply creates angst in the community. There is no support for the mines because you have a group that is shut out of the room. That is no way to progress with mining development in this state in a balanced way—a way that takes the environment and the community with us.

The way forward, as we see it—and I have written to Attorney-General already—and to make the process more efficient is to decrease mining approval times. We see this as the best way to move forward. We should allow people to object. It is their right to object. We have made statements about that—and I do not detract from those statements. I feel we should make the process more efficient within the court system—and I have written to the Attorney-General to initiate discussions around that and how we should propose to do that.

Your method, and I counsel your federal colleagues on this, of restricting objection rights is not the way forward. We are an open and democratic community in Queensland and in Australia. Restricting people and ripping their rights away is hardly the way we should go as a democracy in Queensland or Australia. Making processes more efficient is the way forward. I am taking a balanced approach to this. I have a resources community round table coming up. This will be an agenda item. We will discuss how to progress this.

Mr CRIPPS: I will go to what the Commonwealth Attorney-General said yesterday when he announced that the federal government will move to protect Australian jobs by removing from the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act the provision that allows radical green activists to engage in, what he described as, vigilantly litigation to stop important economic projects. The Commonwealth Attorney-General described section 487 of that act as a red carpet for radical activists who have a political but not a legal interest in a development to use aggressive litigation tactics to disrupt and sabotage important projects. Are you saying that you do not support the Commonwealth government's efforts to reduce these impediments to economic growth projects?

Dr LYNHAM: That specific matter is a matter for the Commonwealth. That is up to the Commonwealth. I can say in principle that I support the right of the community to object to these mining ventures. It might not be the person directly adjacent to the mine. Further down stream people can be impacted by a mine. I support the community's right to object. We are a democratic society. That specific matter that you brought up is a matter for the Commonwealth.

Mr CRIPPS: On a lighter note, has Mr Broccoli subsequently contacted you to thank you for the swift action that you took in relation to the non-conforming petition that was tabled in the parliament during the July sitting?

CHAIR: Was there a question there?

Mr CRIPPS: Has Mr Broccoli contacted the minister to thank him for his swift action in relation to the non-conforming petition that was tabled in the House during the July sitting?

Dr LYNHAM: I can answer that with the respect it deserves, Mr Chair, but I feel we should just move on.

Mr CRIPPS: It is very interesting that the minister is dismissive of the point I just made. While I might have done it with some mirth, the fact is that during the debate in the House the minister moved for that bill to be declared an urgent bill and move through the House during that sitting week and subsequently during the second reading debate on that bill that the minister relied, as a justification for acting swiftly, on the large number of signatures on that non-conforming petition. *Hansard* records it in black and white. I am afraid I spent some time during the second reading debate on that bill making it clear—

CHAIR: Can I get a question?

Mr CRIPPS: Does the minister regret what he did in the July sitting of parliament because obviously the non-conforming petition was not representative of what he said it represented. He has made statements subsequent to the bill going through the House that he thinks there should be time limits put on Land Court proceedings for objections. Do you regret what you did, Minister?

Dr LYNHAM: Should there be time limits on questions?

CHAIR: It took him a long time to get to the point. Hopefully it does not happen again. It is up to you now whether you want to answer that question.

Dr LYNHAM: The key reason for reforming section 47D was not a non-conforming petition; it was an election commitment. It was an election commitment well before we had the non-conforming petition. It was a non-conforming petition introduced by the Speaker and not me. There are always going to be anonymous petitioners on a non-conforming petition and probably on a conforming petition.

Mr CRIPPS: But this is the modus operandi of these green activists, is it not? You relied on a non-conforming petition—

CHAIR: Member for Hinchinbrook!

Mr CRIPPS:—to support your argument that the bill should be declared urgent and proceed through the House.

CHAIR: Member for Hinchinbrook!

Mr CRIPPS: Contrary to the normal—

CHAIR: Member for Hinchinbrook!

Mr CRIPPS:—proceedings of the House—

CHAIR: If you keep going I will think of another line to use.

Dr LYNHAM: The key reason that section was repealed was that it was an election commitment. It is as simple as that.

Mr CRIPPS: That is not what you said during—

CHAIR: Do you have another question or I will move on.

Mr CRIPPS: I am trying to establish the validity of the processes that occurred in this parliament. I am trying to get to the core of why the minister has, subsequent to so passionately and so quickly moving a piece legislation through the parliament—and the minister referred to this matter when answering a question from you, Mr Chair—

CHAIR: I have asked you to ask a question.

Mr CRIPPS: I am trying to get to the heart and the veracity of this issue.

CHAIR: Because you are ignoring me I am going to ask the member for Gladstone to ask a question.

Mr BUTCHER: I refer to page 4 of Budget Paper No. 5. This is a very passionate issue for my electorate. How has the Palaszczuk government protected the potential economic growth of the Gladstone port while also protecting our Great Barrier Reef?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Gladstone for the question. He is a great supporter of his local community. What a great supporter of the local community he was prior to being elected. It was certainly a pleasure to visit Gladstone on a number of occasions. Your reputation certainly preceded you even before becoming a member of parliament.

The port of Gladstone is Queensland's largest, multicommodity port and the world's fifth largest coal export terminal. For these reasons there is no question about the port of Gladstone being a master planned port. As I mentioned earlier, there are only four ports that will be master planned, and work has commenced on the master planning of Gladstone port. A proposed port master planned area boundary for Gladstone has been released for public comment along with the draft guideline for determining a master planned area boundary. A master planned area boundary can include protected areas. It is intended that the extent of Curtis Island included in the proposed boundary for Gladstone will be consistent with the extent included in the Gladstone state development area.

As it is such a busy port, increasing development pressures and demand for access means the ability of the port to handle high numbers of vessels is limited by the shipping channel depth and lack of passing capacity in the one-way channel. For this reason, the Gladstone Ports Corporation proposes to duplicate the existing Gatcombe and Golding Cutting shipping channel to accommodate more shipping traffic.

The project is a declared coordinated project undergoing an environmental impact statement. The project involves upgrading infrastructure at the Port of Gladstone including dredging for a nine-kilometre long channel to a depth of 16 metres and a width of 200 metres, investigating locations for disposing of approximately 12 million cubic metres of dredge material, installing new navigational aids for the channel duplication and relocating existing aids.

It goes without saying that the project has to take into account the requirements of the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan. Sea based disposal of capital dredging material is not allowed in the waters of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage area. In the recent past the Port of Gladstone has successfully utilised material from capital dredging projects to create valuable port land. I expect the proponent would now seriously examine similar beneficial re-use opportunities. If the project proceeds, it would create approximately 100 valuable jobs for Gladstone during the construction phase and 20 operational jobs.

The environmental assessment process will investigate potential water quality and marine impacts within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, the composition of dredge material, beneficial re-use options and impacts associated with disposing of dredge material. The project was initially estimated to cost \$400 million, assuming sea based disposal of dredge material. The additional cost for land based disposal of dredge material is currently being investigated. Our government continues to support sustainable economic development in the Great Barrier Reef.

CHAIR: I refer to page 6 of Budget Paper No. 5. Can the government provide an example of a recent coordinated project where additional conditions relating to our election commitment were enforced?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the chairman for his question. Yes, I am pleased to take the opportunity to talk about how we have delivered on our election commitment to create strong and sustainable resource communities across Queensland. One such significant project where additional conditions have been set in place in accordance with election commitments is the Red Hill mining project. Many of these conditions are set out to address commonly experienced social issues that impact on resource communities. Under these new conditions stipulated by the Coordinator-General, employment opportunities will be available for locals who reside in Moranbah which previously may not have been the case. Unlike the previous government, we are delivering on these commitments. We have commenced a review into social impacts in FIFO resource communities, and the Red Hill project is just one example of our commitment to implementing these commitments.

On 4 June 2015, the Coordinator-General approved BHP Mitsubishi Alliance's Red Hill mining project and released his environmental impact statement evaluation report. The project involves a new underground coking coalmine with a yield of 14 million tonnes per annum and the expansion of two existing coking coalmines—Broadmeadow mine and Goonyella Riverside mine. The project will create 2,000 construction jobs and 1,500 operational jobs. The project is located in the Bowen Basin approximately 20 kilometres north of Moranbah and 130 kilometres south-west of Mackay. All predicted impacts of the project were addressed in the EIS and conditions set to avoid, mitigate or offset these impacts including groundwater, ecology, surface water, land impacts, traffic and transport, noise, air quality and social.

The evaluation report imposed stringent conditions in accordance with new workforce management principles. The principles require that every reasonable opportunity must be provided for local workers to be employed on the project without having to enter into a fly-in fly-out arrangement. The principles are: anyone must be able to apply for a job, regardless of where they live; provided they can meet the requirements of the job, people must have a choice of where they live and be able to apply for jobs in the mine; the percentage of fly-in fly-out must be less than 100 per cent; a thorough audit of all existing housing capacity must be undertaken before the project starts—to support those who wish to live locally, the proponent must ensure the availability of housing accommodation that is fit for purpose and will make optimal use of the existing housing capacity; the proponent must thoroughly assess its workforce requirements and plan to accommodate the likely number of workers who may live locally; social impacts associated with the local workforce in relation to local housing, services and infrastructure must be identified and mitigated in consultation with relevant local and state government service providers; the proponent's social impact mitigation measures should support regional towns in pursuing opportunities to ensure communities are strong and sustainable and they are attractive places to live and work.

The proponent is also conditioned to provide a detailed operational workforce management plan to the Coordinator-General for approval by the end of 2015 which must address the principles and the outcomes of the Queensland parliament's inquiry into fly-in fly-out and the Queensland government's fly-in fly-out review. In addition, the proponent is conditioned to submit a social impact assessment review 12 months prior to construction and conduct bimonthly reporting on the fly-in fly-out workforce.

The principles will also be reviewed by the Coordinator-General following the completion of the government's review panel and the parliamentary committee's inquiry and the government's resultant policy position on fly-in fly-out. I am pleased with the progress made so far in terms of delivering on this commitment and I am confident that these additional conditions such as the ones applied to the Red Hill project will deliver longstanding social benefits to resource communities.

CHAIR: I again refer to page 6 of Budget Paper No. 5 under the heading 'Service area description'. How is the government delivering on its election commitment to reintroduce social impact assessments?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the chair for his question which is an area I know he has keen interest in as he has been actively involved in the parliamentary committee inquiry into the social impacts of FIFO. I am proud to talk about the progress we have made in this area since I became the minister. We have met our election commitment by undertaking a review of all 100 per cent FIFO arrangements. Unlike the previous government, who made a promise prior to the 2012 election that they would oppose 100 per cent FIFO and remove the existing approvals for 100 per cent FIFO, we are delivering on our commitments.

The review panel has consulted closely with resource communities, industry and local government bodies across Queensland to inform their report. The review panel was chaired by Mr Leo Zussino, with the other panel members being Councillor Anne Baker, Mayor of the Isaac Regional Council, Councillor Deirdre Comerford, Mayor of the Mackay Regional Council; and Dr Geoff Dickie, Chair of the Queensland Exploration Council. These panel members have between them a wide range of experience in the resources sector.

The government's review panel into fly-in fly-out arrangements reported to me on 31 July 2015. The report will be made available to the parliamentary committee of inquiry into fly-in fly-out work practices. The parliamentary committee will consider the report and the 235 written submissions and report to parliament by 30 September 2015.

I acknowledge the hard work of the committee members present here today including yourself, Mr Chairman. The Coordinator-General is working with proponents of mining projects on measures to reduce and manage reliance on fly-in fly-out workforces and to maximise local job opportunities. The Coordinator-General's evaluation report for BHP Billiton's Red Hill mining lease project, as I said, was released in June 2015. It clearly shows for the first time a whole new approach to dealing with fly-in fly-out arrangements.

The next mine to be assessed is expected to be the Macmines China Stone project. The Coordinator-General is working with the proponent on conditions that meet the government's policy as with Red Hill. The report includes conditions preventing 100 per cent fly-in fly-out for the operational workforce and requiring a detailed operational workforce management plan be provided by the end of 2015, a social impact assessment review be undertaken 12 months prior to construction and reporting every two months on the fly-in fly-out workforce.

The principles applied by the Coordinator-General in the development of these conditions will be reviewed following the completion of the government's review panel and the parliamentary committee's inquiry and articulation of the government's resultant policy position on fly-in fly-out. These proposed changes will have substantial benefits in terms of boosting employment opportunities in regional Queensland and also changing the social dynamics that exist in resource communities that have a heavy reliance on FIFO.

We will continue to work in partnership with communities, local governments and industry to introduce choice for resource sector workers who want to live in the regional communities near to where they work. I am proud of the work that has been undertaken in this space since my appointment as the minister. I look forward to continuing to drive change to provide benefits for both regional and metropolitan Queensland in ensuring that everyone has equal opportunities for employment in the resources sector.

CHAIR: I have had a request from members of the committee. When might we see that report?

Dr LYNHAM: The report is going to cabinet and then to the committee. That report will form part of your parliamentary committee report.

CHAIR: I call the member for Dalrymple.

Mr KNUTH: Minister, I refer to page 2 of the SDS and acknowledge that the department brings together the functions of the Coordinator-General, economic and regional development, major project delivery, among other things, into a strong, influential lead agency. Recognising the strategic

importance of Cairns and Mourilyan ports, will the minister explain the government's vision in terms of supporting and not adversely restricting commercial development opportunities, employment and the economy in North Queensland?

Dr LYNHAM: I had a question from another member of the panel regarding the Port of Cairns. Member for Dalrymple, thank you for your question. The Queensland government stands by its election commitments to continue to deliver trade and tourism opportunities for the Port of Cairns. The members for Cook, Mount Isa and your good self propose to amend the Sustainable Ports Development Bill to have the ports of Cairns and Mourilyan nominated as priority ports. I flew over the Port of Mourilyan just the other day. It is a magnificent harbour—absolutely magnificent. It was a beautiful day. It was interesting to see the way it is designed. It is only small though.

The opposition leader has publicly stated his support for Cairns and Mourilyan ports to be recognised as strategic ports. The four priority ports the Queensland government has nominated under the Sustainable Ports Development Bill are the same ports that the former government nominated as priority port development areas in its 2014 Ports Bill. The Port of Cairns was not proposed to be a priority port development area.

Separate to that, Cairns now has an EIS process. Now is the time for Cairns to utilise that EIS process. We have worked hard to ensure that future development opportunities for the Port of Cairns can be developed. That is why the Sustainable Ports Development Bill includes transitional arrangements protecting those projects currently undergoing an EIS process which does include Cairns.

On 10 August 2015, my director-general and the Coordinator-General met with both the mayor of the Cairns Regional Council and the chief executive officer of Ports North and agreed to re-work the current EIS for the Cairns Shipping Development Project to include a more commercially and environmentally viable option. We are a government that supports sustainable development opportunities to deliver jobs and underpin Far North Queensland's long-term future. That is why Labor went to the election with the promise not to allow the dumping of dredge spoil in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage area.

The opposition leader is quoted as saying he is very, very keen to see Cairns listed as a strategic port, but we would still need to look at it in relation to the agreement to protect the reef that was reached with UNESCO. He would also have to look to his federal colleagues as well. We have been advised by the federal government that the Sustainable Ports Development Bill, including limiting priority ports to the four ports contained in the bill, has had a material effect on UNESCO's decision not to list the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage area as in danger. The opposition leader needs to ask himself: is he willing to undo UNESCO's decision and risk the Great Barrier Reef and its associated contribution of \$6 billion annually and 60,000 jobs to the Queensland economy?

The government will not be backing down on its commitments to protect the Great Barrier Reef. As I said before, Cairns is undergoing an EIS at the present time. Our departmental officers have been up there meeting with the people involved. Ports North has a big opportunity with the EIS to consider all of the options for the development of Cairns port. I note that the Great Barrier Reef is also ranked as the No. 1 natural tourist destination in the world by *Lonely Planet* this week. Why would we want to put that in any danger?

Mr KNUTH: Minister, I refer to page 3 of the SDS relating to driving business development, economic growth and job creation, and I ask: recognising the strategic importance of creating opportunities for Queensland based industries, will the minister explain the government's vision in terms of expanding and improving opportunities for local businesses to tender for Queensland government procurements, especially in rural and regional Queensland?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Dalrymple for his question. One of the stand-outs for Queensland companies at the present time has to be the Commonwealth Games. I know your question specifically mentions regional Queensland. I would imagine there would be some regional tenders for Commonwealth Games projects. Correct me if I am wrong, Director-General, but a phenomenal percentage of Australian content is going into the construction of the Commonwealth Games facilities. It is probably a good question to ask the Minister for the Commonwealth Games when she is here, but it is a tremendous opportunity.

Queensland government procurement provides a significant market opportunity for local businesses. It is committed to providing local industry with full, fair and reasonable access to this market. The most recent version of the local industry policy, for your information, is the Queensland

Charter for Local Content. Our first local industry policy was introduced in 1999. The policy has the core objective of maximising local content through greater participation of capable local industry in major government procurement activities. A key element of achieving this outcome is the provision of full, fair and reasonable opportunity for local suppliers to tender for major government procurement opportunities.

This policy is achieving results. Twenty-eight Queensland government projects which met the threshold requirements of the charter reported a progressive spend on local content in 2014. This goes back to my first statement. This includes four Commonwealth Games projects—the aquatic centre, the Carrara sports precinct, the Coomera Indoor Sports Centre, and the Queensland State Velodrome. These 28 projects had a progressive spend of over \$1.6 billion for this period, and Queensland firms have won over \$1.35 million of this. Eighty-one per cent of the value of the contracts awarded have been won by Queensland companies.

While this is impressive, there is room to further strengthen the charter and introduce local content considerations. We have also had a tendering for government business workshop to try to encourage local businesses, especially in regional areas, something you are passionate about. We had 36 tendering for government business workshops attended by 818 participants from 591 companies. Workshops were delivered in major locations across Queensland. They were delivered in Rockhampton, Toowoomba, Townsville, Cairns, Bundaberg, Gladstone and Mackay. So the department has been out there trying to encourage people in regional areas to tender for Queensland government business. We have also been to smaller regional centres—Mount Isa, Maryborough, Gympie, Roma, Dalby, St George, Goondiwindi, Bowen, Proserpine, Beaudesert, Emerald, Biloela and Moranbah.

The workshops are four hours duration and are delivered by staff of the Department of State Development. The workshop content is specifically designed—to your point—to encourage people to tender for Queensland government business. They pay a nominal fee to attend. It is only \$50 to attend. Where available, representatives from local governments are invited to present at the workshops in order to let the people at the workshops know about not only state government projects but also local government projects which they can tender for. Winning tenders, as you know, keeps money locally and that is so important. Keeping money locally helps businesses grow and helps businesses become innovative. They hire additional staff, and this supports industry and jobs growth. Most importantly, the town grows.

The Department of State Development is out there. I would encourage business in the local community to attend these tendering workshops, and we will provide them with every encouragement. I have been approached by the member for Maryborough, who is particularly passionate, as we all are, about establishing development in Maryborough. He has made personal approaches to make sure we get out there specifically in Maryborough. The Department of State Development is keen and the Queensland government is keen, because we want money to stay in these regional communities. When something is built in a regional community we want the regional community to win the tender to build this infrastructure. I think we heard that this morning from my colleague the Deputy Premier with cyclone recovery. I think the Deputy Premier also said that we would rather have local industries and local resources out there rebuilding the community as quickly as we can after devastation.

I have one correction: I said that Queensland firms have won over \$1.35 million. That is \$1.35 billion.

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, can I take you to page 6 of the SDS and the reference to the department's role in the assessment approval facilitation and delivery of integrated resort developments in Queensland. I note that the Queen's Wharf project is proceeding, with the facilitation that project enjoyed under the former LNP government. Minister, in relation to the ASF Consortium project on the Gold Coast, are you able to confirm that under the former LNP government the scope of the integrated resort development on the Gold Coast included a cruise ship terminal and that in April 2015 the Palaszczuk government suspended that process and in doing so removed the inclusion of a cruise ship terminal from the scope of the project?

Dr LYNHAM: The ASF Consortium Gold Coast integrated resort development is an important project for this state. As the people of the Gold Coast and the mayor of the Gold Coast have told me, it is a very important project for the Gold Coast. I have also been informed by the member for Broadwater and the member for Southport that they are quite happy your proposal for filling in the Broadwater and destroying Wave Break Island sunk. We had a firm election commitment to preserve the Broadwater and Wave Break Island, and a cruise ship terminal was not possible to meet that election commitment.

Mr CRIPPS: So your answer is you can confirm that the scope of the project under the former LNP government included a cruise ship terminal. In April this year your government suspended the process and in doing so you removed a cruise ship terminal from the scope of the project.

Dr LYNHAM: Following the election of the government it was announced on 28 April that we had suspended any further progression of the IRD and cruise ship terminal process. However, the government was still prepared to work with the proponent, ASF, on potential options to advance a project within the existing IRD framework which does not include a cruise ship terminal. They are on the same block of land, the same footprint, except the footprint has shrunk.

Mr CRIPPS: But that is the difference: the scope of the project before and after was that a cruise ship terminal would not be part of the project after the suspension by the Palaszczuk government in April?

Dr LYNHAM: That is correct.

Mr CRIPPS: Yes, that is correct.

Dr LYNHAM: Coastal development on the Gold Coast should complement our environment and seek to rebuild the sustainability and not degrade the natural asset. We took the point that we are protecting the Broadwater and protecting Wave Break Island, and a cruise ship terminal would not fit with that election commitment.

Mr CRIPPS: Can the minister indicate why, when the government significantly changed the scope of the IRD project at the Gold Coast by ruling out a cruise ship terminal, a new registration of interest process was not undertaken and ASF Consortium was chosen by the government as the sole proponent?

Dr LYNHAM: The state sought to retain the investment opportunity presented by ASF on the Gold Coast. The Department of State Development has worked with ASF to identify potential options to advance a project on the Gold Coast—and this is important—within the existing IRD framework. The process was done. The process was completed. It is within the existing IRD framework. I am pleased to confirm that the government and ASF have agreed to continue the IRD procurement process on a site located between Sea World and the Gold Coast Fishermen's Co-operative which formed part of the original proposal. The next stage of the process will require ASF to prepare a detailed proposal that meets the government's objectives for the project in terms of the contractual, economic and environmental elements. That is what we are doing. We hope that in the first quarter of 2016 we will have a detailed proposal to put forward. Wave Break Island is not included, and it is still an IRD. Once we have that detailed proposal with the community and the city council there will be a detailed—you are probably not familiar with this word—consultation process which will occur. We will reach a grounding with the people of the Gold Coast on this very sensitive and very important area of the Gold Coast, and we recognise it.

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, why weren't other potential proponents given the opportunity to submit an ROI when the scope of the project no longer included a cruise ship terminal? It is a fairly significant change in terms of the scope of the project from one that includes a cruise ship terminal to one that doesn't, and a potential proponent who may have submitted an ROI that did not include a cruise ship terminal within its proposal may have been interested in submitting one when a cruise ship terminal was no longer part of the scope of the project.

Dr LYNHAM: Mr Chair, I feel I have answered this question, but I can get the chief executive, Mr Edwards, involved. If he wants to make any further comment he can, because I feel I have answered the question. It is a continuation of the process.

Mr CRIPPS: No, it is not at all. It is asking why there wasn't a fresh ROI process when there was a significant change in the scope of the project.

CHAIR: The minister has asked Mr Edwards to comment.

Mr Edwards: The original process was about the delivery of a wide range of public infrastructure and public realm, and a cruise ship terminal was part of that requirement. The proponent will still be required to deliver significant public realm and infrastructure, and the current government has decided that that is worth investigating because it has made a policy decision to protect the Broadwater and Wave Break Island. The fundamentals of the project remain the same. It is about increasing tourism visitation numbers to the state. It is about increasing investment in tourism infrastructure, public realm and increasing tourism development on the Gold Coast. The proponent has a good track record, stacked up financially and technically, and we believe the process does allow us to continue to work with that proponent on a new proposal.

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, did you secure any probity advice about preventing other proponents from having the opportunity to lodge an ROI and deciding to select ASF Consortium as the sole proponent for a project that was, in effect, a significantly different project?

Mr Edwards: We have sought significant legal and probity advice the entire way through the project, and the probity and legal advice supported the decision the government has made.

Mr CRIPPS: The probity and legal advice supported the decision of the government to continue with ASF Consortium as the sole proponent of the project—

Mr Edwards: It supported that we could use the current IRD framework to continue to have negotiations with that proponent.

Mr CRIPPS: Despite the scope of the project changing from a project that would have a cruise ship terminal to one that does not have a cruise ship terminal?

Mr Edwards: The scope of the project was about delivering public infrastructure, public realm and benefits to the community. It is early days because we have just recommenced negotiations, but we believe that the ASF proposal will be able to deliver significant community benefits to the people of the Gold Coast.

Mr CRIPPS: While Mr Edwards is at the table or, indeed, the minister might be able to answer this one—

CHAIR: You are going through the minister; that is my understanding.

Mr CRIPPS: Yes, I am going through the minister. Is the minister able to give the committee an update or an understanding of his department's efforts in relation to ongoing discussions with the proponents of the proposed Aquis project in Cairns?

Dr LYNHAM: We are still in negotiations for the proposed Aquis project in Cairns. It is a considerable resort in Cairns. I can take you through the history. It applied for a licence through an expression of interest process and chose to progress to the request for a detailed proposal stage for a proposed development at Yorkeys Knob. Under the RFDP process, a detailed proposal was due from Aquis on 31 October 2014. However—and it is important that the committee hears this—

Mr CRIPPS: It is not so much the entire history; I am trying to ascertain for the benefit of the committee if the department is still engaged with Aquis as part of the integrated resort development.

Dr LYNHAM: Okay, I will get there quickly. On 10 February 2015, as you are aware, Aquis formally withdrew from the integrated resort development procurement process. The government continues to seek an acceptable outcome with Aquis for the provision of an integrated resort development in Cairns.

In May 2015 the government agreed to re-enter negotiation with Aquis to continue the process, subject to both parties agreeing to a process deed that established the basis on which the procurement process could progress. A process deed was issued to Aquis in May 2015 and is currently the subject of further discussions between the parties. Until the process deed is signed, agreed and returned to the government by Aquis, we have no formal agreement to recommence the procurement process. The government has consistently maintained that due processes will not be bypassed for the purpose of issuing a casino licence to Aquis.

The Commonwealth department of the environment approved the environmental impact statement for Aquis IRD on 30 April 2015. The Commonwealth approval follows the Coordinator-General's approval, which was given on 17 December 2014. We are continuing to have very positive discussions with Aquis to this day. I think the chief executive might want to add something.

Mr Edwards: We are continuing discussions with Aquis at the moment. As the minister stated, there is a process and probity deed with the proponent at the moment, and we are hoping that they will sign and execute that agreement shortly so we can recommence the negotiations in earnest.

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, can you advise the committee of any involvement that you have with the Tower Holdings request for a boutique casino licence associated with the redevelopment of the resort at Great Keppel Island?

Dr LYNHAM: I know this is very important for the member for Keppel, as it is to the minister for agriculture and sport. It is a very beautiful area of the state. We went up there after Cyclone Marcia and the hospitality was wonderful from the people of the region. They are certainly a very passionate region about looking after their environment and looking after the pristine area of the Great Barrier Reef.

The government maintains a very strong stance with this. There is no consideration to any further casino proposals outside the existing integrated resort development procurement process. The Great Keppel project was approved by the Coordinator-General on 1 March 2013 and under the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment on 5 March 2013. The Queensland government has issued term leases of 100 years for state land on the island, which is in addition to the existing perpetual lease that GKI Resort Pty Ltd has for the resort site—

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, is that the extent of your involvement? The land dealings?

Dr LYNHAM: Apart from talking to the community and negotiating?

Mr CRIPPS: Yes.

Dr LYNHAM: Yes. It is important that the government has done everything it can to get this project up and running in the region, and the ball is in the court of Tower Holdings to start construction. I have strongly urged it to honour its commitment to the local region to develop the resort as promised. You have been making a lot of noise about commitments and jobs, but it was your decision. Your previous government made this decision that Tower Holdings—

Mr CRIPPS: Thank you, Minister. I just wanted to establish the extent of the dealings of your department with this proposed project. That is all. That was the nature of my question, Mr Chair. I think the member for Burleigh has a question.

Mr HART: Minister, I might go back to the Gold Coast cruise ship terminal for a second. As a member from the Gold Coast, I know that the original proposal there was for a cruise ship terminal and then it morphed into an integrated resort so it became a far bigger thing than just a cruise ship terminal.

Dr LYNHAM: That is under your government, yes.

Mr HART: When you came to government and you cancelled it, didn't you think that moving this to a casino further down The Spit was a completely different thing and it should have been open to tenders?

Dr LYNHAM: No, I disagree. The area under consideration is part of the original footprint, so it is the same area of land that is south of Sea World and up from the fishermen's co-op. That portion of land was always part of the development.

Mr HART: But there was nothing ever planned for that land. It was in the original framework but there was nothing planned for—

Dr LYNHAM: That was in the original framework and that is why—

Mr HART: Minister, will this project be sent to Building Queensland, the new independent body for overseeing the business case? Isn't it appropriate that the government checks on the business case of these sorts of integrated resorts?

Dr LYNHAM: No, it will not be sent to Building Queensland. It is not liable to assessment by Building Queensland.

Mr Edwards: It is a private project, a privately funded project, and private sector projects are not subject to scrutiny by Building Queensland.

Mr HART: They could be, couldn't they, if you chose to?

Dr LYNHAM: But it is a private project. It is going to undergo immense scrutiny by the public—

Mr CRIPPS: There is a fair amount of state assets in terms of the land—

Dr LYNHAM: And it will all be taken into account in due process. The people of Queensland and the people of the Gold Coast will certainly know about the project once the detailed proposal is in. I can tell you that a cruise ship terminal could not have been accommodated with our commitment to protect the Broadwater and protect Wave Break Island.

Mr HART: Have you been to Wave Break Island, Minister?

Dr LYNHAM: Yes.

Mr HART: Minister, have you referred anything to Building Queensland since you have been the minister, since Building Queensland has been in existence?

CHAIR: I think he answered that question earlier.

Mr CRIPPS: I think that was Jackie.

Dr LYNHAM: No, we are not aware of anything we have referred to Building Queensland.

Mr MILLAR: Minister, I refer to page 6 of the SDS. As a part of the department's role in coordinating the critical infrastructure for the Galilee Basin, when will affected landholders be briefed on the location of the GVK Hancock rail corridor?

Dr LYNHAM: I know the GVK Hancock rail corridor is still undergoing assessment through the Coordinator-General. The Coordinator-General might want to take this one.

Mr Broe: If I understand your question, it is when will landowners be made aware of the location?

Mr MILLAR: Yes.

Mr Broe: All landowners along the route of the GVK corridor are aware of the location because they have been involved in the planning through the EIS processes—

Mr MILLAR: The exact locations?

Mr Broe: We will still go through detailed design, but in terms of the location of the rail line as in the EIS that has gone through the Coordinator-General and the Commonwealth, landowners have been made aware, GVK have been out there negotiating and working with landowners. The Galilee Basin state development area to the south contains that corridor. We also have a landowner liaison manager in my office that liaises regularly with all of the landowners along the route. They are kept regularly informed about progress with the project itself, but they are certainly aware of the location of the rail line.

As the project goes through its next stages and through more detailed design, if there are any minor changes to the actual alignment, the proponent still has to negotiate and consult with landholders on that as well and conduct any more detailed flood modelling and look at impacts if they change. So I believe the landowners are well aware of the alignment and will continue to be consulted should there be any changes in future stages of the project. If you have any specific concerns of any particular landowners, I am happy to take them away and get my landowner liaison manager, Scott Taylor, to look into them.

Mr MILLAR: Yes, there are concerns and I will be more than happy to take them through the minister to let the Coordinator-General know and work through that.

Dr LYNHAM: I will be very happy. I am very cooperative with members of the opposition, as you are well aware, and I would be very happy to take those details from you and investigate that fully.

CHAIR: Thank you. I call the member for Keppel.

Mrs LAUGA: I refer to page 3 of Budget Paper 5 and 'realising government policy as an enabler of economic growth'. What have you done to progress your election commitment regarding IFED?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Keppel for the question. The Etheridge Integrated Agricultural Project aligns with the government's policy to support private sector initiatives to develop water and land resources in North Queensland. The proponent will invest \$1.98 billion in sugar and guar cropping, grazing, a meat processing plant, ethanol refinery and aquaculture, as well as associated water infrastructure. The project is an initiative of Integrated Food and Energy Developments Pty Ltd and will be one of the largest agricultural developments in Australia. The proponent estimates that 1,780 jobs will be created at construction and 1,034 jobs during operation. They are significant numbers of jobs for an area in North Queensland.

If it proceeds, the project will aid in achieving the Queensland government's objectives for agricultural development in North Queensland and national goals for the sustainable development of Northern Australia. The fully developed project would also align with the government's plans to grow biofuels and biomanufacturing industries in Queensland, including a proposed biofuel mandate. The project is a declared coordinated project undergoing an environmental impact statement with the Office of the Coordinator-General. Key issues to be addressed with this project in the environmental impact statement include: water supply and allocation; downstream impacts; interference with surface water flows; soil suitability; and broadscale clearing. The Coordinator-General works in close with the Department of Natural Resources and Mines to assess the sustainability of the project's proposed water offtake as part of the environmental impact statement.

The Palaszczuk government made it explicitly clear that it would release and rescind the LNP's secret development protocol in the interests of open and accountable government. In June 2015, the government delivered on this commitment to rescind and publish the development protocol signed between the proponent and the previous government by tabling it in parliament. On 3 June 2015, a memorandum of understanding between the proponent and the state was signed. The MOU sets out the relationship between the environmental impact statement and the water allocation provisions of the

Water Act 2000 should the Coordinator-General's report conclude that the environmental impact statement requirements have been met and the project can proceed. The difference between the MOU and the previous development protocol is that this is an entirely transparent process, with the MOU made publicly available. The MOU was tabled on 4 June 2015 and can be accessed by all through the Queensland parliamentary website.

The MOU also provides for: additional provisions and safeguards—yes, additional provisions and safeguards, as distinct from their separate agreement; a package of mitigation measures and offsets for residual impacts that will deliver an overall net benefit from the project, taking into account environmental, economic and social costs and benefits, and that is expected to be in the environmental impact statement; an independent peer review verifying the environmental sustainability of the project's water requirements; and the proponent will pay at commercial rates for the water as set by the chief executive administering the Water Act 2000 or an independent water pricing expert, subject to the state authorising the taking of water for the project.

These are strong environmental safeguards that go over and beyond what is required of the usual EIS process. The inclusion of these provisions and safeguards is vital to ensure that IFED is the right project for Queensland. The Queensland government will assess this project to ensure that it can deliver a net benefit to the state of Queensland. The proponents currently state that this is a project that could possibly deliver, as I said, 1,700 jobs and 1,000 ongoing jobs. I have made this quite clear previously. This government will act to deliver jobs for Queenslanders. However, projects that deliver jobs must also stack up financially and, importantly, environmentally and be in the public interest. This is what this government will ensure occurs with IFED and all projects and developments through Queensland.

To ensure that the IFED project is not negligently jeopardised by the allocation of water that may be vital for the progression of the project, the government will take a prudent approach by not releasing any unallocated water in the Gilbert River catchment until the proponent has completed the environmental impact statement process. This government, however, will be releasing 239,650 megalitres in the Flinders catchment to encourage economic growth and jobs in the agricultural sector in North Queensland, as per its election commitment. The government is aiming to finalise an amendment to the Gulf Water Resource Plan and the Gulf Resource Operations Plan this month. This amendment does not provide any specific reserves for any water project near the Flinders or Gilbert rivers catchment, such as the proposed Etheridge Integrated Agricultural Project.

CHAIR: Thank you. Member for Keppel, you can have one more question. Minister, you will have to look at keeping your answer a little bit shorter this time, if you don't mind.

Mrs LAUGA: I refer to page 6 of Budget Paper 5 which references Queen's Wharf. What is the government doing to promote regional integrated resort developments?

Dr LYNHAM: I would like to thank the member again for the question. First of all, it would be helpful to have some background on the IRD process. On 14 October 2013, the previous government announced up to three casino licences may be offered in Queensland—at Queen's Wharf and two in regional areas. Following this, a competitive bid process for the IRD was launched in December 2013. Six expressions of interest were received for the regional IRD process. In May 2014, following the completion of the evaluation process, the two short-listed candidates for the regional IRD projects were announced—being ASF Consortium Pty Ltd on the Gold Coast and the Aquis resort at the Great Barrier Reef in Cairns. These preferred proponents were then required to submit a detailed proposal.

For the Brisbane based IRD, the preferred proponent was selected based on who was deemed the most likely to deliver the project's vision and objectives. The vision for the project included a unique and vibrant new world city development that attracts visitors and investment, reconnects the activity of the Brisbane city centre to the river, preserves and celebrates Brisbane's heritage, and delivers high-quality public spaces.

All of the IRDs being proposed were required to be a high-quality, mixed use destination aimed squarely at providing tourism, leisure and entertainment facilities that appeal to a broad market. An integrated resort could include iconic architecture with open public spaces, five- or six-star hotels, and meeting and conference spaces. They may also, provided they meet all of the requirements necessary, include casinos and offer gaming activities. Integrated resorts do offer a unique opportunity for Queensland. I think we have chosen well with the Echo venture.

May I just stress also that with an integrated resort everyone has the word 'casino'. An integrated resort does include a casino, but a casino is less than five per cent of the floor space with the Queen's Wharf development. So it is only a very small amount of the floor space. An integrated resort


development is just that: a resort development that offers four-, five- and six-star accommodation, other entertainment space and open public space. That is what an integrated resort offers and that is why this development is going to be transformational to the centre of Brisbane.

CHAIR: The committee will now break. The hearing will resume at 6.45 pm to examine the estimates for the portfolio area of Natural Resources and Mines.

Dr LYNHAM: I have one correction if I may, Mr Chair. The Department of State Development was not involved in land dealings associated with the Great Keppel Island Resort; it was the Department of Natural Resources and Mines. But we were involved with the Coordinator-General approval of the project and the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment approval projects.

CHAIR: We will resume at 6.45 pm.

Proceedings suspended from 6.01 pm to 6.46 pm

 **CHAIR:** Good evening. The hearing is resumed. The committee will now examine the estimates for the portfolio area of Natural Resources and Mines. I welcome all departmental officers who are here. I call the opposition.

Dr LYNHAM: Mr Chair, can I make an opening statement?

CHAIR: Okay. I do apologise. You are more than welcome to make an opening statement.

Dr LYNHAM: Thank you, Mr Chair. Thanks also to the members of the committee again. As the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, I would like to acknowledge the role that land, water and mining resources play in the ongoing economic health and prosperity of Queensland. Most importantly, I reiterate this government's commitment to the sustainable management and use of our natural resources. Queensland's rich coal, petroleum and mineral resources have fuelled significant economic growth over the past two decades. The sector represents 60 per cent of all state exports. That is more than \$27 billion worth. Its total value to Queensland is \$36 billion including wages, goods and services, and royalties. It supports 17,000 businesses, and one in five Queensland jobs are mining related. As a jobs focused government, I would like to recognise the industry's significance.

Over the next financial year, my department will spend \$449 million to underpin Queensland's natural resources and mining sector. One initiative that demonstrates the value we place on the sector is the establishment of my ministerial resources round table. This brings together industry leaders to inform strategic policy development and to encourage and facilitate collaboration within the industry. Membership of the round table includes industry leaders representing coal, gas and mineral production as well as exploration companies and peak industry bodies. As the chair of this group, I will continue to work closely with these industry leaders to ensure that Queensland remains both globally competitive and socially responsible. I have also implemented, importantly, a resources community round table, which will consist of members from environmental groups, agriculture and landholder groups, resource industry peak bodies, and prominent members of Indigenous and wider communities. This demonstrates this government's commitment to consultation, giving everyone an opportunity to have their view heard.

Another important issue facing the resources sector is the management of environmentally sensitive assets. This is why we are contributing up to \$8 million to continue stage 4 of the Great Artesian Basin sustainability initiative in Queensland. The aquifers of the Great Artesian Basin are important underground water supplies for rural Queensland. They support numerous springs and natural ecosystems and have significant environmental importance. The current plan under which this program is managed is due to expire in September and the department is in the final stages of initiating a replacement plan to manage this significant resource.

The department is also continuing to work on modernising and enhancing its online services to deliver faster service outcomes and to make it easier for industry to do business. This morning I marked the completion of the MyMinesOnline project, kicked off by my caucus colleague Stirling Hinchliffe. Since December 2010 the average time taken to grant an exploration permit for minerals has been slashed by 58 per cent, another Labor initiative delivering for industry and jobs. I am determined, too, that Queensland will continue to develop its mining equipment, technology and services sector. This sector is estimated to generate \$21.2 billion in revenue annually, and I see this sector as being significant future contributors to jobs in Queensland. METS has been identified nationally as one of five key areas with high global growth potential and with 436 operating METS companies—more than any other state—it makes sense to capitalise on our competitive advantage.

The budget for the Department of Natural Resources and Mines underpins steady and stable government with good programs that will help manage all our resources sustainably and in the interests of current and future Queenslanders.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I call the opposition.

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, I refer to pages 4 and 5 of the SDS and I note the service area highlights for the service area of Land and Water Services. There are 10 dot points listed in the service area highlights which are—all of them—either a continuation of initiatives that commenced under the former LNP government or a commitment to overturn an initiative delivered by the former LNP government in the area of land, water and vegetation management. Minister, after six months in this portfolio, have you had any ideas of your own and, if so, why were they not worthy of inclusion in the Service Delivery Statement?

Dr LYNHAM: Mr Chair and member for Hinchliffe—member for Hinchinbrook—it was a slip of the tongue because, as I said, Stirling Hinchliffe initiated that program. Again, I note that we have had this discussion in parliament about the collaborative drilling study assistance—

Mr CRIPPS: Pages 4 and 5 the Service Delivery Statement and the area of Land and Water Services.

Dr LYNHAM: I can get a public servant to spend a few weeks getting this together on which one of the initiatives started with us and tender a form et cetera, but I am not going to waste a valuable public servant's time creating a list of what are our initiatives, which would override your initiatives in the past year on any measure. As I have said in the past, too, one of the big things that our government is taking forward, one of the major initiatives that this government is taking forward is a consultative approach to the community as a whole. We have people in the room: we have environment groups, we have the agricultural community, people whose vote you took for granted, such as the agricultural community—

Mr CRIPPS: We saw that—

Dr LYNHAM:—we have these people in the room discussing ways forward, how we—

Mr CRIPPS: We saw that in the *Courier-Mail* the other day you nominated your most significant achievement as being more meetings.

Dr LYNHAM: We are bringing the community and industry with us—

Mr CRIPPS: If that is the extent of your answer, that is fine.

Dr LYNHAM:—and may I say—

CHAIR: He answers the question as he wishes to.

Dr LYNHAM:—that is one of the reasons that you are there and I am here—

Mr CRIPPS: Have a go at answering it. Have a go.

Dr LYNHAM:—because you failed to have a consultative approach with the community. I have never seen anything like it, especially with the—

Mr CRIPPS: Consultation is your biggest achievement, isn't it, Minister?

Dr LYNHAM:—MERCPC. I think you are the only person who united the agricultural sector, the environmental groups, the resources sector—all against you. You have them all against you. The only time I have seen those groups united was against you with your legislation because you rushed the—

Mr CRIPPS: How come your achievement of consultation is not in the SDS?

Dr LYNHAM:—tenure reform, a part of MERCPC—I think that was the first cache of reform brought in by you. Previously our tenure reform—you took the first tranche of that, brought that in, made it the most reprehensible legislation anyone has ever seen. The whole community objected to it, including your heartland—the agricultural heartland—who said it was the worst legislation they have ever seen. We have taken a different approach. We are bringing the community with us. We are bringing industry with us. We want to see long-term benefits to the resources sector and those benefits flowing to the agricultural sector, to the community as a whole and to Queensland.

Mr CRIPPS: Thanks, Minister.

Dr LYNHAM: That is the way this government works.

Mr CRIPPS: Thanks, Minister.

Dr LYNHAM: This government works with a steady approach. We are not going to be rushed into things.

Mr CRIPPS: You are certainly not going to be rushed into anything; that is for sure. Minister, I refer to page 6 of the SDS and I note that the service area objective for Mining Services is to provide a framework that encourages exploration, investment and development for Queensland's resources

sector. Minister, I ask: how do you reconcile this stated objective with one of your first decisions as mines minister, that being to reimpose a ban on uranium mining in Queensland, denying new investment and job opportunities to communities in the north-west minerals province?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Hinchinbrook for his question regarding the uranium industry. I think it is common knowledge that prohibiting uranium mining in Queensland has been the government's longstanding policy and one we committed to act on during the state election campaign. You are probably aware that there has been a consistency in uranium policy throughout Queensland over many, many years. That consistency has only changed in the Borbidge and Newman governments. Apart from that, the consistency has been a prohibition on uranium mining here in Queensland. This government is no different to previous governments that recognised what the community wants, and the community does not want uranium mining here in Queensland. We do recognise significant benefits that the resources industry provides to our state, our economy and our community. That is why we are committed to ensuring that industry can continue to develop in a way that sensibly balances economic, social and environmental considerations. It is expected that all companies will meet the world's best practice social and environmental performance and outcomes for Queensland. However, it has been decided that the potential environmental and community health impacts of mining, processing, storing and transporting uranium as well as disposing of the waste products outweigh any potential economic benefits the industry could provide to the state. That is why we have reintroduced a prohibition on uranium mining.

Mr CRIPPS: Who decided that, Minister?

Dr LYNHAM: What this means for Queensland is that no new mining leases for uranium will be granted, meaning no new uranium mines can be developed under this government. There are currently no active uranium mining projects in Queensland, with all projects at the exploration and appraisal stages.

Mr CRIPPS: Did you consult with anyone?

Dr LYNHAM: It is important to note that the Department of Natural Resources and Mines has not received a single application for a mining lease for the purpose of uranium mining since the previous government's regulatory framework for uranium mining started on 31 July 2014. Under this government's policy, companies exploring specifically for uranium will be able to continue. Exploration for uranium has always been allowed in Queensland, even during the previous prohibition as uranium is often found in combination with other minerals like gold, copper and rare earths. Companies may apply for new exploration permits to target uranium, but no new mining lease approvals will be granted for uranium. The effect of banning uranium exploration would essentially result in companies undertaking exploratory drilling and not reporting the presence of uranium to the state. Allowing exploration to continue also provides an opportunity for other minerals often found in conjunction with uranium to be discovered. May I remind you of the previous government's—your government's—policy prior to your election to government? I think the then opposition leader in waiting said there would be no uranium mining under his watch and then he introduced uranium mining.

Mr CRIPPS: Thank you, Minister. So your first action as minister was to ban mining of a certain mineral in Queensland and deprive the north-west minerals province of a new opportunity?

Dr LYNHAM: Reinstating a long-term policy of—

Mr CRIPPS: Who did you consult about reimposing the ban? Any technical expert?

Dr LYNHAM: The consultation process on uranium mining has been done for many, many years.

Mr CRIPPS: I see; no-one. Minister, in relation to—

Dr LYNHAM: I would love to see if you have a definition for 'consult'.

Mr CRIPPS: In relation to the same part of the SDS where the objective for the Mining Services area is 'to provide a framework that encourages exploration, investment and development', how does the minister reconcile this stated objective with Labor's politically motivated review of the approvals process for the New Acland mine stage 3 project? How does this type of political interference encourage resource development and investment in Queensland?

Dr LYNHAM: You obviously do not realise that for a resource development to be successful, the community must be with that resource development. You can ascertain there is a lot of controversy around the New Acland project because the community is not with it.

Mr CRIPPS: Which community, Minister?

Dr LYNHAM: We do not want those mistakes to occur. We want communities to be with the resources community and to have—

Mr CRIPPS: Which community are you referring to?

Dr LYNHAM: There are a lot of local farmers and landholders around New Acland that have objected to stage 3 going ahead.

Mr CRIPPS: 'A lot'?

Dr LYNHAM: A great many. At my request a review is underway into the approval process for the New Acland coal environmental impact statement. I ordered this review to ensure absolute transparency, certainty and clarity for all parties in this process. I am well aware that the environmental impact statement and the Acland expansion project have been met by considerable community opposition. I have met with the proponent, I have met with mine workers and business supporters as well as opposition groups, local farmers and residents who are opposed to the project. One of my first actions in taking this role was to travel to the area and meet with as many people as I could. I will continue that consultation process in my office, where again my door is open to the people involved with this project. The department has been active in the local area as well.

Mr CRIPPS: Can you nominate what was not transparent about the approvals process?

Dr LYNHAM: In recognition of the impacts and contentious nature of the project New Acland coal revised the initial project scope, reducing the size of the projected project. The revised project was approved by the Coordinator-General on 19 December 2014 subject to 137 conditions. New Acland coal is yet to obtain approvals for the environmental authority, and I am yet to consider the granting of the mining lease. A further approval is also required under the Regional Planning Interests Act 2014 for the priority agriculture area that may be impacted by the proposed expansion.

Mr CRIPPS: What was not transparent?

Dr LYNHAM: Under my portfolio I am ultimately responsible for the administration of the Mineral Resources Act 1989. A component of the mining lease application process is the premise of natural justice. Providing an avenue for stakeholders to have their say on projects is an intrinsic element of this process. The Department of Natural Resources and Mines initiated the public notification of this project, as it is a legislative requirement under the Mineral Resources Act 1989.

The public notification period for New Acland's mining lease application for the stage 3 expansion closed on 1 July 2015. There were 1,426 submissions received to the environmental authority application under the Environment Protection Act 1994 within the time frame and two after the close of the notification period. There were 30 objections received to the mining leases lodged under the Mineral Resources Act 1989 within the notification time frames. The sheer volume of submissions, objections and correspondence from the community, both for and against the project, is testament to the interest and passion that has been expressed.

The government is committed to the protection of prime agricultural land, and securing a balance between competing land uses is an imperative for me.

Mr CRIPPS: What was not transparent about the process that required a review?

Dr LYNHAM: The government is also committed to employment and job creation, and this proposed mine expansion will secure employment at the existing mine and create further employment in the region. I am aware that current operations at the existing New Acland mine will cease in 2017 if the stage 3 proposal does not proceed. Currently, as you are aware, there are approximately 300 people employed by the mining operation.

Mr HART: Minister, you have been talking for five minutes now and you still have not answered the question. Can we move on?

Mr CRIPPS: Why did you need to conduct a review? What was not transparent about the assessment process to this point in time? Why did you need to politically intervene?

Dr LYNHAM: A review is underway. Once the result is known you will be notified.

CHAIR: I am sorry, your time has expired. I call the member for Gladstone.

Mr BUTCHER: Referring to page 2 of the SDS, dot point 5, what is the department doing to deliver quality front-line services through engaging with customers and focusing on customer service delivery?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Gladstone for the question regarding MyMinesOnline. This wonderful system was originally implemented by my good friend and colleague Stirling Hinchliffe when he had responsibility for the mining portfolio.

The department has now completed the development of the system, and Queensland is reaping the benefits through vast improvements in efficiencies and a reduction in waiting times for applicants. We are now trying the expansion of MyMinesOnline to link with other government agencies in a One Window service delivery system to further cut down on interdepartmental duplication and to send a clear message to private enterprise that the Palaszczuk government will welcome their investment in Queensland. This investment will create job opportunities for Queenslanders.

MyMinesOnline has transformed Queensland's manual paper based tenure system to an efficient online system that automates many of the steps in administering resource authorities. MyMinesOnline now enables resource companies operating in Queensland to undertake electronically the majority of resources permit related transactions. Registered MyMinesOnline users can view and manage authorities, lodge applications and renewals for authorities and register dealings.

In fact, it is a great site. It is well implemented and a collaborative site. It has taken some time between industry and government to get this absolutely right. I can manage it quite well. If I can manage it with half an hour's tuition, then anyone can. What I do like about the site is that members of the public can access it to see exactly where a mining tenement is located within their land. It is invaluable to have that access, openness and accountability that is part of the Palaszczuk government.

As a result of the investment in this program, the time taken to assess resource applications has been reduced, and industry benefits from these shorter transaction times. MyMinesOnline has enabled the earlier commencement of resource projects, which flows on to create a more positive investment environment for the mining industry in Queensland. As of 30 June 2015, the average time to grant an exploration permit for minerals has been slashed by 58 per cent since December 2010. Renewals and assessable transfers have been reduced by 72 per cent. Other transactions—for example, associated agreements—have had assessment time frames reduced by 80 per cent over the same period. MyMinesOnline allows online visibility and transparency of the status of various transactions and the ability to lodge 24/7 from anywhere in the world.

Furthermore, the trial One Window pilot was released earlier this year and enables companies to transact with other government agencies relating to resource transactions. One Window delivers the ability to apply for and receive a suitable operator registration number within minutes. An integrated system within the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection has removed time lag and duplication between the agencies. Standard environmental authorities for mineral exploration have been processed in under 10 days. As of 30 June 2015, there have been 66 standard environmental authority and suitable operator registration applications lodged in the system. There have been 260 suitable operator number searches processed by One Window.

These figures I have just mentioned demonstrate the capability of the system to slash waiting times for businesses and streamlines their requirements when lodging applications. MyMinesOnline will continue to be enhanced into the future as the department and industry jointly identify enhancements to the system. Today I saw the old paper system in action. For one mine there was a stack of papers this thick and someone would have to go through all them to put the transactions through. The total system is capitalised at \$15.4 million.

I am excited by these developments, which are a direct legacy of the previous Labor government. The decrease in waiting times for applicants and less duplication in order for them to complete their applications presents great opportunities to encourage investment in the Queensland resources sector and beyond and subsequently deliver vitally important jobs to Queensland.

CHAIR: Minister, I refer to page 2 of budget paper 5 under the department's overview detailing the department's contribution to the Queensland government's objectives for the community. Dot point 1 states 'create jobs and diverse economy' by ensuring that we are growing our agricultural sector. Minister, what initiatives are you driving to ensure that this commitment is met?

Dr LYNHAM: Thank you again, Mr Chair, for the question. Agriculture, as you are aware, has always been a significant element in Queensland's economy, and the ongoing health and prosperity of a vibrant agriculture sector in Queensland is something that the Palaszczuk Labor government will work hard to secure. I will work closely with my colleague Bill Byrne, who is doing a fine job as the minister for agriculture. The minister for agriculture will outline many programs and initiatives that assist the agriculture sector.

In many instances, however, it has been identified that additional sustainable volumes of water are necessary to boost agricultural production in Queensland. The majority of Queensland's water resource plans identify volumes of unallocated water held for allocation at a future date. These volumes

can be made available for future consumptive use without compromising the security of existing users or environmental users within a catchment. Unallocated water can be held in a water resource plan as a general reserve, a state or strategic reserve, strategic infrastructure, town water supply or Indigenous reserve.

The current process in the Water Regulation 2002 provides for both a competitive release process via auction or tender and a non-competitive release process. The actual process steps for releasing water will vary depending on the method of release, with each being fit for purpose and tailored to the specific needs of a release. The process steps of each release of unallocated water are set out in the terms of sale for the release.

The Department of Natural Resources and Mines has worked in partnership with the University of Queensland to develop a pricing model for the sale of general reserve unallocated water. Water users who are interested and eligible for strategic or state reserves, strategic infrastructure, town water supply or Indigenous reserves can apply directly to the department. Unallocated water granted from the strategic or state reserve must be for a project of regional or state significance or be declared to be a coordinated project. Currently there are no unallocated water processes being progressed by the department.

The department has published an online map that displays the general reserve unallocated water volumes of surface and subartesian water that is available in each catchment or management area across Queensland. A map of the Queensland section of the Great Artesian Basin showing the volume of unallocated water reserve in each management area is also available on the website. Currently there are approximately 1.3 million megalitres of unallocated water held in general reserves across Queensland. The department has received interest from a number of clients expressing interest in general reserve unallocated water.

To progress future release processes the department has undertaken an analysis of the demand in each of the state's catchments to assist in determining a prioritisation program. A decision to release unallocated water is dependent on the finalisation of a number of planning activities that are currently underway. The gulf, Burdekin, Fitzroy, wet tropics and Great Artesian Basin resource plan areas have been identified as key areas of interest. Any decision to release unallocated water held in general reserve in these priority areas would focus on supporting the irrigated agriculture sector.

I have committed to commencing a gulf unallocated water release process in the third quarter of this year to the Flinders River catchment. This is proposed to occur through a competitive release process. The department is not in a position to release any unallocated water in the Gilbert River catchment until the environmental impact assessment process for Integrated Food and Energy Developments Pty Ltd has been completed. To provide the certainty proponent Integrated Food and Energy Developments requires, it would be tantamount to wilful obstruction and bad faith to release any unallocated water in the Gilbert.

A release process will enable business and industry to apply for 240,000 megalitres in the Flinders River catchment. Any release of unallocated water in the gulf catchment would depend on the finalisation of an amendment to the Water Resource Plan 2007 and Gulf Resource Operations Plan. This is expected shortly, and I look forward to delivering future opportunities and growth to Queensland.

Mr KNUTH: Minister, I refer to page 2 of the SDS and note that one of the department's key challenges and opportunities is to balance environmental, social and economic outcomes. Can the minister advise how the department will ensure that social outcomes are equally weighed against economic outcomes to deliver this balance, especially in the circumstance of the Aurukun bauxite mine, which offers the rare opportunity for a part Indigenous owned consortium of traditional Wik owners.

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for his question. As I stated before, on Saturday I was in Aurukun and met extensively with the community up there. I also commissioned a review of the previous government's EIS process with Glencore, and on the basis of legal advice we have decided that we will be continuing with Glencore in this process. I also was at hand to witness overwhelming community support to continue with the Glencore process.

The community meeting provided me with very positive feedback from many clan elders and many traditional owners. I intend, as I said before, to listen to them very carefully to make sure that we get exactly what the community wants from this, including the social and economic benefits. There will be a complete EIS process and there will be negotiation with traditional owners and with the mining company as well. But distinct from these processes I think this is a special area and we must try with all our might to make sure that we are seeking to put their objectives into place, what they want in terms

of the community. I have had notification that there has been some debate amongst the traditional owners and residents of the region about the two different projects. In the interests of time—and I am sure the member for Hinchinbrook wants to ask some more questions—this is a very important issue for me and I was very touched by my visit to Aurukun, as was probably the member for Hinchinbrook when he went to Aurukun as well.

Mr CRIPPS: I think your decision is right, Minister.

Dr LYNHAM: Yes, it is just such a—

Mr CRIPPS: As was our decision.

Dr LYNHAM: They are just a proud people. I wanted to make sure that we took the project on and we have done a review and we are giving it to Glencore, but taking it forward is going to be the important step. I look forward to working with the local member and look forward to working with the community so we can genuinely do this. I know it sounds like platitudes—I know it does—but within my heart I really want to see this progress. I really want to see the community do well out of this. I told them, 'I want to hear what you want. I don't want to hear what Glencore wants. I don't want to hear what the state wants. I want to hear what you want out of this project,' and that is the first step to find out what the community wants and then work with them and try as hard as I possibly can with everything I have got to make sure that the community gets what they want out of this project.

Mr KNUTH: Minister, I refer to page 2 of the SDS and note dot point 4 states the government's objective to create jobs and a diverse economy, including growing our resources and agriculture sectors, and I ask: what will the government and your department be doing to progress a targeted review in the Burdekin Basin water resource plan to assist development in local agriculture?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for his question and I understand this area is of vital importance to you. The Burdekin is a real food bowl for Queensland and a rich agricultural area and I understand that Burdekin Basin water resources are pivotal to supporting economic development in North Queensland. The Queensland government is committed to supporting growth in agriculture and resource sectors in the Burdekin Basin and the Labor Party did make a commitment to develop appropriate water and land resources in North Queensland on a sustainable basis. As the Minister for Natural Resources, I will undertake to ensure that North Queensland continues to develop to deliver a growing economy and vitally needed jobs. Water resources in the Burdekin Basin are managed under the Water Resource (Burdekin Basin) Plan 2007 which provides a strong framework for managing water resources. The water resource plan protects the rights of water users, provides mechanisms for dealing with future water requirements and supports the water needs of natural ecosystems, including the Great Barrier Reef.

The water resource plan identifies reserves of unallocated water to meet future demand throughout the plan area. Importantly, further demand for water to support further irrigated agriculture development upstream of Burdekin Falls Dam in areas like Charters Towers and along the Sutter River is emerging. Mining companies with aspirations in the Galilee Basin have also been considering water supply options. Interest in sourcing water from the Belyando-Sutter subcatchment and the potential long-term pipe connection to Burdekin Falls Dam has been received. Additional water volumes reserved under the existing water resource plan could meet some of this additional demand. Unallocated water reserves identified can be made available as required under a process prescribed in the Water Regulation 2002. Additionally, there are mechanisms under the Water Act 2000 to provide opportunities such as seasonal and permanent trading of existing water entitlements. Trading opportunities could be provided via amendment to the water resource plan for the Burdekin Basin. Providing for water entitlements that are currently under-utilised to be bought and sold on the market in the same way as land presents another opportunity to meet some of these emerging demands and to allow for sustainable economic development.

In other catchments throughout Queensland where water trading has been implemented, better decision making regarding the usage of water has led to improved economic outcomes for the communities. Therefore, providing stronger, more efficient and more flexible water management arrangements that better deliver on the community's needs is important, and I am sure that is exactly what you would like for your community. Accordingly, I am proposing to prepare a draft amendment to the Burdekin Basin water resource plan focusing on the subcatchments upstream of the Burdekin Falls Dam—namely, the Upper Burdekin, Cape, Campaspe and Belyando-Sutter. This amendment will seek to provide greater security for existing water users while allowing for future expansion in the water markets. I believe that providing certainty to water users in these areas is particularly important given emerging water demands.

The proposed draft amendment will be underpinned by the best available science and a considered community—again, an important word—consultation process. Before preparing the draft amendment, I will be seeking community views about water allocation and sustainable management issues. I will be releasing a statement of proposals to provide stakeholders and the community with the opportunity to comment on the proposed scope and intent of the amendments. I strongly encourage all interested parties to make submissions. The views of the community assist the Department of Natural Resources and Mines and myself in moulding a water resource plan that will deliver greater opportunities that best serve the interests of the Burdekin catchment and Queensland. I would love to involve you and your community through this entire process to make sure we get the best outcomes for the people in your electorate.

Mr KNUTH: Hear, hear, Minister. That is good news and very exciting; thank you. Minister, I refer to dot point 4 on page 2 of the SDS stating the government's objective to create jobs and a diverse economy, including the growing of our resources and agriculture sector, and I ask: does the government's objective extend to advancing the fertile soil of the Southern Atherton Tablelands Development Scheme to support agricultural jobs growth, local jobs and flood mitigation that protects the town of Ingham and the flooding of the Bruce Highway and the lower Herbert floodplains?

Dr LYNHAM: This is the Herbert?

Mr KNUTH: This is the Atherton Tablelands development scheme. I am happy if you have to take the question on notice.

Dr LYNHAM: We will take that on notice. We will get to the specifics of it and we will take it on notice. I am aware of the issue, but we will definitely take that on notice and get back to you.

Mr KNUTH: Thanks, Minister. One more question, Minister. I refer to dot point 4 on page 2 of the SDS stating the government's—

CHAIR: Sorry, member for Dalrymple, but time has run out. It is now time for questions from the opposition.

Mr CRIPPS: My questions are, through the minister, to the commissioner for mine safety. Can the commissioner for mine safety come to the table please? That is okay, Minister?

Dr LYNHAM: That is fine.

Mr CRIPPS: Thank you. Good evening, Commissioner.

Mr Harrison: Evening.

Mr CRIPPS: Commissioner, I refer to page 6 of the SDS and the department's role in promoting and maintaining good safety outcomes in the resources sector. Commissioner, if you could briefly, what qualifications and competencies are required for a person to be appointed as a mines inspector in Queensland under the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act?

Mr Harrison: There are a range of qualifications to be appointed as a mines inspector. For a coalmine inspector you need a first-class mine manager's certificate. For a metalliferous mines inspector you need a first-class underground mine manager's ticket in a metalliferous mine. The previous example for a coalmine inspector is in a coalmine. If you are a mechanical mines inspector you need to have a mechanical engineering qualification like a diploma or a degree in mechanical engineering. If you are an electrical inspector you need a diploma or a degree in electrical engineering as it relates to mine safety.

Mr CRIPPS: Thank you, Commissioner. Commissioner, specifically in relation to the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act and the process to be appointed as a mines inspector, this process includes a Board of Examiners assessment process, does it not?

Mr Harrison: Correct.

Mr CRIPPS: Can you briefly outline the level of rigour involved in that process?

Mr Harrison: To acquire a first-class mine manager's ticket in either underground coal or underground metalliferous you are required to sit a legislation exam which determines your understanding of your obligations as an underground mine manager under the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act or the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act. You are then required to undertake a written exam which tests some situational awareness of how you might apply knowledge and ability in terms of managing the risk at a mine site. If you have passed both of those steps, you are then required to front an oral panel which is a three-hour oral test where the panel tests your knowledge of application of hazard and risk management to scenarios that you might encounter in your job as an underground mine manager.

Mr CRIPPS: Thank you, Commissioner. Commissioner, it is therefore, would you agree, an accurate statement to say that it is important to have people who are properly trained and skilled to be engaged in monitoring safety in our mines and making decisions and enforcing the law under these acts?

Mr Harrison: Vital, I would say.

Mr CRIPPS: Briefly, Commissioner, what qualifications and competencies are required for a person to be appointed as an industry safety and health representative in Queensland under the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act?

Mr Harrison: We require them to hold a deputy's ticket.

Mr CRIPPS: Commissioner, to be appointed as an ISHR under the act, is the person required to be assessed by the Board of Examiners to secure the necessary competencies involved?

Mr Harrison: To acquire a deputy's ticket you do have to be assessed by the Board of Examiners, yes.

Mr CRIPPS: Commissioner, acknowledging that certain competencies are required to be appointed as an ISHR under the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act, are those qualifications and competencies equivalent to those required to be appointed as a mines inspector in Queensland under the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act?

Mr Harrison: No, they are not.

Mr CRIPPS: Thank you, Commissioner.

Mr Harrison: Thank you.

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, in relation to the mine safety regulatory impact statement, are you able to advise the committee where the department's consideration of that regulatory impact statement is up to?

Dr LYNHAM: Which regulatory impact statement is that?

Mr CRIPPS: The national harmonisation mine safety regulatory impact statement has been out for public consultation. The public consultation period closed some time ago. There were a lot of submissions to that regulatory impact statement. Are you able to advise the committee where the government's consideration of that RIS is up to?

Dr LYNHAM: I will. I understand where your line of questioning is going and I agree with you and I am with you as one that there have been some unfortunate incidents and accidents in the Queensland mining industry over these past years. I am with you in terms of prevention of these tragic events occurring. I realise that health and safety in the mining industry is absolutely paramount and our thoughts are obviously with the families of those who have suffered incidents or fatalities in our mining community. We are still recognised internationally as having a very good safety and health record in Queensland mines, but no system is perfect and we cannot afford to become complacent. With that in mind in terms of where you are heading, I agree that we cannot. We always have to seek improvement in mine health and safety and I am always looking for ways to improve mine health and safety, as are mine owners, as are the community, as are specifically the unions involved in mining as well. Queensland's mining safety legislation and Mines Inspectorate are integral to achieving world's best practice. Queensland's mining safety legislation and Mines Inspectorate involves the participation of workers and industry and striving for information improvement is also very important.

Mr CRIPPS: The RIS, Minister. Did you want to tell the committee where the consideration of the RIS is up to?

Dr LYNHAM: In Queensland, a 193-page consultation regulatory impact statement was released for comment on September 2013 by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines. There were 246 public submissions that were received in response to that consultation document.

Mr CRIPPS: Yes.

Dr LYNHAM: Many of these submissions were quite lengthy and detailed.

Mr CRIPPS: I agree.

Dr LYNHAM: It is taking significant time and resources for the department to give full consideration to the material in the public submissions and to undertake the thorough analysis that is needed to ensure that the best outcomes are achieved. I believe that the overall package of initiatives that I am currently considering has the potential to significantly improve safety and health legislation for

the mineral and coalmining industries and to ensure that Queensland develops greater regulatory consistency with the other large mining states of New South Wales and Western Australia. The package of legislation is intended to be introduced into parliament in 2016.

Mr CRIPPS: Okay. Thanks, Minister.

Dr LYNHAM: As minister, I will be seeking to make sure that we get these amendments right. The safety and health of workers is too important to do otherwise. I am with you. It is above politics. This whole issue is above politics and we have to get this right. That is why it has taken some time.

Mr CRIPPS: I agree.

Dr LYNHAM: I appreciate your concern. I acknowledge that. We have to get this exactly right and to improve our mine health and safety. I will be striving to the end, because we have to get this absolutely correct.

Mr CRIPPS: Thank you. Minister, I refer to page 4 of the SDS and the stated intention of the Palaszczuk government to wind back the important reforms that the former LNP government introduced into the vegetation management framework. I understand that the SDS also says that the department is currently undertaking a review. Will the minister provide the committee with the terms of reference that he has set down for his department within which to conduct its current review of the vegetation management framework?

Dr LYNHAM: Significant changes were made to the vegetation management framework during your term in government. These amendments included the reintroduction of remnant native vegetation clearing for certain agricultural activities, the removal of the protection of high-value regrowth on freehold and Indigenous land—

Mr CRIPPS: But that is not my question. My question is—

Dr LYNHAM: And the implementation of self-assessable—

Mr CRIPPS: You are currently conducting a review. There must be terms of reference that you have given your department under which to conduct this review. Will you provide the committee with those terms of reference so that we are aware of how the review is being conducted?

Dr LYNHAM: I would term more precisely a review as being a community round table on vegetation management.

Mr CRIPPS: That is not what the SDS says. The SDS on page 4 as I referenced in my question—

Dr LYNHAM: It is just an interpretation of the SDS.

Mr CRIPPS: It says that you are reviewing the current vegetation management framework.

Dr LYNHAM: And we are using a community round table for that review. We are using a vegetation management round table for that review process. I think it is improper of me to fetter the outcomes of a review process by onerous terms of reference. I want this to be an open review process. I want everything to be on the table. That is what an open, consultative, balanced process is.

Mr CRIPPS: Does the round table have terms of reference or is it open slather?

Dr LYNHAM: No, a round table is an open discussion, an open consultative round table. I do not want them fettered by opinions or by suggested processes. I want them to have an open discussion about the very controversial issue of vegetation management in the state. I want to get this right. I know that every time the government changes we have something different in vegetation management laws. I want to see this progress from government to government without any change in vegetation management.

Mr CRIPPS: Okay.

Dr LYNHAM: I want to get this right and part of that process is to have a consultation with a round table of environmental groups, of Indigenous communities, of agricultural groups sitting around a table, chaired appropriately, to make sure that we have an appropriate outcome working into the future to get vegetation management right.

Mr CRIPPS: Minister—

Dr LYNHAM: I know in your communities it is a matter of importance.

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, thank you very much for your answer—

Dr LYNHAM: I know in my community it is a matter of importance.

Mr CRIPPS: It is unfettered. There are no terms of reference.

CHAIR: And I would like to say that it is time and I will ask the member for Gladstone.

Mr BUTCHER: Minister, I refer to page 2 of the SDS, dot point 16. What legislative framework is the government going to put in place to provide for sustainable management of Queensland's water resources?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for the question. I know that this is an issue of great significance to many Queenslanders and those on the committee. As I am sure the member is aware, the Water Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2014—the WROLA Act—includes a number of changes that are not supported by the Queensland government. In January 2015, the Queensland Labor Party went to the Queensland people with a very clear commitment to reinstate ecologically sustainable development principles to the Water Act 2000 and to remove the water development option. On taking office, I obtained Governor in Council approval to defer the commencement of a number of the provisions of the WROLA Act that were due to commence on 18 February 2015. This was a necessary step to deliver on the government's election commitment to act immediately to prevent the commencement of the Newman government's water laws, which will have a detrimental effect on Great Barrier Reef catchment systems.

Following on from this step, I have been reviewing the uncommenced provisions of the act to assess their alignment with government policy. The government when in opposition strongly opposed the WROLA Bill during its debate in parliament last year. We were particularly concerned about the removal of ecologically sustainable development from the Water Act and the inclusion of provisions for a water development option. I intend to introduce amending legislation in the near future for the scrutiny of the community and the Queensland parliament.

The WROLA Act includes provisions that are consistent with government policy that would help to achieve priority business improvements, particularly in water monitoring, licensing management and planning to deliver better services to our clients and stakeholders more broadly. The government is being systematic, pragmatic and considered in working through the alignment of the uncommenced provisions of the WROLA Act with government policy to deliver certainty to stakeholders as soon as possible.

I acknowledge that landholders and the resources sector would like to see some resolution brought to the issue of managing underground water impacts. I also acknowledge that there are mixed views across stakeholders regarding the consistency of the reforms with the government's policies. There are also mixed views across stakeholders in relation to the water development option provisions. I have previously outlined to the House my concerns regarding water development options and the current framework that is proposed that they operate with.

For the benefit of those present on the committee, my concerns can be classified as regarding the lack of appropriate community consultation, transparency and independent science. The granting of a water development option potentially would have significant impacts, especially on small scale producers who potentially will be unable to access additional volumes of water until a determination is made.

Mr CRIPPS: That is rubbish.

Dr LYNHAM: The granting of a water development option, however, does not provide for a consultation process.

Mr CRIPPS: That is rubbish.

Dr LYNHAM: It is instead deferred to the EIS—

Mr CRIPPS: That is complete—

Dr LYNHAM:—well after the water has been locked up.

Mr CRIPPS: That is misleading this committee.

Dr LYNHAM: It is essential that all stakeholders, including small scale producers, are provided with an opportunity to have their say when water access is an issue, including small scale producers.

The lack of suitable criteria in determining the appropriateness of the initial grant of a water development option risks the transparency of the project. The granting of a water right should always be subject to a criteria to ensure that the water is being put towards its best use and this requires the backing of independent science. This will ensure that water is not being unnecessarily tied up for a project that does not stack up financially or environmentally.

The pace of the WROLA act review must be in balance with ensuring that all of the issues raised have been appropriately considered and a suitable way forward has been resolved before proceeding. The review is not getting in the way of the government delivering a good outcome for water allocation and resource management in Queensland. In fact, just this month the government intends to finalise water planning activities for the gulf and Barron plan areas, which will deliver new opportunities for sustainable development in North Queensland.

I know the people of Queensland want this government to get this right. The people of Queensland did not vote for this government to ignore its election commitments and rubberstamp the previous government's legislation in its entirety. I look forward to the introduction of amending legislation and following the considerations of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee.

Mrs LAUGA: I refer to pages 17 and 23 of the SDS. Can the minister describe the benefits delivered in the Fitzroy area through the natural disaster relief arrangements?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Keppel for her question. Obviously, the Fitzroy directly impacts your area, as it does the area of the Minister for Agriculture and also the member for Mirani. The Palaszczuk government is committed to supporting Rockhampton's recovery after Tropical Cyclone Marcia. The Department of Natural Resources and Mines has allocated \$1.12 million in natural disaster relief for Rockhampton and the Fitzroy River area. As we are all aware, Tropical Cyclone Marcia caused extensive damage in Central Queensland. Over 550 homes were damaged and other significant damage was caused as a result of fallen vegetation and floodwaters. Flooding associated with the cyclone damaged vegetation on the banks of rivers, creeks and streams as well as the riverbanks themselves in Rockhampton and its surrounding areas. One million dollars of the funding that was announced in May has been directed towards local projects assisting in the clean-up of cyclone debris in Rockhampton's waterways. This funding means that recovery work can go ahead at 64 waterway sites nominated by the Rockhampton Regional Council to prevent further potential damage to infrastructure and the environment.

An additional \$120,000 has been directed towards the Fitzroy Partnership for River Health to help protect waterway health, including those flowing into the Great Barrier Reef waters. The Fitzroy Basin is the largest water catchment system on the east coast of Australia and supports 120,000 people living in Central Queensland, including Rockhampton. It also supports a vast number of regional jobs through a variety of land uses and industries including grazing, agriculture, conservation, forestry, mining and irrigation. Thus it is vital to ensure that the Fitzroy Basin is in peak condition to further the sustainable development of regional Queensland. Healthier river systems have numerous benefits, including improved water quality in the Fitzroy River flows entering the adjacent Great Barrier Reef World Heritage area. The Queensland government is committed to saving the Great Barrier Reef. This funding, once again, affirms the Palaszczuk Labor government's commitment to environmental sustainability.

Mr BUTCHER: I refer to page 6 of the SDS, point 5 under the service area highlights. How is your government encouraging investment for the next generation of onshore oil and natural gas in Queensland?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Gladstone for the question. It is always good to get back to the previous question from the member for Dalrymple. He asked a question regarding the reservation policy in the state development area. I am happy to address that more fully now.

As you are aware, and as I said before, the easily obtained gas that we used to have in Queensland from Roma and adjacent sources is no longer there. Gas mainly is extracted through the coal seam gas process. Thankfully, we have developed a rich and vital industry and that provides our export gas but it also provides our domestic gas resources. The cost of getting that gas is much higher than it was when we were getting the gas from Roma. It is now \$5.50 per gigajoule. That is up from even in 2011, when it was 85 cents a gigajoule to extract gas from natural resources.

There are a number of commercial policy and regulatory reasons for this increase. Some large industrial customers are concerned that they are not getting gas supply offers that are acceptable both in price and in terms of contract. The Queensland government is very aware of the importance of stable supplies of competitively priced gas for our local power generation, agriculture, industry but, most importantly, a good solid supply of economical gas to manufacturing. Sometimes that is vital and, as I said before, that is essential for the community of Mount Isa. I have been working very hard to achieve that gas pipeline across into Mount Isa.

I understand that you mentioned the reservation policies. There are gas reservation policies in Western Australia at the moment. I am yet to be convinced that they are working in Western Australia. I am yet to be convinced that they are working in other places in the world. They do not guarantee, in

my view, lower gas prices. Unfortunately, what happens if external constraints are put on gas pricing it can stifle and reduce exploration and investment. You may be aware that I have released 11,000 square kilometres in the Cooper Basin for the tender process and we also have the Surat available as well.

I think if we put reservation strategies in place we may find that the stimulus for exploration in those areas is reduced. I do not want to have any disincentives to decreasing the supply of gas in Queensland and I believe that one of the mechanisms for decreasing the price of gas is simply to create more supply and the Mount Isa pipeline and more exploration. Also there are restrictions in gas in New South Wales essentially and I don't know why because we have had a great CSG industry in Queensland. In New South Wales they have inordinate restrictions in developing their gas reserves which also means that gas is being directed into New South Wales areas which, with more supply, could come to Queensland. So I would encourage New South Wales to develop their gas fields as well which will put more supply effectively into the market.

This is why the Palaszczuk government also is developing a gas action plan in close consultation with industry and community stakeholders. The terms of reference are important in the gas action plan. The terms of reference are characterising the Queensland gas sector in terms of fully understanding our gas endowment and the economics of this endowment, identifying barriers to achieving least cost supply—that is important—be they regulatory, technological or other factors such as capital access, social licence or infrastructure issues. And again, as I mentioned before, ensuring that we have transparent markets so that the people of Queensland understand what the market is and why the price is what it is. And ensuring that Queensland capitalises on all possible demand opportunities such as more LNG plants, gas to liquids applications or as feedstock in manufacturing operations. All those things create industry here in Queensland. I have said before we have a very non-diversified state. We have a lot of resource, a lot of agriculture and we have to get out there and build more diversity into our industry. That includes IT, the Advance Queensland policies that we are promoting, but it also includes manufacturing. With a good economical gas supply and a reliable gas supply in Queensland hopefully we can stimulate a good diversified manufacturing base back here in this state. I would like no better than to see—

CHAIR: Minister, we have to move on. Member for Dalrymple?

Mr KNUTH: You mentioned this before in part and I again refer to dot point 4 on page 2 of the SDS stating that the government's objective is growing our resources and agriculture sector and I ask: when will the government tender additional volumes of unallocated water in the gulf water catchment area and, most importantly, how will the government help small-scale producers in these areas?

Dr LYNHAM: As I stated before, the Flinders River release will commence in the third quarter of this year through a competitive release process. I agree with you there is potential for agricultural development in the gulf region, specifically the Flinders where there is a wide range of communities on that river all after water to promote. I have had representatives from—people visit me quite frequently with different plans along that river and it is great to see the enthusiasm of the community. I think one that I remember quite well is the Flinders shire project, the one they have near Hughenden on the Flinders, and also at community cabinet in Townsville I think most of the deputations I had in the community cabinet in Townsville were concerning development in the Flinders region. And I can see the member for Hinchinbrook nodding his head. He has obviously had the same experience as me. So it is good to see that there are enthusiastic people out there.

Mr CRIPPS: They are pretty keen in the Gilbert too. They are pretty keen to go.

Dr LYNHAM: I will get back to you.

Mr CRIPPS: There was a big meeting at Georgetown the other day too amongst people who want to do small-scale irrigation.

Dr LYNHAM: We have had that argument. Importantly, identification of new reserves has been based on robust science by the CSIRO that has demonstrated it is possible to make water available and not impact on existing users and the environment. During the development of the plan amendments stakeholders did request an equitable and transparent unallocated release process and that unallocated water will be distributed in a way that would allow for a mixture of large and small-scale developments. I mentioned before the previous former minister's water development options would have virtually wiped out small-scale developments.

Mr CRIPPS: That is nonsense. You don't understand what you are talking about. That much is clear.

Dr LYNHAM: Here we have now taken it into account by consultation with a mixture of large and small-scale developments. That is possible with release of a tender process, to cater for both large and small-scale processes. That is what our department is in discussion about now: how best to release that tender process. No unallocated water, as I said before, in the Gilbert until we have had IFED look at their EIS. It is important that IFED get a go and look at their EIS. He is touting—I don't think IFED would ever have a go, despite what I saw on this secret protocol.

Mr CRIPPS: Why? Why do you have an inconsistent position between the Flinders and the Gilbert?

Dr LYNHAM: There is no inconsistent position.

Mr CRIPPS: It is very inconsistent. It is in contrast.

Dr LYNHAM: IFED would never have had a chance with you. Not one chance.

Mr CRIPPS: But you said that the water for their three rivers project is inclusive of the Flinders water.

Dr LYNHAM: Mr Chair, he is going for large-scale producers now. He has already said that small-scale producers have got no chance for his water development offering.

Mr CRIPPS: No. That's what he said.

Dr LYNHAM: So we have got no water released on your plan and here I am working with people on the Flinders and the Gilbert who want water in sustainable fashion and here we are.

Mr CRIPPS: You've got trouble, mate, because you should read what you said in the last session and work it out for yourself.

Mr KNUTH: What you are saying is the small-scale producers now have an opportunity?

Dr LYNHAM: Absolutely. It is all in the way that we phrase the tender process and how we work the tender process. As I said, consultation and balance are extremely important for any consultation process and with outcomes as well consultation and balance are very important. There are ways and means. We are releasing the water through a competitive tender process, but it is how we frame that competitive tender process to see how we can best achieve outcomes. I am happy, as I always am, to have further consultations with obviously active members in that area. I have for the Herbert that response to your question now if you want me to go through it now or can I provide it to you afterwards?

CHAIR: Afterwards will do.

Dr LYNHAM: Sure.

Mr KNUTH: I refer to dot point 4 on page 4 of the SDS and I ask: will the minister explain the government's vision for vegetation management in Queensland and how the minister plans to minimise any impact on farmers and graziers in electorates like Dalrymple, Mount Isa and Cook?

Mr MILLAR: Also Gregory while you are there.

Dr LYNHAM: Vegetation management is extremely important.

Mr KNUTH: Minister, can I add Gregory to that?

Dr LYNHAM: It is very important that we get this right in Queensland, there is no doubt. During the time of the Beattie and Bligh governments the Vegetation Management Act 1999 brought clearing rates down from 750,000 hectares per year in 1999-2000 to around 150,000 hectares per year in the 2011-12 period. The Palaszczuk government recognises the important contribution that vegetation management has made to reducing Australia's carbon emissions. There is no doubt about that. That has worked. But we also realise that there are necessities for clearing and we do respect the heritage of our agricultural communities and we do know that the majority of agriculture users respect their land and want to look after their land. We respect that. We also know that canegrowers as well want to see the Great Barrier Reef maintained. They do not want to see the reef destroyed. We know that we can work together to achieve the same aim. We know there are areas, say in the gulf, where I could take an environmental group and look at those areas, the areas invested with prickly acacia or something like that, and say, 'Look, would you mind this area being more for agriculture?', and I am sure they would say, 'No problems.' You know, there is water there, you have got an infestation, clean it up and that is suitable for agriculture. There is a balance available. There is not a thing of let's not clear or let's all clear. There is a balance available and achieving that balance is very, very important.

I also understand that people are doing it tough out there. There is a drought out there at the moment and they are doing it tough. That is why—you are probably wondering why—I have not rushed into anything to do with vegetation management. I want to get this right. I have been talking to all groups.

I have a great relationship with AgForce, Queensland Farmers' Federation, great relations with the agricultural community, and we still have a great relationship with the environmental groups. So we have that now. I do not want to put any terms or conditions on what we want to achieve. At our first vegetation roundtable meeting we have had some give and take by both groups. So instead of being poles apart we have got these groups being closer together. I think working through the roundtable process the closer we get these people together the better the outcome, the easier the decision and, hopefully, just hopefully, we can have some long-term commitments through vegetation management that is not influenced by politics, that is not influenced by a change in government. You are laughing there because you score these shocking political points on this.

Mr CRIPPS: I think that is a ridiculous statement.

Dr LYNHAM: It is shocking political points on this. It is shocking political points that you are achieving for a sole political purpose.

Mr CRIPPS: What a terrible thing to say.

Dr LYNHAM: You are a political animal. I am here to represent and to work with the people of Queensland to achieve a desirable outcome.

Mr MILLAR: They are graziers. They were able to manage the land that they were able to manage without being interfered with by bureaucracy.

Dr LYNHAM: Look, one must take a consultative approach. We also understand that a lot of Australia's—some of Australia's agricultural land is being sold to foreign interests and do they have the same amount of heritage, the same amount of care for land as an Australia farmer does?

Mr CRIPPS: That is out of left field.

Dr LYNHAM: All those issues must be taken into account and that is why I am hearing all those issues. We understand that environmental heritage and the way that the environment is managed in the agricultural community is very important, as it is to a person in South-East Queensland.

Mr MILLAR: The best people to do that are the farmers.

Dr LYNHAM: I would ask the DG would he go further and explain the vegetation management framework.

Mr CRIPPS: Save him, James.

Mr Purtill: I am very happy to explain the basis for the vegetation management community round table. We are looking to ensure that any change implemented is considered and balanced and promotes the interests of not only agriculture, sustainable agriculture, reducing carbon emissions and particularly external impacts beyond the boundaries of the property as well, such as impacts on the Great Barrier Reef which affect a whole range of people if we look at the recent interest from UNESCO. We will have AgForce, the QFF, Canegrowers will represent agricultural interests, we have got TWS, the WWF and the Environmental Defenders Office representing the conservation sector. We will have them in the room. That is a very challenging proposition, but we need to have all parties in the room with an independent chair to be able to work through the optimal compromise, the optimal balance between the interests of all parties. It is always a challenge and I am sure you have experienced that in your own constituencies, the balance of those interests. It falls upon the department and the portfolio to identify competing interests, to identify the best possible outcomes that can be achieved for all parties. We are expecting that that group will convene in the near future under an independent chair and the first report will be furnished to the minister in the first quarter of 2016. The idea of that is to provide an improved framework for the management of native vegetation in Queensland, but we would concede that there are likely to be points upon which consensus may not be reached.

Mr MILLAR: That will be a certainty.

Mr Purtill: I still think it is a worthwhile pursuit to have those parties in the room and we will provide them with the factual basis upon which.

Mr MILLAR: Continuing the current vegetation management laws are a worthwhile pursuit.

CHAIR: Thank you, DG. Opposition question?

Mr CRIPPS: Thank you, Mr Chairman. I will continue in this line of questioning since we are on the topic already. Minister, how are you going to reconcile the recommendations that come out of your stakeholder consultation and your unfettered roundtable consultation with the election commitments that Labor gave in relation to repealing certain sections of the Vegetation Management Act that were put in place by the former LNP government?

Dr LYNHAM: Every person comes to that round table knowing that that is an election commitment.

Mr CRIPPS: But you have already given certain election commitments and you have been sprouting your commitment to your election commitments, which we all understand. How are you going to reconcile differences between the recommendations that come out of the roundtable process with the election commitments that you have given?

Dr LYNHAM: Firstly, I note the humorous bent you put on having a community round table where people actually discuss things. I note that in the first part of your statement you smiled and waved your arms. Consultation: it is an anathema. You do not understand the word 'consultation'. I think most—

Mr CRIPPS: No, that is not my question. You are trying to waste the time—

CHAIR: Order! Member for Hinchinbrook, your question was a hypothetical one, anyway. I would like you to sit there and let the minister—

Mr CRIPPS: No, it is not a hypothetical question, Mr Chairman. If you give me an opportunity to say, it is not hypothetical to say that the government has given commitments and then the minister said that the roundtable discussion will be unfettered. They are in conflict with one another. If the round table is unfettered but the Labor Party has already given election commitments, which one will give when the recommendations from the round table turn up?

CHAIR: It is up to you, Minister, if you want to answer that. Member for Hinchinbrook, I would appreciate it if you do not come in over the top of me again.

Dr LYNHAM: I am reflecting on the way that the question was asked. One could see the ridicule that he held for the process of consultation. He asked a question of consultation, but it does not exist—

Mr CRIPPS: You do not want to answer the question.

Dr LYNHAM: I will get to the question.

Mr CRIPPS: You want to make up stories about what I looked like when I asked the question, but you do not want to answer the question. Answer it.

CHAIR: Order!

Dr LYNHAM: The aim of the exercise is to achieve the objectives and outcomes that the community wants. It is also to achieve the principles of the 2012 legislation commitment. We want to see clearing rates not skyrocket. We want to see clearing rates at a sustainable level on land that is appropriate, in a sustainable way. We want to see this balance. That is all our election commitments have said. We want to go back to where we were in 2012—not every tick and box and cross and legislation and God knows what, but the principles and outcomes of the 2012 legislation. How we get there with this community round table is what is important. I am just amazed at the way that the question was asked about how consultation obviously did not exist. I know your doors were not open to specific groups.

Mr CRIPPS: Stop! You are going off on a tangent again. That is not the question that I asked.

Dr LYNHAM: You asked how we were going to achieve this—

Mr CRIPPS: We will move on, because you have nothing else to contribute.

Dr LYNHAM:—and whether there is any conflict. There is no conflict between these two elements.

CHAIR: We will move on. Next question.

Mr CRIPPS: I refer to page 2 of the SDS and the government's stated intention to amend the VMA to minimise the clearing of vegetation. What evidence can you provide to this committee to demonstrate that the clearing of vegetation is not being minimised under the existing vegetation management framework?

Dr LYNHAM: As you are aware, we are presently working under the previous legislation because I do not want this to be a rushed process. I do not want to suggest that we are encouraging any clearing. We are working very closely with the agricultural community. Specifically, the agricultural community agrees with us that if anyone is performing any illegal clearing, we will come down on them very, very hard indeed.

The SLATS figures are released and I am getting those details for you. The Statewide Landcover and Trees Study is known as SLATS. It is a major vegetation monitoring initiative to monitor, as you are aware, the overall cover of woody vegetation in Queensland. We fund it with \$1.2 million annually to monitor vegetation across the state. The size of information analysed leads to a general two-year period between the satellite scan and the SLATS report.

Mr CRIPPS: Mr Chairman, while he is taking advice from his director-general, my question relates to a statement in the SDS to say that the government intends to make changes to minimise the clearing of vegetation. What evidence can the minister provide this committee that the clearing of vegetation is not being minimised under the existing framework? That is my question; not the SLATS report, not how much you fund it or the government funds it. You have made a statement in the SDS. Can you prove what you have said?

Dr LYNHAM: I am getting the figures.

CHAIR: When you have asked the question, the minister is entitled to answer the question the way that he likes. I would appreciate it, now that you have asked the question, if you let him answer it.

Dr LYNHAM: I am just making sure the figures are accurate for the committee. That is why the delay, to make sure that there is accuracy in these figures. Some of the figures require checking by the department to ascertain what sort of clearing was undertaken. I want to be completely sure.

Mr Purtill: We have a hole punched through the numbers. I want to give him a fresh copy.

Mr CRIPPS: Should we move on to another question and allow them to come back to it, Mr Chairman? Would you like to take the question on notice?

CHAIR: Can you give us the information, Minister?

Dr LYNHAM: We can advise there has been an increase in 2011-12 and we will have some figures next month for the proceeding period. There is some delay because some of the figures do require some on-ground checking, as well.

CHAIR: Can you take the question on notice so you can get it right?

Dr LYNHAM: We will take it on notice.

Mr CRIPPS: I wonder, given the complexity of the figures involved, if you might take a couple of—

Dr LYNHAM: It is not the complexity of the figures involved. It is the amount of checking that is required because there has to be some on-ground monitoring. You cannot just go on raw data based on the SLATS figures. Sometimes you have to send a departmental officer out to make sure.

Mr CRIPPS: I quite agree.

Dr LYNHAM: That is why there is a delay.

Mr CRIPPS: That is fine. I have no problem with that. However, the statement was made in the SDS that changes will be made to minimise the clearing of vegetation. My question was, what evidence can you provide to demonstrate that the clearing of vegetation is not currently being minimised? When I am talking about those things, some of the things I would like to know are: what component of the figures that you present includes vegetation managed under each of the 15 self-assessable codes that cover routine low-risk property management and maintenance activities; what component of those figures includes vegetation such as mulga, which is pulled for feedstock in drought declared areas of Queensland, recognising that the drought is very widespread and deep at the moment; and what component of those figures includes vegetation cleared as part of the fully assessed and approved high-value agriculture application?

Dr LYNHAM: That is exactly why we check. When you are looking through a satellite you may see mulga clearing. We understand that farmers have to clear mulga for stock. That is why we check.

Mr CRIPPS: When you are minimising the amount of vegetation cleared under the vegetation management framework, what is to say that the current vegetation that is being managed or cleared is not necessary or appropriate?

Dr LYNHAM: We have not tabled any figures on that.

Mr CRIPPS: But you have made an assertion in your SDS that you will make changes to minimise the clearing of vegetation. It is incongruous for you to say that in your SDS and then assert something different in front of me.

Dr LYNHAM: We will have those figures in a month. Those figures will be there in a month and they will show a trend or not a trend.

Mr HART: Are you saying that you have made the statement without having the figures available?

Dr LYNHAM: We have not tabled them. They take some checking.

Mr MILLAR: It is in your SDS.

Dr LYNHAM: You cannot make statements without these being thoroughly checked.

Mr CRIPPS: Why did you make a statement without those figures being checked? Why did you sign off on your SDS and present it to the parliament without being able to support your assertion in your SDS that you will implement changes? In 2015-16, page 2—

Dr LYNHAM: The policy objective—

Mr CRIPPS: I am sorry, Minister. In 2015-16, one of the department's key priorities is to implement changes to the vegetation management framework to appropriately manage and minimise the clearing of vegetation. You have asserted there is some deficiency.

Dr LYNHAM: It is a policy objective of this government to minimise clearing.

Mr CRIPPS: What in the current framework means that clearing of vegetation is not currently being minimised?

Dr LYNHAM: For the clearing of vegetation, I have the SLATS figures at the present time. There will be announcements next month. But it is the policy objective of this government. I do not want to release inaccurate data to you. I want these things to be checked.

Mr CRIPPS: I want the SLATS data to be accurate, too.

Dr LYNHAM: The policy objective of this government is to minimise unnecessary clearing. We only have to look back on history. In 1999-2000—these are checked figures—757,790 cleared.

Mr CRIPPS: That was before the VMA, which was introduced in 1999 and came into effect on 1 January 2000, if I am correct.

Dr LYNHAM: 2010-11, 91,690, which is a massive decrease. You have that history. The policy of this government is to minimise unnecessary clearing. If you look historically you can see it. I do not have those figures yet, but those figures will be there next month. There will be announcements regarding—

Mr CRIPPS: Yet you can assert in your service delivery statement that these changes will occur. Doesn't that pre-empt your public consultation process and also your roundtable process?

Dr LYNHAM: I can compare our process any day with your non-consultative, ham-fisted approach to clearing.

Mr CRIPPS: That is not the point. Haven't you tied yourself up—

Dr LYNHAM: There is no tie up—

CHAIR: Thank you both very much, Minister and member. I would like to move on and I will ask a question myself. It should be fairly easy to get around this one. I refer to page 23, paragraph 18, of Budget Paper No. 5, which references an increase in funding due to the renewal of the GABSI program. How is the government implementing this very important program, which delivers significant water savings to regional Queensland? It is a very important issue, Minister.

Dr LYNHAM: I thank you for the question, Mr Chair. I know it is a very important issue and I know that you understand and appreciate the vital significance of the Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative. It is a \$450 million national program seeking to address declining pressure in the Great Artesian Basin. Unfortunately, the federal Liberal and National government failed to respond to calls from rural stakeholders for continued funding for GABSI to complete the outstanding works by not providing funding in the 2014 budget. However, I am appreciative, as I am sure all members opposite are, of their reconsideration of this issue and the announcement in October last year that they will continue to fund GABSI.

Under GABSI, the Queensland and Commonwealth governments provide funding for landholders to rehabilitate uncontrolled bores and replace bore drains with piping. The Great Artesian Basin plays a pivotal role in sustaining and developing economies in communities in inland Queensland. Water from the basin supports town water supplies, pastoral and mining activities and natural springs of significant cultural and environmental value. The development of this water resource in the late 19th and early 20th centuries resulted in uncontrolled water flows into open drains as the early technologies used did not allow for the control of this water source. The ongoing uncontrolled flows from the basin resulted in declines in pressure, which affected the localised water pressure, resulting in cessation of flow of both bores and important springs.

Over the past 15 years of GABSI, \$178 million worth of work has been completed on bore rehabilitation and piping in Queensland, with the Queensland government contributing \$63 million. The government has signed the GABSI project agreement confirming the state's participation in the GABSI

Phase 4 Program. This follows the Commonwealth's announcement on 16 October 2014 of a total of \$15.9 million of new funding over three years for GABSI. In June this year, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines sought submissions from eligible landholders to participate in the new program. In late July, Queensland submitted to the Commonwealth an initial works program identifying urgent projects that are eligible for Commonwealth funding. In the coming weeks, Queensland intends to seek a variation to the works program, identifying all additional eligible priority projects to be completed in 2015-16. The delivery model for the new program will be similar to a grants program based on submissions from landholders. The state's matching contribution will be new funds, dependent on projects proposed by landholders and the Commonwealth's approval of the works program.

Under GABSI and its predecessor programs, almost 200,000 megalitres per annum of flow has been saved in Queensland through the rehabilitation of 676 uncontrolled bores and the replacement of 14,057 kilometres of bore drains with pipes and troughs. The rehabilitation work has occurred across the entire basin footprint in Queensland. Landholders also rehabilitate bores and remove bore drains outside any government programs over this period. In Queensland, there remain 215 bores to be rehabilitated and approximately 5,500 kilometres of associated bore drains to be replaced with piping. These bores and associated bore drains waste an estimated 80,000 megalitres per annum of groundwater from the basin. The effectiveness of the program to date has resulted in increased flows from remaining uncapped bores. Inability to complete the remaining bore and bore drain remediation works could undermine the significant investments and achievements to date. The continuation of the longstanding partnership between the Commonwealth and the states and local water users is essential if sustainability of the Great Artesian Basin resource is to be assured.

CHAIR: I now refer to page 2 of Budget Paper No. 5 where it states that it is the department's aim to work cooperatively and collaboratively with other line agencies in delivering services and outcomes. How has DNRM worked with DAF to contribute to drought support measures in drought affected communities?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank you for this important question. Our government understands fully that prolonged drought is the greatest challenge currently facing the agricultural sector in Queensland. It is the most widespread drought on record, with more than 80 per cent of Queensland drought declared. My department, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, will continue to contribute to the Queensland government's drought relief measures. We recognise that ongoing drought support is needed to assist the sector throughout 2015-16. Presently my department administers 13,911 primary production leases. Of those, 7,724 are drought declared.

For 2014-15 the department administered drought relief of \$4.1 million. For 2015-16 we are applying three measures of drought relief. We are continuing the rent rebate, which amounted to approximately \$3.2 million in foregone revenue during 2014-15. That level of funding will continue in 2015-16. We are also continuing the water licence rebate which waived the annual \$71.50 water licence fee for around 13,500 drought declared properties. In the previous financial year this accounted for more than that \$960,000 in foregone revenue.

We are introducing a third measure for 2015-16 that will provide for hardship deferral to be available to all drought declared category 11 leases. These leases cover primary production purposes, including agriculture, viticulture and aquaculture. My department will be delivering the rebate using a transparent and equitable approach to move to a flat percentage rebate that will be made available to all drought declared category 11 leases which are paid above the minimum rent.

A flat 12 per cent rebate approach in 2015-16 increases the number of landholders receiving a rebate from around 3,450 to 4,650. Where landholders opt to defer payment, no penalty interest will accrue. The water licence rebates will continue essentially unchanged. This customer focused delivery of drought relief support by my department has been designed and implemented to make these support measures as easy and efficient as possible and avoids any need for landholders to apply.

Where landholders are eligible, their rebate is calculated by the department and adjustment notices are issued. This approach also minimises red tape for drought declared primary producers and allows the department to channel all the allocated foregone revenue to landholders. All up for 2015-16 we anticipate our drought measures will amount to approximately \$4.1 million in foregone revenue. This is just part of the broader four-year \$52.1 million whole-of-government drought assistance package that our government is delivering to affected landholders. I believe one of the government owned corporations gave some independent relief as well.

Mrs LAUGA: Referencing page 2 of the SDS at dot point 4, how are you planning to create jobs in a diversified economy by growing our resource sector?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for the question. I know the member values the significant contribution the collaborative drilling initiative has had in attracting innovative exploration investment to the state as does the Palaszczuk government. This is an initiative with a long, successful history in Queensland. As the Labor Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, I am proud to continue a program that was introduced by Henry Palaszczuk as part of the Beattie government back in 2016—and a wonderful program it is.

I believe that it is a testament to the success of this program over the intervening decade that industry and governments from both sides of the political divide continue together to advance this program to provide contributions towards the costs of drilling in underexplored areas or to test innovative exploration ideas. Commencing in 2006 under the smart mining program, the collaborative drilling initiative has supported the exploration industry over nine rounds, providing assistance for over 50 per cent of the project, up to \$150,000. Encouraging companies to initiate high risk, more innovative exploration drilling in their suite of projects was of crucial importance when the government rolled out the collaborative drilling initiative in 2006. All sectors across the resource industry have been eligible under this initiative, with junior explorers in particular benefitting from these collaborative drilling grants—explorers who are vital to the ongoing economic prosperity of the state.

In May this year I announced 16 exploration projects sharing in \$1.43 million in grants under round 9 of the initiative. These projects will target gold, copper gold, base metals, graphite and phosphate in greenfield and brownfield areas across Queensland. Successful applicants in current and past rounds have come from all mineral and energy sectors, including base and precious metals, coal, coal seam gas and geothermal.

The Palaszczuk government supports the responsible, sustainable development of resource sector projects that will deliver jobs, regional development opportunities and ongoing economic benefits for Queensland. Initiatives such as this one are vital to unlocking the resources that will support mining projects and jobs into the future across Queensland. The initiative has been highly successful in encouraging companies to spend capital on high risk, more innovative ideas in both greenfield and brownfield regions.

For the \$5.99 million paid to 52 companies for 72 projects over eight rounds, \$18.4 million was spent by the companies themselves. This equates to industry leverage of over three to one and is regarded by the government as a significant return on its investment. This initiative announced achieves 33 technical successes associated with new mineralisation. The longevity of such an initiative is demonstrated by the industry's public support and continued submission of applications seeking grants across all rounds.

Companies have provided positive feedback, including those that have stated that their projects would not have proceeded without the funding support. The initiative has been focused towards the end result rather than the process itself—that is, to support companies within a highly flexible framework.

To this end, I emphasise how the collaborative drilling initiative continues to evolve in order to reflect the realities of the exploration industry. This is exemplified by the period of drilling changing from the original 12 months to 21 months for rounds 8 and 9 as well as moving from one round to two rounds per year from round 6 to reduce the waiting period to submit applications.

Collaborative drilling projects provide the resources sector with new and valuable information about Queensland's mineral and energy potential to further stimulate ongoing exploration investment. More exploration leads to new discoveries which, in turn, leads to new projects, with jobs and flow-on economic benefits for our local and regional communities. I am committed to delivering enhanced economic outcomes for local and regional communities. I am pleased to continue the collaborative drilling initiative that has delivered such a positive outcome since 2006.

CHAIR: I call the member for Gregory.

Mr MILLAR: Minister, I refer to page 4 of the SDS and the department's intention to prepare legislation for the management of Queensland's network of stock routes. I refer to the minister's press release on 30 July relating to councils taking over responsibility for issuing permits to use stock routes. Can the minister please advise whether councils will collect and control 100 per cent of the revenue taken from the issuing of stock route permits? Will the department continue to provide an annual allocation for capital and maintenance activities on Queensland's stock route networks?

Dr LYNHAM: Stock routes are vital and an historic part of Queensland.

Mr MILLAR: Absolutely.

Dr LYNHAM: We all appreciate stock route management is important to get this right. We are trying to reduce red tape and trying to reduce duplication. A lot of the processes related to stock routes were managed by both local government and state government. Local government would collect the fees and pass them on to the state or vice versa. We know that a lot of stock routes in Queensland are not used a lot of the time these days.

Mr MILLAR: They are getting used at the moment.

Dr LYNHAM: Not for the movement of stock but for grazing purposes. Some are still vital for the movement of stock throughout Queensland. Others provide valuable agistment to adjacent property owners as well.

Mr MILLAR: Councils want the revenue. They need the revenue.

Dr LYNHAM: I know. A key improvement to the current roles is to reduce duplication of the roles of state and local governments. Local governments will play a lead role in managing the stock route rural network. It comes with significant responsibilities.

Mr MILLAR: Councils in my region and all over Queensland what to know whether they are going to get the revenue. They need the revenue.

Dr LYNHAM: There is no doubt that the revenue—

Mr MILLAR: One hundred per cent of the revenue.

Dr LYNHAM: The revenue can be used by local governments to improve their essential network. The existing role of local governments in managing the stock routes will be acknowledged. It is proposed that they will be given more flexibility, including the ability not only to collect the revenue but also to keep the revenue from relevant users of the stock route. By restructuring the fee framework it is proposed that local governments will be able to keep the majority of revenue from new and existing permits issued over stock routes for activities such as short-term agistment, travel and grazing.

Mr MILLAR: Can I clarify that. You say the majority so that is not 100 per cent? So you are ruling out 100 per cent?

Dr LYNHAM: We are again—I know it is anathema to you—entering into a consultative process with local governments to thrash out these issues.

Mr MILLAR: That is not the issue here.

Dr LYNHAM: That is exactly what we are doing. I have already had representations from local government about the management of stock routes. Again, I hate to tell you this, but we are going to get it right. We are sitting down with local government to work this out. We have introduced this concept to local governments. We have had some consultation. As we move forward, and before legislation is introduced into the House, further consultation is necessary. I can hear that you have obviously had some representations and concerns and that is why you are asking the question. It is good of you to ask that question. We want to hear from local governments out there. We will be meeting with them continually to thrash this out and reach a situation where we manage stock routes effectively in the state.

Some of the infrastructure on stock routes is a bit worn and torn. The improvement of that infrastructure will be managed by the state to get stock routes into a more productive state before we hand them over.

Mr MILLAR: So you are committing to an annual maintenance budget?

Dr LYNHAM: No, I am not committing to that. I am committing to having consultation with the groups. I am also committing to making sure that when the stock routes are handed over to local government they are handed over in good repair.

Mr HART: I refer to page 7 of the SDS and the number of service measures for the area of mining services. The number of service measures in the SDS as opposed to last year's SDS has declined from five to three. The notes accompanying the SDS provide explanations for the discontinuation of two service measures, but they have not been replaced with a measure that is more effective or informative. What does this say about the Palaszczuk government's accountability and transparency when the performance of half of your department can be fairly reflected by only three service area measures?

Dr LYNHAM: The percentage of new production tenure applications granted within timelines agreed between the department and industry partners was reported in the 2014-15 SDS under the mining petroleum service area. It is difficult to provide the numbers for this measure due to the specificity of the discontinued measure. One example is that the measure did not fully reflect the actual number

of dealings and was not a genuine reflection of the true number of dealings. It did not reflect the true volume of work undertaken. Basically they were discontinued because the standards simply no longer apply. The percentage of serious accidents with high potential incident investigations completed within prescribed times was reported in 2014-15 under the mining safety and health services area.

Mr HART: But how can the true performance of your department be reflected in only three service area measures?

Dr LYNHAM: I will ask the DG.

Mr Purtill: How long is a piece of string in terms of how many performance measures are reflected in the Service Delivery Statements. We are attempting to always, regardless of which year—

Mr HART: Are you trying to minimise them?

Mr Purtill: We are looking to provide diagnostic measures that reflect on the investment in each of those particular areas without it being a laundry list. It is always very difficult to know where to discontinue—

Mr HART: Three is not really a laundry list; it is only a very short list.

Mr Purtill: I suppose it depends on your perspective of what is required to reflect on the investment and whether—

Mr HART: It is quite an investment, would you not think?

Mr Purtill: In the totality of the department I would say it is standard practice and reflects about the level of performance measures that have been reflected in Service Delivery Statements since I have been working in government across-the-board.

Mr HART: So across-the-board of government do you think three in every department is okay?

Mr Purtill: If we have a look at our outputs across-the-board, we have discontinued the measures, reflected by advice back from the Queensland Audit Office, because of the move towards efficiency and effectiveness measures rather than, if you like, busyness measures. We are developing our standards of efficiency and we will always be looking towards future Service Delivery Statements to do that. We will work with not only the Audit Office but Treasury to continually try to improve the performance information in the Service Delivery Statements, but we do not want to get hogtied into continuing to report against measures that have either had their day—

Mr HART: It is about accountability and transparency at the end of the day.

Mr Purtill: Absolutely. That is why we continually improve the measures.

Mr CRIPPS: That is what we keep getting told, and we would like it to be reflected in the Service Delivery Statements that come forward from the department.

CHAIR: Do you have a question?

Mr CRIPPS: Yes, I do have a question. I refer to the answer to question on notice No. 11, Minister, and the release of land for exploration in the Cooper Basin in a manner consistent with the management of strategic environmental areas which is also an issue canvassed on page 6 of the SDS. I note in the minister's answer to the question that he states that the Palaszczuk government will commence yet another review—this one into the suitability of the current level of environmental protection of rivers in the Cooper, Georgina and Diamantina catchments. The minister also states in his answer that the Palaszczuk government remains concerned about the repeal of the Wild Rivers Act. Will the minister rule out the reintroduction of the Wild Rivers Act or a similar piece of legislation during this term?

Dr LYNHAM: Thank you for the question. It is a very important question and this area is very important to us. I have met with the traditional owners. I will be out in the Cooper Basin in October, again meeting with the traditional owners and also meeting with some of the landowners out there. I have also been to the South Australian side of the border. I flew into Moomba and went up to the Queensland border and had a look for myself, and I could see what a beautiful area the Cooper is. As I said, the Cooper Basin does not respect state borders. The Cooper Basin moves across into South Australia. South Australia has been mining resources like petroleum and gas in this area for many, many years.

Mr CRIPPS: So have we.

Dr LYNHAM: We have too, with the Jackson oilfield down south. We had consistency with exploration and production with the wild rivers legislation when it was in place. So we had wild river legislation at the same time that we had petroleum production in that area. South Australia has also

shown that such things can coexist. It has to be managed well and there is never a better government to manage such a situation while there is a Palaszczuk Labor government. Minister Miles, with the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, will be following me and I suggest that question be asked of him about pristine rivers, especially pristine rivers in the Cooper Basin area.

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, I want to ask a question about the Queensland natural resource management program. I would like some assistance from the department to try to identify where this year's funding for the Queensland natural resource management program is located in the SDS for the Department of Natural Resources and Mines. I cannot seem to locate it. For the benefit of the committee, is the minister able to undertake to table a full program costing schedule for projects and initiatives under the Queensland natural resource management program for this financial year?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Hinchinbrook for the question. Can I pass that question on to our CFO?

Mr CRIPPS: Of course.

Ms Platt: Most of the funding for the NRM investment is contained under the grants and subsidies expense line.

Mr CRIPPS: That is on what page?

Ms Platt: Page 17.

Mr CRIPPS: That is on page 17 in the controlled income statement, under grants and subsidies, notes 5, 12 and 19. Are they explained in the notes at the back?

Ms Platt: Yes, they are.

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, for the benefit of the committee, are you able to undertake to table a full program schedule of projects and initiatives under this year's Queensland natural resource management program? It is a program that is very dear to my heart. I would like to know how it is shaping up for this financial year.

Dr LYNHAM: I have sought advice from the department and they would be happy to provide those figures.

Mr CRIPPS: The CFO is quite right about those notes too. I had overlooked them.

CHAIR: Thank you very much. I call the member for Dalrymple.

Mr KNUTH: I am all good, Mr Chairman.

CHAIR: I call the member for Keppel.

Mrs LAUGA: I refer to page 2, dot point 10 of Budget Paper No. 5 which states that a key strategic opportunity includes 'strengthening relationships with stakeholders to develop policies in a considered, consultative way'. How has the Queensland government balanced environmental, social and economic outcomes in its decision-making?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Keppel. Obviously in your version of the Oxford dictionary the word 'consultation' is present. The Palaszczuk government is very aware and believes fully that striking a balance is of the utmost importance to govern effectively through many terms of a very successful government. The Palaszczuk government was elected as a government that would listen and consult and, as Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, I am intent to honour this commitment. I personally believe that engagement with all views from all stakeholders is vital to developing and implementing well-rounded, tested, balanced policies that are reflective of the views of the broader community and in the interests of all Queenslanders.

I am pleased to discuss the establishment of two resources round tables. The Queensland government has opened the door to both industry and community consultation through the establishment of these round tables which allow me to directly hear the views and perspectives of a broad cross-section of the Queensland community. The resources ministerial round table consists of a number of resource companies and peak industry bodies representing the mineral, coal, petroleum, gas and exploration sectors. The round table seeks to promote innovation and technology adoption in the resources sector, as well as the streamlining of regulatory frameworks. By collaborating to address the current challenges faced by the sector and working to identify future opportunities, this round table will be a key strategic asset for the Queensland government.

The community ministerial round table—the first of its kind for this portfolio—reflects my commitment to consult with all stakeholders involved in the sustainable development of Queensland. This round table will include representatives from key sectors to ensure that all relevant points of view

are obtained. The agricultural sector, conservation sector, representatives from natural resource management groups and representatives of the Indigenous sector and unions will be all invited to attend, as well as obviously the resource sector.

In addition to these roundtable discussions, I have had numerous meetings with stakeholders in the agricultural, resources and environmental sectors. Since taking office, I have met with 25 industry groups, nine environmental organisations and over 100 businesses in order to assist in making balanced decisions as minister, and that does not include telephone conversations. These round tables, along with other ongoing consultations, send a clear message that, unlike the previous government, the Palaszczuk government is committed to consultation and supporting the sustainable and balanced development of our resources sector.

CHAIR: Earlier there was some discussion from the member for Dalrymple with reference to the Atherton development scheme. Are you in a position to provide any further information?

Dr LYNHAM: Can I make a correction too, Mr Chair, regarding a previous statement?

CHAIR: Yes.

Dr LYNHAM: In terms of the statement on stock routes and the current arrangements where local governments have responsibility for maintaining facilities, the network will remain obviously but the state remains committed—and this is the specific point that I was talking to—to funding the capital works program for water infrastructure facilities supporting the network so that when the local governments have it the water infrastructure is in good stead.

To go back to your question, member for Dalrymple, the Queensland government supports sustainable economic development opportunities including in the southern Tablelands area of the Wet Tropics. Bananas and sugarcane are the key crops in that area and also livestock and grazing. The Department of Natural Resources and Mines intends to release a draft resource operations plan for river catchments in this region for public consultation in the latter half of this year. The draft ROP will implement the water management framework established under the Wet Tropics water resource plan that was released in 2013. Representatives from all sectors including conservation, irrigation, seafood and tourism have all had a role here. We are progressing to implementing the water resource plan and the department has ensured that the ROP provides for the sustainable management of water in this area.

In the Herbert, the volume of unallocated water is 12,450 megalitres out of a total volume of high-flow unallocated water of 245,000 megalitres. The total volume of general unallocated water is 1,750 megalitres. But we do hope, as we always do, to convert licences to tradeable water allocations to make this more sustainable. The proposal for a master plan for integrated agriculture and power generation for the southern Atherton Tablelands indicates that over 100,000 hectares of undeveloped land may be suitable for agriculture. Council believes that appropriate infrastructure in the upper catchments of the Herbert and Tully also could reduce flooding in the coastal plains around Tully and Ingham during the wet season. The council's interest is the possibility to increase the level of agricultural production in North Queensland. The concept covers a number of portfolios. To the best of my knowledge, there has been no formal submission on feasibility work at this time. Are you aware of that?

Mr KNUTH: That is correct.

Dr LYNHAM: We look forward to seeing further information. My department will continue to work with council, as we will with you, as we have demonstrated in the past. We will continue to work with you to clarify what the council is after with this project and to see if we can assist where we possibly can.

CHAIR: There was also some discussion with regard to vegetation management that you were going to make available to the committee and also all costings of initiatives.

Dr LYNHAM: We will have to get back to the committee. When are the answers due?

CHAIR: Twelve o'clock on Friday. There is no hurry!

Dr LYNHAM: We will get back to you on those questions.

CHAIR: On both of those.

Dr LYNHAM: Yes, both of those.

CHAIR: The time allocated for the consideration of the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines has now expired. Minister, do you have any questions that were taken on notice, other than those that I have mentioned to you, which you wish to answer now?

Dr LYNHAM: No. I just have some closing remarks, if I may, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: Yes.

Dr LYNHAM: I would like to thank all members of the committee. I do sincerely thank you for sticking to the SDS. It was sincerely appreciated. Not once did I have to suggest that any question was going outside of the parameters of the SDS. I thank you for that because it made the answers that much more efficient. If you would like to discuss anything further, I am happy to meet with you in my office and we can have those discussions, especially those issues that the member for Gregory and the member for Dalrymple have. I am happy to discuss those issues with you at any time.

As a new minister who is facing this process for the first time, I would like to acknowledge those whose help has been invaluable to me today. I have never seen an estimates hearing before from either side, so this is the first time. I would like to thank my directors-general past and present—Dr Brett Heyward, Dave Edwards, Michael Schaumburg and James Purtill—and the Coordinator-General, Barry Broe, for their assistance and advice both today and in the time that I have been the minister for the portfolios of State Development, Natural Resources and Mines.

A significant amount of time and effort has gone into preparation for this hearing today, as you would be aware. I would like to thank the hard work of all the staff, both my ministerial and departmental staff, who have been involved. I would also like to thank you, Mr Chairman, and the committee for your time here today and your commitment to the estimates process and the ongoing good governance of this state. Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. On behalf of the committee, I thank you for your attendance and I thank your staff and all the support you have. It was a great effort in putting some of those answers together. I thank Hansard, as always, for their great work. I thank the secretariat, who never stop working hard. They put a lot of effort in to making sure that we have good information and that is well written up. The committee has resolved that the answers to any questions taken on notice or additional information must be provided to the committee secretariat by midday on Friday, 21 August 2015. After a great day of entertainment and all the fun and laughs that we have had, I declare the hearing closed.

Committee adjourned at 8.45 pm