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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT

Wednesday, 14 October 2015

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WEDNESDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2015



The Legislative Assembly met at 2.00 pm.

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

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise that on 28 September this year Ms Liz Tavender, who is on my left, was appointed to the position of Senior Supervisor—Operational Procedures and Training in the Security and Attendant Services area.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr SPEAKER: This role incorporates the functions of Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms, which today will include carrying the mace into and out of the chamber. Ms Tavender is the first woman to have performed this role in the Queensland parliament and I congratulate Liz on her appointment.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

PETITIONS

The Clerk presented the following paper petitions, lodged by the honourable members indicated—

Peachester State School, School Zone Flashing Lights

Mr Powell, from 603 petitioners, requesting the House to prioritise the installation of school flashing lights at Peachester State School [[1376](#)].

Atherton Hospital, Upgrade

Mr Knuth, from 5,588 petitioners, requesting the House to urgently approve the upgrade of the Atherton Hospital [[1377](#)].

East Pumicestone, Crisis Accommodation

Mr Williams, from 551 petitioners, requesting the House to establish an emergency/crisis accommodation in the East Pumicestone region of Bribie Island, Ningi and Sandstone Point [[1378](#)].

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

Animal Facilities, Exclusion Zone

465 petitioners, requesting the House to introduce an exclusion zone for entertainment events with a minimum buffer zone of five kilometres radius of any zoo, wildlife sanctuary, breeding facility or animal shelter [[1379](#)].

The Clerk presented the following paper and e-petition, sponsored and lodged by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Orders 119(3) and (4)—

Net-Free Fishing Zones

9,514 petitioners, requesting the House to support legislation or regulation that introduces the proposed net-free fishing zones to Queensland waters [[1380](#), [1381](#)].

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

Urraween Road and Maryborough-Hervey Bay Road, Intersection Upgrade

Mr Sorensen, from 1,640 petitioners requesting the House to upgrade the intersection of Urraween Road and Maryborough Hervey Bay Road to an acceptable safety standard [[1382](#)].

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

Police Resources

24 petitioners, requesting the House to provide more resources to the Queensland Police Service to enforce road safety laws in the Pine Rivers region [[1383](#)].

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPER

The following members' paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Member for Cairns (Mr Pyne)—

[1384](#) Correspondence and other documents, various dates, relating to the operation of local government in Queensland

MINISTERIAL PAPER

Fisheries and Another Regulation Amendment Regulation (No. 1)

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing) (2.03 pm): I lay upon the table of the House my response to the Agriculture and Environment Committee's request for clarification of certain matters regarding the Fisheries and Another Regulation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2015. I also wish to advise the House that the committee has authorised me to release the letter for the information of members.

Tabled paper: Agriculture and Environment Committee: Report No. 8, 55th Parliament—Fisheries and Another Regulation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2015, government response [\[1385\]](#).

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Advancing Education

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.04 pm): We have entered a time of unprecedented global change. Technology is rapidly changing the way we live and the way we work. It is estimated that around 75 per cent of the fastest growing occupations require science, technology, engineering and maths related skills and knowledge and we know that many jobs are at risk of becoming automated in the near future. My government's Advancing Education is the first step in developing a long-term vision for early childhood education and care and schooling in Queensland. Today I have, along with my education minister, Kate Jones, and the member for Bulimba, Di Farmer, launched the first in a series of important discussion papers which will help us grasp opportunity and play our role in global change. It focuses on the importance of coding and robotics within the school curriculum starting next year. This is our opportunity to engage students, to engage parents and to engage teachers and talk about the next wave of education opportunities and, leading on from that, future jobs for the next generation of Queenslanders. Now is the time—and I believe that Queensland is already well placed—to take on these challenges, but we need a plan for education designed to equip young Queenslanders for life in what is expected to be a very different world and a very different workforce.

Advancing Education includes a range of targeted initiatives designed to support early childhood learning experiences, particularly for vulnerable children and families; inspire students to study science, technology, engineering and maths; improve literacy and numeracy; expand the study of cultures and languages, with a particular focus on Asian languages; improve pathways to teaching and teacher preparation; better manage the way that resources are distributed to our schools; expand the number of vocational education and training options in schools and reconnect disengaged students; and introduce a new senior assessment and tertiary entrance system. Advancing Education also provides the basis for a series of more detailed discussion papers to help achieve this vision. These important discussions will help to generate deeper conversations about how the delivery of education needs to adapt to develop our future workforce. The first of these papers to be developed, *Coding counts*, which was released this morning, focuses on the importance of coding and robotics within the school curriculum starting next year. Over the coming weeks and months we will be visiting communities across Queensland to talk to community leaders, teachers, industry representatives, parents and of course people from the education sector to discuss how we can build on these plans. We have also set up a dedicated web page so that all interested Queenslanders have an opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas. We want to encourage new ideas. We want to encourage deep thinking in this space to achieve a solid plan for education that is innovative and future focused. We want to be firmly focused on jobs for the future.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.07 pm): My government has from the outset remained absolutely committed to launching the National Disability Insurance Scheme in Queensland, and we have delivered. On 25 September the Queensland and

federal governments agreed that Northern Queensland will be the location of the NDIS early launch in early 2016. This is six months ahead of the commencement of the NDIS across Australia. Eligible children and young people aged under 18 in Townsville and Charters Towers and all eligible people with a disability on Palm Island will be the first Queenslanders to access the NDIS next year. Rolling out first in these locations provides the best opportunity to test NDIS processes simultaneously in a regional city, a rural centre and an Indigenous community. Around 1,600 people are expected to be eligible for the NDIS in the early launch sites, with 600 people expected to start receiving their funded support packages from April 2016. The remaining 1,000 eligible people in the launch site will receive their funded packages from July 2016. My government has contributed \$1.6 million towards early access to the scheme in North Queensland and the federal government will provide \$2.5 million. I want to assure people with a disability that once my government finalises the bilateral agreement with the federal government we will have more information about how the NDIS can be rolled out across Queensland. We are absolutely committed to finalising this agreement as quickly as possible. However, I am very concerned that the federal government's delay in signing the agreement will impact on proper planning for the transition to the NDIS.

The NDIS is also set to bring economic benefits to Queensland, creating 13,000 additional jobs in Queensland's disability sector and injecting around \$4 billion each year into the state's economy at full scheme from 2019-20. The NDIS will bring greater choice and control over how people with a disability live their lives and receive support, and I am pleased we are delivering on this early. The early launch in Queensland is a clear sign of the Queensland government's commitment to roll out the NDIS to all eligible Queenslanders with a disability.

Premier of Queensland Export Awards

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.08 pm): Last week, I was honoured to announce that Narangba based kangaroo leather processor Packer Leather, founded in 1891, had been chosen as Queensland's Exporter of the Year. The Premier of Queensland's Export Awards, now in its 26th year, acknowledge the important contribution that Queensland's exporting businesses make to our state's economy through the jobs they create and the increased prosperity they generate. Our exporters make a huge contribution to Queensland's economy, with goods exports of more than \$47 billion and service exports of about \$10 billion. In fact, one in five Queensland jobs is supported by exports.

Queensland exporters are special people who know how to adapt to changing times and to keep finding new opportunities in both traditional and emerging market sectors. For example, Creative Industries Award winner, Alt.vfx, is a state-of-the-art film and television post-production and visual effects company that was established in 2011 and has quickly become one of the most respected and highly awarded visual effects studios in Australia. Small Business winner Evolve Skateboards' creator, Jeff Anning, identified a gap in the market and created motorised skateboards, which sold out on their first run in July 2014.

It is important that we recognise the international success of Queensland exporters not only to celebrate their achievements but also to inspire others to look at overseas markets. Through these awards we are sending a very strong, very clear message to the world that Queensland is Australia's foremost location for trade and investment.

My government's \$180 million Advance Queensland program will help harness our intellectual excellence and create the world-beating exporters of the future without neglecting the remarkable performance over many years of our traditional exporting sectors. I would like to again congratulate all of the winners and finalists of the 2015 Premier of Queensland Export Awards and also thank my deputy, Jackie Trad, who also attended. It was indeed a remarkable night.

Natural Disaster Preparedness

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade) (2.11 pm): This week is RACQ Get Ready Week, where we urge all Queenslanders to get ready for the upcoming season of intense heat and potential natural disasters. During this week, councils, government agencies, businesses and individuals will all pitch in to get ready for the storms, cyclones, floods, bushfires and heatwaves that could potentially affect us during this summer.

Earlier this week, the Bureau of Meteorology released its tropical cyclone outlook, which shows that there will be an average or below average number of cyclones this season. But, as the people of Central Queensland will tell us, it takes only one to leave a devastating trail of destruction. This means planning and preparing for disasters, knowing what local resources are available and helping out friends, neighbours and family.

This year, we are asking that people start a conversation with friends, families and neighbours that starts with 'What if?': 'What if a massive storm were to roll in over the weekend? Would your house be ready?' People should begin by making their 'what if?' plan for when disaster hits and complete an emergency plan and prepare an emergency kit.

The Queensland government is getting ready to help more Queenslanders face the next disaster. The best advice on what to do to get ready is on the RACQ Get Ready Queensland website at www.getreadyqld.gov.au. On that site Queenslanders will find fact sheets covering topics such as emergency plans, emergency kits, how to tune in to warnings and how to prepare their pets. There is also important information for people on not only how to prepare their home and car but also how their business can get ready to be more resilient during a natural disaster. All members of parliament have a get ready disaster preparedness information kit, which includes copies of the fact sheets, information from emergency services and what councils are doing in local areas.

I am also pleased to inform the House that we are continuing to fund the not-for-profit organisation GIVIT for the forthcoming storm and cyclone season until April next year. Although GIVIT has other funding sources for different aspects of its business, it works with the Queensland government to manage the donation and distribution of goods and services following a disaster.

I again urge all Queenslanders to take this week to get ready. We can save more than just our prized possessions; we can save lives.

Safe Work Month

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (2.14 pm): Safe Work Month is well and truly underway this October. Some workplaces are hosting a toolbox talk for their own workers and some are sending people to one of the many forums that the Queensland government is putting on. This year, for the first time though, businesses across the state have taken up our invitation to hold their own safety forum, open for all to attend. This means that, at its own cost and by its own choice, industry is creating a platform for safety professionals to come together to share and expand their knowledge. Never before have we seen industry embrace safety so emphatically as part of its core business and deliver such a clear statement that safety must be embraced at an industry-wide level for the benefit of all.

It is easy to see why. Work related deaths and injuries in Queensland are trending down and our businesses are paying the lowest workers compensation rates in the country. Our workers compensation laws are now fairer and more balanced—much more balanced—making it easier for workers to be fairly compensated for legitimate workplace injuries. Last month, amendments were passed that give Queensland firefighters—auxiliary, full-time and volunteer—some of the best workers compensation entitlements in the world.

This week, we want to see changes to work safety laws that reinstate the rights of work health and safety entry permit holders to gain immediate access to a workplace and the power of health and safety representatives to direct workers to cease unsafe work, because as long as workers are getting injured there is more that each of us can do, especially if we want to see workplaces in our state become the safest in Australia.

Last week, I joined safety ambassador Shane Webcke at the King George Square Safe Work Month breakfast. I can tell members that it was very popular with both blue- and white-collar workers. What a great way to start the working day! There were celebrity cook-offs, fitness demonstrations and a heap of safety expertise on offer to get everyone thinking about what they can do to make their workplaces that much safer. Shane Webcke is a fantastic ambassador for work safety—and it shows, as people are flocking to listen to him speak at around 30 events from the Gold Coast, up to Cairns and out to Roma. Shane took on the role as safety ambassador because he knows only too well what a workplace death can do to a family. He put his career on hold when his dad was killed at work. Now that he is a dad himself, as well as an employer, he is determined to see that no other family should go through what the Webcke family did. I will join him at a breakfast forum in Cairns next week, one of many events still to come in Safe Work Month.

A highlight for me will be next week when Shane and I announce the winners of the Safe Work and Return to Work awards. These awards recognise and reward the efforts of those who are excelling in keeping our workers safe, or getting those who are injured back to meaningful work as soon as they can, because we firmly believe that, when we find someone who is getting safety right, it is common sense to celebrate their success and share their solutions with other businesses. By working together, Queensland's government, its businesses and its workers can make real inroads into creating the safest and most productive workplaces in the country. Safe Work Month inspires us to think about how we can make our workplaces safer.

To get the community further engaged in Safe Work Month, people can share their most important reason for working safely for their chance to win one of five Fitbits by posting their photo on our Facebook page using the hashtag #MomentsThatMatter and telling us their most important reason for working safely. The first 50 people who send in photos are going to receive a poster signed by Shane Webcke. We hope that everyone can come on board and join us in this very important initiative, Safe Work Month.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the Minister for Health, I am pleased to announce that we have students attending our public gallery from the Gold Coast Christian College, in the electorate of Mudgeeraba, and also students from Bray Park State School, in the electorate of Pine Rivers.

Ice

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (2.18 pm): The Palaszczuk government is concerned about the spread of the drug ice throughout our communities—ranging from the edge of major cities to rural and sometimes even remote communities. Over the last five years the weight of police seizure of methamphetamine in crystal form has more than doubled. The Queensland Police Service reports that, over the same period, the purity of ice has risen to 72 per cent.

The federal government has established a National Ice Taskforce. This task force has been holding public meetings around the country and is due to report to the Prime Minister very soon. Its recommendations will be considered by the Council of Australian Governments later this year.

We look forward to seeing what is in the report, but we are not just waiting for another level of government to act. Last month, the Premier and I announced that this government is putting a \$6 million package into front-line treatment and management for Queenslanders suffering from the ice epidemic. The focus of this package is early intervention to stop people getting addicted to ice. An amount of \$2 million has been allocated to operate two drug and alcohol brief intervention teams in the emergency departments at Logan and Townsville.

People affected by this drug often arrive at emergency departments with other injuries so it is an important time to intervene early in the cycle of dependency. A further \$500,000 has been allocated to developing one of these intervention teams in Rockhampton and another \$500,000 will expand the Gold Coast's existing intervention team in light of its success there in recent years. New programs are also proposed at Gold Coast and Rockhampton that provide additional youth focused programs to intervene early and link with other community supports. At Logan we will be investing in a program to help families with young children where parents use drugs. These aim to help the parents either get off drugs or otherwise minimise the impact on their children. At Charleville and Cunnamulla we will help support a community wellbeing program to work on integrating services, community supports and employment and education programs to address ice. On Cape York at Cooktown and Weipa we will provide clinical nurse consultants who will provide clinical leadership and expertise to the existing services. They will also be used to provide education to schools and children.

These areas have been selected as immediate priorities based on service mapping and activity data analysis undertaken to support the new Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Services Plan 2016-21 which is currently under development. We have also built on analysis which informed the 2007 Ice Breaker Strategy. Townsville, Metro South and Central Queensland have proportionally high rates of alcohol and other drug clients accessing emergency department services. These regions aside, we will also be spending \$680,000 on specific training and resources to support front-line workers facing the ice epidemic across the state. Our hospital and health services across the state already spend approximately \$114 million a year on alcohol and other drug services and treatment, but this \$6 million package is targeted at those areas most in need where we can ramp up services quickly. We will be monitoring implementation across the initial six areas and collecting data and other information on the activity delivered by the new services. This will help us determine and develop the best possible treatment options to use across the state.

Advancing Education

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (2.21 pm): Today I was proud to stand with the Premier of Queensland and the member for Bulimba to launch Advancing Education, the Palaszczuk government's action plan for the future of education in our state. Our key priorities include offering the digital technologies curriculum, including coding and robotics, from prep to year 10 from 2016; ensuring every state school has access to specialist teachers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics; ensuring all state schools offer languages other than English from prep with a focus on Asian languages and culture; improving learning outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; and, very importantly, supporting our teachers through targeted professional development and practical teaching resources and working with our universities to ensure that our new graduate teachers have the skills they need when they enter the classroom.

This is all about preparing our students for the future. Our teachers play a key role in delivering this initiative and we are committed to working with them. We will reward the expertise of our teachers by developing new career pathways through a new classification system and provide new opportunities to become specialist teachers. This builds on our commitment to be putting more teachers in the classroom, with an extra 2,500 teachers, including 870 above projected growth. This is an exciting day in education as we deliver the pathway forward to ensure that the education we are providing in this state gives our children the skills they need for the jobs of the future.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

 **Hon. CJ O'ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland) (2.23 pm): Last month I was delighted to join the Premier, along with the members for Townsville and Thuringowa, to announce that the NDIS would be launched in North Queensland. As the Premier said, from early 2016 young people with disability under the age of 18 in Townsville and Charters Towers and all eligible people with disability on Palm Island will be the first Queenslanders to access the NDIS. Early access means that about 1,600 people with disability in North Queensland will start seeing the benefits of the NDIS before the full rollout starts mid next year.

The combination of Townsville, Palm Island and Charters Towers offers the best location to test the NDIS in Queensland's unique and diverse environments: a regional city, a rural centre and an Indigenous community. Importantly, it will give us the opportunity to test how the scheme will roll out across the state from July next year. I am pleased that we have been able to deliver on our election commitment through joint state and federal funding and I commend Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull on his swift action to agree to and sign off on the early launch soon after taking up the position.

Queenslanders deserve access to the NDIS and the excitement in the community cannot be underestimated. Cootharinga North Queensland CEO Peter Mewett told me what a difference the NDIS will make to his organisation. Peter is excited to have the opportunity to work with people with disability to help achieve their life goals and give people choice and control with this historic reform. I was touched to hear the story of Sally Jupp, a Townsville mother of two children with autism. Sally told me about her struggles raising children with disability, struggles shared by many Queenslanders. As Sally said, a key thing the NDIS means is making goals achievable. For her children that means being able to communicate. Being able to talk will now become a reality. She has a countdown to the rollout of the NDIS, describing it as their lifeline, and I am very pleased that now Sally and her family can bring that countdown forward with the early launch of the NDIS in North Queensland.

Overseas Visit

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (2.25 pm): I have recently returned from a nine-day business mission to Peru and the United States with seven Queensland businesses from the mining equipment, technology and services sector—Akwa-Worx, Ausenco, Dingo Mining, Hy-Performance Fluid Power, Russell Mineral Equipment, TSG Consulting and Verterra Ecological Engineering. Queensland can be justifiably proud of these companies. While in Peru I addressed the Perumin mining convention, a five-day biennial event in Arequipa. This was an exceptional opportunity to pitch Queensland as a resources investment destination and our METS companies as business partners. I also participated in a Trade and Investment Queensland roundtable session where our participating businesses, plus other Queensland companies attending Perumin, presented their capabilities to a number of major Peruvian miners.

Over half of Queensland's METS companies already export to South America and it was clear to me that Queensland is regarded as the global hub for innovative mine technologies and services. Ausenco has already provided engineering, procurement and construction management services to design, build and commission a new mineral concentrator at the \$1.75 billion Constancia copper mine in the Andes. I am confident that this recent mission has assisted the participating businesses to make valuable inroads into the South American market and I look forward to seeing their future successes support jobs and economic development.

Also in our travelling party was a TAFE Queensland representative, with whom I met senior officials of Peru's major industry backed technical education provider. We discussed their human capital issues and explored potential for future collaboration. I hope that my colleague, the Minister for Training and Skills, will have some further announcements in the future regarding this very exciting venture between TAFE Queensland and the training providers in Peru.

I also visited Houston, meeting and addressing oil and gas companies, including BG Group, SCF Partners, HDR Engineering, Denham Capital, Bechtel Corporation, Blue Mining Technologies, National Oilwell Varco, Schlumberger, Chevron, Halliburton, Primrose Petroleum and JESI. In Fort Worth I met US aeronautics giant Lockheed Martin to identify upcoming opportunities for Queensland companies in the production of F-35 strike fighters. Lockheed are already using Queensland companies as part of their global supply chain and those contracts are supporting 50 local jobs. In my electorate I have an offshoot of Boeing producing high technology goods for the US market. I am keen to see Queensland companies like Ferra Engineering and Micro winning more contracts with Lockheed Martin in the next round later this year.

Queensland businesses are taking on the world and coming out on top. The Palaszczuk government is committed to forward-thinking policies and programs like Advance Queensland that will drive this even further. We will continue to give Queensland companies and, indeed, Queensland children, that winning edge in the future. I will table a more detailed report for members in the near future.

Training Ombudsman

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (2.29 pm): I believe Queensland has one of the best vocational education and training systems in this country. However, given the ever-changing landscape of VET, when issues arise the system can sometimes be difficult to navigate for stakeholders, employers, apprentices, trainees, students and other key stakeholders. The Palaszczuk government is also committed to working with stakeholders to make sure that the training services provided in this state are of the highest possible quality. To assist Queenslanders in dealing with the complexities of the VET sector and to provide an independent avenue to pursue issues of concern associated with training services, our government is investing \$5 million over the next three years to deliver on our election commitment to establish an independent training ombudsman. The training ombudsman will provide a recognisable and accessible avenue for complaints and consumer advocacy for VET stakeholders to progress disputes and seek advice and assistance relating to the overall conduct of the VET sector in Queensland. In short, this will enhance consumer protection in the VET sector and inform strategies to improve the quality and confidence of training and skills development in Queensland.

The training ombudsman will be independent from the Department of Education and Training and is planned to be established through amendments to the Further Education and Training Act 2014. The training ombudsman will not duplicate the work of other regulatory agencies in the training sector, but will take a personal approach to guiding VET consumers through the often lengthy and complicated processes that they may need to follow to resolve their complaints. This can sometimes be a daunting process for those disadvantaged individuals such as young students who may not otherwise seek a solution to their concerns or issues. It is important to note that the training ombudsman role will be subject to the passage of legislation that would be brought before this House.

However, in recognition that the issues to be dealt with by the training ombudsman are ones that need to be addressed sooner rather than later, I have established, through a ministerial charter, an interim Training Ombudsman role to get started on assisting our training stakeholders. Mr Geoff Favell, an experienced leader in the VET sector who has significant insight into how the system works, has been appointed as the interim Training Ombudsman. I can advise this House that before this new role was even publicised, the office had been contacted with complaints that are now leading to investigations in relation to quality of training. The interim Training Ombudsman can be contacted by email at info@trainingombudsman.qld.gov.au or by telephone on 1800773048. Further information can also be obtained from the Queensland government website.

All members of this House who have any constituents, whether they be training providers, employers or individual students, who have concerns about training quality or access to training should encourage them to contact the interim Training Ombudsman. We encourage anyone with concerns in relation to the quality of training to contact the Training Ombudsman, so that we can make sure that in this state we have the best quality training.

Solar Energy

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (2.32 pm): I am very pleased to report that in Queensland building the solar state is underway, panel by panel, project by project. Last month, I advised the House that the renewable energy auction, promised by the Palaszczuk government at the last election, will exceed our election commitment of 40 megawatts by 50 per cent. Today I can announce that there has been strong interest in the auction. Thirty—I repeat, 30—potential project consortiums have already registered their interest. Long-term revenue contracts will be provided to successful Queensland based projects in the Australian Renewable Energy Agency's 200 megawatt large-scale solar round. The Palaszczuk government's support will provide successful project proponents with long-term income certainty, which will help them to access favourable financing arrangements and develop lower cost renewable energy projects.

Today, I can also announce the contract for difference price range. This is the support that successful companies will be offered for a 20-year period to provide that certainty of revenue. It will be within the range of \$80 to \$100 per megawatt hour, which is an excellent result for Queensland and also shows how the cost of large-scale solar is dropping year by year. A final strike price will be published before the end of the year, but this range will help potential solar developers to better assess their capacity to bid for the available Commonwealth and Queensland government assistance.

It is expected the support agreements for successful Queensland based projects will be finalised before the end of 2016, with construction to commence immediately. By supporting up to 60 megawatts of extra renewable energy capacity, we are aiming to establish and to drive significant growth in large-scale solar generation in Queensland. Increasing the uptake of renewable energy in the Sunshine State not only will be good for the environment, but also will create new jobs of the future and diversify our economy. Queensland has some of the best solar resources in the world and is ideally placed to benefit as solar generation becomes an increasingly important part of Australia's electricity generation mix.

I can also update the House on the delivery of yet another Palaszczuk government election commitment. Today the Queensland Productivity Commission released the issues paper for the electricity pricing inquiry and is calling for public submissions. This Friday the commission will also release the issues paper for the review into a fair price for the cost of solar energy sold back into the electricity grid by homes and small businesses. I encourage all interested stakeholders and Queenslanders to get involved in those two important reviews.

Police Resources

 **Hon. JR MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (2.35 pm): We on this side of the House know how important safe and reliable public transport is to the people of Queensland. That is why today I am pleased to announce a boost to the Queensland Police Service Railway Squad, with an extra eight officers soon to be patrolling Queensland Rail services right across the south-east. Those officers will further enhance passenger safety on our extensive railway network. It means that next year the Railway Squad's operational strength will be boosted from 70 to 78 officers.

The squad targets antisocial behaviour on the network and its strong commitment to passenger safety has seen a significant reduction in serious crime across the city network. Through their proactive approach, police recorded assaults on the QR network have continued their downward trend, dropping 16.5 per cent over the past financial year. The new officers will go a long way to ensuring that Queensland Rail maintains its record as Australia's safest rail network as it continues to expand, by enhancing passenger safety through a visible and active police presence.

In addition, a trial of new tablet technology will mean officers will be able to live stream footage from CCTV cameras at selected stations. This financial year, QR installed an extra 500 CCTV cameras across the city network. This tablet technology will assist the Railway Squad to monitor the network and

respond to incidents, even when they are out on patrol. We will also make sure we continue to provide the appropriate level of security across the network with the opening of the Moreton Bay Rail Link mid next year. I know that members of this House are keenly looking forward to that.

Our new officers will work in partnership with a range of other security personnel operating on the Queensland Rail network, including authorised officers, private security guards, senior network officers and mobile dog patrols. Those personnel are in addition to emergency help phones and almost 9,000 CCTV cameras, including real-time CCTV and a dedicated 24-hour security monitoring facility.

Police reported assaults on the Queensland Rail network have reduced by 16.5 per cent from 151 assaults in 2013-14 to 126 assaults in 2014-15. The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring the safety and security of all train commuters and this is just one way that we are delivering on that commitment.

Forestry

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing) (2.38 pm): With some interest expressed by those opposite about the role of Forestry within DAF, I seek to inform the House that the forestry business group within the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries comprises 106 staff and is made up of two separate units: Forest Products and Forest Industries.

The Forest Products unit is responsible for the commercial management and administration of some of the state's valuable natural resources such as log timber, other forest products and quarry material under the Forestry Act 1959. The Forest Products unit comprises 100 officers, with 86 of these staff located in three regionally based forest management areas—the south-east, headquartered at Gympie; the south-west headquartered at Dalby; and the north headquartered at Rockhampton. The remaining 14 officers of this unit are based in Brisbane.

The Forest Industries unit's key roles are to maintain oversight of the plantation licences held by HQPlantations Pty Ltd and to enhance development of Queensland's forest and timber industry. The unit comprises six officers, all of whom are based in Brisbane. The Forestry Business Group also utilised temporary contractor support in the north forest management area in 2014-15 to undertake a range of forestry management activities.

The capacity of the forestry group to fund its work programs is dependent upon revenues receipted from the sale of state owned log timber and quarry material under the Forestry Act. DAF demonstrated its efficient management of log timber and quarry material sales by performing well against its forest products sales service standards for the 2014-15 financial year.

For the 2015-16 financial year DAF is expecting that industry demand for state owned log timber will continue to be strong, although somewhat down on the high levels recorded in 2014-15. Demand for state owned material in 2015-16 is expected to be lower than in 2014-15. This is due to the continued slowdown of private sector investment in mining related activities and infrastructure from the very high levels that were experienced in recent years.

The sale of forest products and quarry material will, however, continue to make a significant contribution to state development and employment generation, particularly in rural and regional areas of the state. Royalties generated by DAF's log timber and quarry material sales are also expected to make continuing positive commercial returns for the Queensland government. As minister, I am very pleased to represent forestry in the department and within Queensland.

Ecotourism

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (2.41 pm): The Queensland government recognises the importance of the tourism industry to the Queensland economy. It is a major export earner and generator of jobs for the state. Our world-class national parks, marine parks and World Heritage areas provide a competitive advantage for tourism in Queensland and this government considers high-quality, best practice ecotourism to be a key way to grow tourism in this state.

To guide ecotourism developments in line with this government's strong commitment to the environment, the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing, in association with the Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games, has refocused the Ecotourism Facilities on National Parks-Implementation Framework. The framework sets out the guiding principles for ecotourism facilities on national parks and provides a model for evaluating and managing ecotourism proposals.

The Palaszczuk government understands that our national parks are valued by the community as the most highly protected conservation areas in the state. Any ecotourism development must achieve the right balance between conservation of these natural and cultural values and their use for commercial tourism purposes.

The framework now ensures that alternative off-park sites are considered first and gives preference to facilities proposed on previously disturbed sites. It also includes a new principle requiring a contribution back to the conservation and management of the national park and benefits to local communities. The public interest provisions have been expanded also to ensure that exclusive use areas are restricted only to those areas essential for commercial operations.

We are continuing to work with existing proposals to ensure they progress and deliver great tourism and conservation outcomes for Queensland. Some existing proposals do not meet the conservation standards of the implementation framework but, where possible, we will work to find an alternative space for these ventures.

In addition to the new framework, I am pleased to announce that the draft Queensland Ecotourism Plan was released for public consultation at the DestinationQ forum on 8 October. Like the revised framework, the Ecotourism Plan promotes a fresh approach to ecotourism in Queensland, and is underpinned by a guiding principle of protecting and conserving our natural and cultural assets for future generations to enjoy.

The Ecotourism Plan reflects the government's policy priorities of: showcasing Queensland's unique wildlife and the world renowned Great Barrier Reef; encouraging the refurbishment of existing infrastructure such as reef island resorts; supporting the development of innovative ecotourism experiences; and encouraging the expansion of authentic Indigenous products. I am confident that the revised framework and Ecotourism Plan will give proponents the investment certainty they need to develop innovative, best practice ecotourism products on national parks while meeting community expectations for the conservation of these highly valued places.

MOTION

Suspension of Sessional Orders



Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (2.45 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That so much of sessional orders be suspended during this Thursday's sitting to enable government business to take priority following question time until the lunch break, with business after the lunch break as follows:

2.30 pm to 3.00 pm—private members' statements

3.00 pm to 4.30 pm—government business

4.30 pm to 5.00 pm—private member's motion

5.00 pm—special adjournment and adjournment to be moved.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Electricity Industry



Mr POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (2.46 pm): I give notice that I will move—

That this House condemns the state government for their raid on the dividends of electricity companies and for increasing their debt levels that will lead to higher power prices for electricity consumers in Queensland.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tour

Mr SPEAKER: Before proceeding to 15 minutes of private members' statements, I am pleased to announce that there are students in the gallery from Wynnum State High School in the electorate of Lytton.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member for Cook

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.46 pm): The front page of the *Cairns Post* says it all about the situation in Cook and the sentiments of the people in that community about their representative in this parliament. It is time for the member for Cook to just go. I table a copy of that front page.

Tabled paper: Front page of the *Cairns Post*, dated 14 October 2015 [[1386](#)].

What we saw in this parliament last night was the desperate attempts of a government that is clinging to power with the support of the member for Cook. The actions by the Premier have effectively made the member for Cook one of the most powerful people in this state. Every vote that this government accepts from the member for Cook is now tainted by the actions of the members opposite last night. That was their opportunity to take a stance against the behaviour of the member for Cook.

It was also disappointing to see the actions of the member for Nicklin, someone who has been a long-term advocate for maintaining and improving the integrity of this parliament, voting to effectively give the member for Cook the balance of power in Queensland. Earlier this year we supported the appointment of an independent Speaker of this parliament and we are disappointed that some of the strong statements made at that time about improving the standards in this place have seemingly fallen by the wayside.

Despite the pattern of behaviour by this member, the Premier has continually failed the test of leadership on this issue. The actions of the member for Cook continue to be a distraction for this government and this parliament. Those opposite, with the support of the member for Nicklin, failed to effectively deal with that last night.

The Premier said in April this year that the people of Cook deserve the highest standards from their MP. She told them that she promised the people of Queensland that she would lead a government of integrity and honesty. By the actions of the Premier and the government and the inaction in dealing with the member for Cook, the Premier broke that promise last night in this parliament. In doing so, she has failed the people of Cook and the people of Queensland. When the government accepts the vote of the member for Cook they are effectively condoning his behaviour. That means that every motion that is passed and every bill that is passed is because the Premier has agreed to accept the tainted vote of the member for Cook.

At what point does the Premier to say enough is enough? The concern from the elders in local communities around Cook is that they have had enough. Why is this not good enough for this Premier? We saw the comments yesterday from the mayors of Kowanyama and Yarrabah and now today we see the concerns of the local councillor in Napranum who said, 'We can't have elders doing that ... we can't have that sort of people as leaders of our country.'

We have heard lots of rhetoric about consultation, lots of rhetoric about listening, lots of rhetoric about higher standards, lots of rhetoric about calling out men for reprehensible actions towards women in our society and lots of rhetoric about the need to take a strong stand on the issue of respect for women in relationships. Queenslanders expect better of a Premier and Deputy Premier who rail and rant publicly about their disgust at the behaviour of the member for Cook, but the Premier is now complicit with the member for Nicklin in co-owning every decision of this parliament which will be determined by the member for Cook's casting vote. Mr Speaker, with the greatest of respect, I think that your comments after casting the deciding vote last night also should be explained to this House and to the people of Queensland.

Elective Surgery, Waiting Times

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (2.50 pm): In this chamber on 19 May, in a debate concerning elective surgery management in Queensland, the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Southern Downs, made a number of claims. Firstly, he stated that, at the change of government, the number of people who were waiting for their surgery longer than clinically recommended was 'reduced to 73'. That is simply incorrect. Departmental records show that on 1 February 2015 the number of people ready for surgery waiting beyond the clinically recommended time was 324. In the same debate the opposition leader stated that his wait time gimmick 'was a \$500 million program and it was properly costed; the money was there'. It has now been 105 days since I asked the member for Southern Downs to provide some skerrick of evidence to back up his claim.

In that 105 days the world has changed a lot. Queensland won the State of Origin—again. Cuba and the United States have resumed diplomatic relations. Malcolm Turnbull is the new Prime Minister. The Cowboys won the NRL grand final. NASA found water on Mars.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DICK: Even they are laughing at it. I am pleased to report that Pistol and Boo were saved from the threat of euthanasia, a threat made by—to quote their owner, Johnny Depp—‘some sweaty big gutted man from Australia’. The members opposite seem to have forgotten who the sweaty big gutted man from Australia might be—one of their former senators. The member for Southern Downs is still living in a world where none of this has happened. Despite repeated requests, the member for Southern Downs simply will not release the cabinet documents to demonstrate his claim that there was \$500 million—that the money was there and that the program was properly costed. Where are the documents? It is not a difficult proposition. He refuses to stand in this place even to repeat the claim.

Now we have heard a lot from the ‘fixer’ opposite, the member for Southern Downs. We have heard a lot this week about integrity, haven’t we, Mr Speaker? We have heard from him that actions speak louder than words. We have heard that all week from the Leader of the Opposition. Well, it has been 105 days—105 days—and we have had neither actions nor words from the Leader of the Opposition, and it is about time we had both.

Drought

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (2.53 pm): As we stand here today, 80 per cent of this great state remains drought declared. Drought is declared across the majority of Western Queensland. My thoughts and those of the opposition go out to the people in the hardest hit regions such as the areas around Longreach, Stonehenge, Jundah and all the way up the north-west. The vast outback is almost devoid of stock at a time when prices are actually at a decent level. The loss of revenue to these areas is mounting up in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

This is a human catastrophe. There has been no drought-breaking rain over the winter and we are now heading into another long, hot, dry summer. For many rural businesses, this is their fourth year of drought. These farming families face desperation, loss and a landscape which is forcing them to make extreme decisions, such as packing up and leaving their family home, complete destocking and separating the family unit for the benefit of the children. This drought is affecting not just our producers but also the communities in the rural townships which support them; the small businesses such as the coffee shops, the grocery stores, the shearing teams; and the community groups such as the local football teams.

This drought has now grown to be considered amongst the worst of the historic Queensland droughts such as the Federation drought of 1895 to 1902, the droughts in the early eighties and the droughts of the nineties. In 1901, during the Federation drought of 1895 to 1902, the then member for Capricornia, Mr James Forsyth said—

I think it would be to the advantage of many members if, instead of staying in Brisbane, they travelled over the country and found out what is the condition of the country and people. I saw and heard some things there which I was very grieved to hear.

The drought has now raged for four years and I am hearing stories of families who cannot pay their electricity bills that are sitting on the kitchen table, who cannot pay the food bill and who certainly cannot pay the rates, and of children who are now being taken out of boarding schools because they simply cannot afford to stay there. It is taking its toll on people’s mental health and many people are only just hanging on.

When I visit these regions, however, I continue to be amazed by their fighting spirit, their determination to hang in there until it does finally rain, to see it through and to do their best. There is no denying farmers and their communities are bound together in this shared disaster, but they will show us all how resilient they are and how proud they are of their livelihoods and what they must suffer to continue to stay on the land. I say to Queenslanders who are living with drought in our modern times: you are not forgotten. Just like in 1901, the LNP opposition will continue to do all we can to support you, highlight your plight and give you hope that times will get better.

(Time expired)

Advancing Education

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (2.56 pm): We made it clear from day one that we were going to be a government for education, that we were going to put education front and centre of everything we do because we firmly believe—

Ms Grace interjected.

Ms JONES: Thank you, member for Brisbane Central. We firmly believe that investing in our young people is the best way for us to grow Queensland and to grow our opportunities here in this great state. What we saw in the budget was a record investment in education—\$9 billion in education. Today, as I said earlier, I had the great privilege of standing with the Premier to announce our future plan for education in this state. We know the evidence: every time we make a significant investment in education we see improvement, whether that was our decision to finally bring Queensland into line with other states and have 13 years worth of schooling here or whether it was our decision—the decision of the former minister sitting next to me—to see year 7 transition into high school. We know that we are the only state that is continuing to see, year in and year out, an improvement in NAPLAN results because of the investment that we are making in education. I appeal to all members of this House that we work together in a bipartisan way to make sure that we provide our young people with the skills they need for the future. That is exactly what *Advancing Education*, which we have released today, is all about.

In addition, we have released a *Coding counts* discussion paper. I ask all members of parliament to be involved in our roadshow as we travel the state to have that discussion with parents, with teachers and with students about how we can provide those skills. With the member for Bulimba, I was talking to parents here today who were saying that they want their children to have these skills because they want to make sure that they are employable for the future. They want them to have the coding, the programming, the problem solving, the understanding and the systems in place to ensure that they are best placed for the employment of the future, and we owe it to them. We know that 50 per cent of the jobs of the future will require a greater level of digital understanding. That is why we are firmly focused on the future.

It seems, Mr Speaker—you know me; I cannot let a good opportunity go by—that there is someone here today who is also very much focused on their future. The speech we heard from the member for Surfers Paradise this morning was a disgrace. It was a disgrace because what we are seeing is three desperate men desperately clinging on to their positions because they know that the member for Everton has the numbers. They know that the member for Everton is going around counting the numbers. It was a desperate speech by a desperate man who is desperately trying to cling to his position. We have the three here—

An honourable member interjected.

Ms JONES: No, that is right, because what we get from the opposition—

An honourable member interjected.

Ms JONES: That is exactly what it is. When we talk about the future, when we talk about jobs, when we talk about education, what do we get from them? Ridicule, nothing, no policies and no collaboration. They are too busy focused on themselves. I would be worried, if I were you, with a contribution like that.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Lockyer, I do not need your assistance. If you want to speak, there are ample opportunities on the speaking list for you to contribute.

State Schools

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.59 pm): As I have sat here this afternoon and listened particularly to the Premier and the member for Ashgrove, I have again seen the triumph of rhetoric over substance. I have again seen the triumph of rhetoric over fact. And again I have seen the triumph of rhetoric over secrecy. We heard this afternoon from the Minister for Education and the Premier rhetorical terms such as a real plan for education. The education minister said that she was proud of her plan and that it is a pathway forward. What we did not see from the Premier or the Minister for Education—but, fortunately, the member for Caloundra's little birdy came fluttering in earlier today—and what the Premier and the Minister for Education did not tell us about was this cabinet-in-confidence document which was prepared by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet's Economic Policy Group in June this year. Let us look at what it said in relation to education. It states—

Potential areas for investigation of refinements to the current school system could include ... funding allocation systems—voucher systems—

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition is referring to a document. I would ask that he table the document.

Mr SPRINGBORG: With absolute delight, Mr Speaker, but let me have it for another two minutes please because they are going to get it. This document also states—

... co-payments for high income families and special needs teacher funding and alternative school incomes

That is what it says. This is their document prepared in the Premier's department in June this year. No-one should in any way be surprised by this, because sitting over there with the member for Bundamba, the member for Ashgrove, the member for Woodridge, the member for Inala, the member for Mulgrave and the member for Sandgate are people who have a track record of secrecy. Those people over there now want to attack the underlying principle of free education.

Today did they level with the parents of Bulimba when they were at that school? Did they tell them that they were actively considering co-payments or that they were actively considering a tax on education in Queensland? Did they say to them that they had a secret plan to bring in charges on education for students in this state? Interestingly, in June this year the member for Ashgrove was standing up here saying that the people of Queensland would not support this, and at the same time the Premier's department was cooking up a plan to implement it in this state. To satisfy the appetite of those opposite, I table the document.

Tabled paper: Extract from Department of the Premier and Cabinet: Economic Policy Group, Queensland Economic Action Plan, June 2015, pp. 2 and 12 [[1387](#)].

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Question time will run until three minutes past four.

State Schools

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (3.03 pm): My question without notice is to the Minister for Education, and I ask: when did the minister become aware of the secret plan of the Premier and the Labor government to slug Queensland parents a fee to send their children to state schools in Queensland?

Ms JONES: I am so glad the Leader of the Opposition has asked me this question because I am very pleased to stand here and say to every single person in Queensland that a Labor government would never, ever means test public education in this state. The only person in this country who has put that on paper is their former prime minister, Tony Abbott. It is absolutely true, and those opposite would have seen it reported, that Tony Abbott put to COAG a paper that looked at means testing education. The honourable Leader of the Opposition is absolutely right: I stood in this parliament and said, 'Over my dead body. No way would Queensland sign up to that.'

The honourable Leader of the Opposition has had the privilege of serving in the parliament for many years. He knows exactly where I stand on public education. He knows exactly where the Labor government stands on education. He knows full well, as does every single member of this Labor caucus, that we would never, ever means test public education. I will answer his question: the only reason why any state Labor government had to give an answer to this idea was that their Liberal Prime Minister put a paper together proposing the idea of means testing public education, and we rejected that very clearly as we will continue to do.

When I stood here very firmly rejecting any possibility that we would sign up to means testing public education, where were the LNP in Queensland? Did the future leader of the LNP say that it was a bad idea? No. Does he support means testing in public education? Did we have the former minister for education saying this was a bad idea?

Mr Dick: Nothing.

Ms JONES: We heard nothing. Once again and true to form, what do we hear from the Leader of the Opposition, who has been in this place for 26 years? Nothing. We know that he does not stand for anything apart from trying to divvy up the spoils of what they have. We will always fight to ensure that every child, no matter where they live, no matter how much income their parents have, has access to good quality public education. That is what gets me up every single day, because we owe it to those children to give them the best possible education we can.

State Schools

Mr SPRINGBORG: My question without notice is to the Premier. While the Premier was at Bulimba State School this morning, did she level with parents and teachers and tell them about the Labor government's secret plan to slug—

An honourable member interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I will start that again.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, the day is short.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Whilst the Premier was at Bulimba State School this morning, did she level with parents and teachers and tell them about the Labor government's secret plan—a plan being cooked up in her own office—to slug parents with a fee to send their children to public schools in this state?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the Premier, I now warn all members to cease the petty interjections and disruptions or I will make rulings and members will be leaving the chamber for a short time.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. I did go to Bulimba State School this morning with the Minister for Education and the member for Bulimba and, yes, we released a secret plan. It is here in black and white and in colour for everyone to see. Here is our plan. Our first plan is about advancing education. I will table these documents after I finish speaking. The Leader of the Opposition might want to read our secret plan. In fact, this is a public plan. We had a press conference on the public plan.

While they are stuck in the past, my government is talking about the future. I heard the question that the Leader of the Opposition asked the Minister for Education. Just because a government department puts something in black and white—and we have not seen the whole document—does not mean that it is government policy. In fact, if you read the front page it says 'not government policy'. Let me give the Leader of the Opposition a lesson in reading. The third line is 'not government policy'. There we are.

It is very cute, very cute. Let me make it very clear: it is not government policy. We will not be charging parents to attend schools. If you want to talk about secret—

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the next member for a question, I say to the Leader of the Opposition that you have asked two questions and you have made continuous interjections. I would urge you to not persist.

Education, Coding

Ms FARMER: My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier advise the House of any developments in the important area of teaching coding in our schools?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Bulimba very much for the question. Let me continue on with what I was saying. I was very proud to go out today to Bulimba State School to talk about the future of Queensland's education system. The future of Queensland's education system is focused firmly on our students and making sure that our students have the very best opportunity to engage in jobs for the future, and that includes learning about coding and learning about robotics. Over the next few weeks, we want to engage in a conversation with parents, teachers and the community about teaching coding and robotics in schools. While the opposition is stuck in the past, we are going to continue talking about the future. This is part of our Advance Queensland plan; it is \$180 million to diversify our economy. There is nothing more important at the moment than diversifying our economy. When I travel to places like China, Japan and the United States, this is what is happening. This is the new age of digital technology, and we have to embrace it.

I was impressed with the year 4 students I met today at Bulimba State School because I think they could come in here and give everyone a lesson in coding and robotics. In fact, the year 4s were engaged with the year 1 students to actually teach them the basics of coding. This is what is going to happen into the future and we need to be part of it.

Over the next few weeks, we want all members of this House to be involved in this fundamental discussion about the future. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to bring parents with us. There are a lot of parents and a lot of members of the community out there who probably do not understand coding and robotics, but we are going to see a mass change in the way that industries do business into the future. For example, in the agricultural sector—and I know the Minister for Agriculture would see this firsthand—we will see robotics involved in the production of crops into the future which means a different way of doing business. Also, with aged care, we will see more evidence into the future about the changing nature of the way things are done there.

I would like to commend the Minister for Education for having a plan for education in this state, unlike the former government that seemed to bury their head in the sand. Whilst I am on my feet, I want to table these two documents for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Department of Education and Training: Advancing education—an action plan for education in Queensland [1388].

Tabled paper: Department of Education and Training: #codingcounts—a discussion paper on coding and robotics in Queensland schools [1389].

The Leader of the Opposition might want to read something here about a plan for the future. This is clearly a firm focus of the Labor government on education. We want to take Queenslanders with us because it is the right thing to do.

Draft Queensland Economic Action Plan

Mr LANGBROEK: My question without notice is to the Premier. Will the Premier explain what is the Labor government's definition of a 'high-income family' as outlined in her economic action plan?

Ms PALASZCZUK: This is a question coming from the opposition that had a plan to sack public servants. They went out and sacked—

Mr Dick: That was their secret plan.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That was their secret plan. Let me make it very clear—

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. Obviously, under standing order 118, that is nothing to do with the question that was asked. If the Premier could revert back and actually answer the question.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. The question in itself had a whole lot of wild aspersions and assumptions. It referred to the Premier's plan—using the word 'your' as well—and it is clearly not. That has been established already. It is not the Premier's plan; it is not government policy. If we want to be playing games around the details of the standing orders, I suggest that the member should be given another go at trying to direct the question.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. I do not need your assistance.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I clearly answered this question before. It is not government policy. It was clearly written in black and white—'not government policy'. It is not our plan, it never will be our plan. It was the LNP at the federal level which had this plan—called Tony Abbott. Tony Abbott was the one who was pitching this around. There is absolutely no Queensland plan in relation to this matter. It is a false premise.

Is this as good as it gets? Honestly, is this as good as it gets from those opposite? Today we released a comprehensive plan for advancing education in this state and they are stuck in the past. There is no discussion about coding or robotics; there is no discussion about engaging with countries across the Asian region. We need to make sure that our kids are equipped for the future, and that means exploring options of learning a second language. This is what parents and the community are talking to us about. They want to see their young children given the best opportunities in life, and that is exactly what we intend to do.

DestinationQ

Mr STEWART: My question is to the Premier and Minister for the Arts. Will the Premier update the House on the government's commitment to Queensland's vital tourism industry as highlighted by the recent DestinationQ forum in Townsville?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Townsville very much for the question. Wasn't it absolutely great to be up in Townsville last week for DestinationQ? There were so many people in attendance. It was a great two-day conference with a great engagement level with the tourism operators. Can I just say on behalf of this government that the Minister for Tourism is doing an outstanding job. In fact, she was congratulated on many occasions for her hard work and for how much work she is doing in that sector. She recognises that tourism is going to be a huge growth sector for our economy into the future.

When I went to China, I had the opportunity to meet with the Wanda Group. They said to me very clearly that they are interested in doing more investment in Queensland. In fact we know that they have on their drawing books at the moment the Jewel investment on the Gold Coast, but they are actually looking for another site in South-East Queensland. My government is going to actively work with them to identify a potential site because it means more tourism into Queensland and it means more jobs. We

know that tourism contributes over \$23 billion to the economy. One in 10 Queenslanders rely on tourism directly or indirectly for jobs—and that is about 230,000 jobs. That is why Minister Kate Jones did not hesitate to renew the DestinationQ contract.

We had three key themes at this conference—invest, excel and grow—and that is exactly what we want to see. We want to see more investment of tourism operators here in Queensland. We want to grow the market. We know that there will be a lot of potential into the future and we want to be at the forefront. We want people to come to Queensland and not go to other parts of Australia; we want to get their tourism dollar here.

We also want to trade more with Japan and China. What they are saying to me overseas is that when they come to Queensland they do not just want good accommodation and good service; they want the whole experience when it comes to food and wine. It is good to see that Queensland wine has improved over the years. It is getting to be topnotch at the moment. They also want to know our great food experiences. I believe there is a huge opportunity here for us to grow this market in the years to come. I say well done to Kate as the minister.

We have also seen that some direct flights have opened up as well. We have the new Qantas flight from Brisbane to Tokyo, which is packed. Jetstar has commenced direct services from Wuhan to the Gold Coast. SilkAir has commenced direct services between Singapore and Cairns, which is great news for the Cairns members. International services from Townsville have commenced with Jetstar flying from Bali into Townsville, and I hear that the members up there are very excited about that.

DestinationQ was an outstanding success and we look forward to DestinationQ next year.

State Schools

Mr MANDER: My question is to the Minister for Education. Can the minister guarantee that no departmental or ministerial staff under her control were involved in the development of the Premier's policy to tax parents to send their kids to state schools?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the House, please. Thank you, members. We will wait until there is silence. I call the minister.

Ms JONES: We had this problem at estimates, too, when I made a comment and the member opposite did not listen to the answer. I am happy to give it again. Then I made it very clear—and I thank the Leader of the Opposition for showing that I had actually answered this question back in June. I am happy to answer it like I did 10 minutes ago and I will say it again here today. Let me be very clear. What we saw through the COAG process was the former prime minister of Australia—

Ms Trad: Tony Abbott.

Ms JONES:—Tony Abbott—so yesterday! Tony Abbott put to COAG a paper which had four ideas, one of which was that the federal government would walk away from funding state education altogether. He also put in an option that the LNP wanted to means test state education in this country. That was what happened. There was lots of media at the time. It was on the front page of all the national papers at the time. When the former Prime Minister put that out there for discussion, what did we say and what did the country say? We said no. We said no to means testing, to the Liberal Party's idea of means testing public education in this state. The member opposite has already said that back in June I said no and I will continue to say no. You do not join the Labor Party if you believe in means testing public education. That is an idea that clearly people in the Liberal Party believe is a probability. It is the Liberal Party that put it in black and white, on paper, that they want to see the means testing of public education in this country. We will never, ever means test public education in this country and let me tell honourable members why. Why can we all stand here saying that, knowing 100 per cent that it is true? Because we believe that education is a building block for life. We believe that when you are born to poorer circumstances or you have parents—

Mr MANDER: I rise to a point of order with regard to relevance. The question was specifically about whether the departmental or ministerial staff under the minister's control had a role in the compilation of that paper that was tabled this morning.

Ms JONES: Mr Speaker, I am giving the very clear position of the minister which informs—

Honourable members interjected.

Ms JONES: Let me make it very clear. My position as the minister is that I do not and never, ever will support means testing of public education, which means I clearly gave no direction to anybody ever to do that.

Opposition members: Your staff.

Ms JONES: That is what I am saying. I have never given a direction to anyone to entertain the idea of means testing. What disappoints me is that if the member opposite cannot see the relevance of the access of poor kids to school and means testing education, he does not deserve to be here. The link is implicit. The link is the very reason I am standing here today.

Infrastructure Projects, Commonwealth Funding

Ms GRACE: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on the progress that has been made to secure funding for public transport and other infrastructure projects from the Commonwealth government and any alternative plans?

Ms TRAD: I thank the honourable member for the question. I acknowledge again in this place her commitment to public transport services for people in her electorate. These are undoubtedly exciting times in terms of discussing nation-building infrastructure in Australia. Finally, we have a government that is actually willing to talk about infrastructure, infrastructure financing and also supporting infrastructure that meets public benefits, such as public transport. It is also quite exciting that we have a federal government that is prepared to talk about cities and regions and their role in terms of building the national economy and the fact that the congestion in our cities leads to less economic productivity and outcomes, and that needs to be addressed.

So I am very pleased with the fact that we have a new federal government that is prepared to fund public transport infrastructure, that is not prepared to make decisions based on ideology and mode of transport, but is prepared to assess projects on their merit, which is what this federal government did recently in terms of the Gold Coast Light Rail project. Again I will place on record in this place my appreciation of the federal government's allocation of \$95 million to Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 2. Of course, there are many other projects in Queensland—many other transport projects, public transport projects and major road projects—that we have already submitted to Infrastructure Australia for their assessment.

While the current federal government has quite clearly taken a different position from their predecessors under Tony Abbott's leadership, I am pleased to say that the federal Labor opposition has made some very exciting announcements in relation to national infrastructure. Only last week the federal Labor opposition announced that they will build up Infrastructure Australia once again to the independent robust infrastructure adviser that it used to be before Tony Abbott fiddled with it.

The other thing that is quite exciting is the idea of a \$10 million infrastructure trust or infrastructure fund that will be financed through Infrastructure Australia. This will mean that Infrastructure Australia will take the politics out of financing and procuring nation-building infrastructure projects in Australia. That is exactly the type of vision that we will get from Labor, whether that is at a state level or a federal level: the idea of how we can build our nation for economic prosperity and how we can deliver not only infrastructure but also education outcomes so that everybody has the opportunities they deserve in life, the opportunities that they work hard to achieve in life. The role of cities, the role of transport, the role of infrastructure in all of that is key, and only Labor recognises that.

Draft Queensland Economic Action Plan

Mr NICHOLLS: Sounds like more tolls on the Bruce to me.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order. I just want to clarify whether that question was directed to the Minister for Main Roads.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Clayfield, you know it is not appropriate to be making statements. Put your question. Do not provoke the government. Everyone seems primed. So please, just put your question and we will move on.

Mr NICHOLLS: It has been a little while.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Premier, please. Your question please.

Mr NICHOLLS: My question is to the Premier, and I ask: will the Premier now release the entire draft Queensland economic action plan developed for her by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and, if not, why not?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am so pleased the member for Clayfield has asked me a question today, but I will get to that in a moment. I am almost jumping at the bit. I have made it very clear that the document that was handed down by the Leader of the Opposition was for discussion only. There was a person who was applauding the creative thinking behind the means tested public education proposal, and who was that?

Ms Trad: Who?

Ms PALASZCZUK: It was Tony Abbott. On 22 June an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* stated very clearly—

Prime Minister Tony Abbott has not ruled out a controversial idea to make wealthy families pay for their children to attend public schools but says it would be a decision for the states and territories.

Let me make it very clear that this Labor government will never, ever go down that path—not now, not ever. I am so glad the member for Clayfield asked me a question, because here is another document I found. It appears that the former premier thought that someone on the other side had let him down. Who could possibly have let the former premier down? He is singled out for special mention—

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. Under standing order 118, it would be very good of the Premier to tell us how this relates to the question that has been asked regarding plans of officers in her department.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, could I please bring you back to answering the question.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It appears from this book that when the former premier made the tough decisions someone was not there to back him up. This book reveals very clearly that the member for Clayfield was missing in action. I always welcome a question from the member for Clayfield. We fondly recall those days in this House and how you participated in it.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, I think you have answered the question. We have many more questions to go and many more opportunities. I call the member for Springwood.

Business Confidence

Mr de BRENNI: My question is of the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer inform the House about business confidence in Queensland and how it compares to other parts of Australia?

Mr PITT: Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. I know that the member for Springwood has a keen and active interest in what is happening with local business in his electorate. He is very keenly seeing what we are seeing right around Queensland, and that is rising business confidence. Since coming into office we have had an open door policy when it comes to meeting with business, and we did that within days of opening the doors here at Parliament House to meet with business and industry. It is no surprise that this policy is working as intended to boost business confidence.

In the latest *NAB Monthly Business Survey* for September we have seen that for the third month in succession Queensland is leading all of the mainland states in terms of business confidence. That is no accident because we are engaging with business, we are listening to their concerns and we are working with them in a way that is very collaborative. We are not closing the doors; we are out there engaging and speaking with them, trying to involve them in our policy discussions and creating policy for the future. I congratulate the minister for small business as well, who has a very important role to play here.

There are certainly many positive signs when you look at this survey. It talks about trend business confidence being up plus seven points on the NAB index. This is three points higher than New South Wales and six points higher than Victoria. This is a very good sign for Queensland because it says that people can see we have a good business environment. It goes further to talk about trend business conditions, and the index in Queensland remains at plus two. The survey indicates that solid business conditions are improving with the dissipation of some financial market jitters—that is important, because that has helped lift confidence—and improvement is largely concentrated in transport and utilities, up 14, and personal services, up 12. Both of these industries are enjoying the highest confidence levels at plus 13 and plus 16 points respectively.

The main point that I would like to convey to the member is that he was part of a team which helped hand down the first budget for this government, which was a pro-jobs and pro-growth budget and which is all about instilling confidence in businesses here in Queensland to ensure that they have

the confidence to invest going forward. It is about ensuring that they have as much certainty as possible and helping to drive that confidence. We cannot take all the credit. We are very happy to say that low interest rates, which are being supported by the low Australian dollar, are also contributing. We are very pleased about that, because that is having an input into future areas and other areas that strengthen the economy such as housing and investment.

I am very pleased to say that conditions in Queensland are performing solidly for the third month in a row and we have topped the *NAB Monthly Business Survey*. We are very pleased to be ahead of New South Wales and Victoria in that regard, and we will continue to do all that we can to instil business owners and managers with the confidence they need to continue getting on with the job.

Port of Townsville

Mr CRIPPS: My question without notice is to the Treasurer. The recent annual report for the Port of Townsville showed an increase in dividends to the Queensland Treasury of \$5.38 million compared to the previous financial year and growth in trade income for the same period of 8.8 per cent. In light of these strong results, will the Treasurer explain why the Palaszczuk government dismissed the former chairman of the Port of Townsville, Mr Pat Brady?

Mr PITT: Mr Speaker, this question sounds a lot like the question from yesterday which I answered pretty comprehensively, but I am happy to answer the question for the member again. Yesterday he asked a question about Ports North, today there is a question about the Port of Townsville and tomorrow there will be another question about another GOC.

Let me make it clear to the member. The government undertook a process to look at what we could do in this space looking at the best candidates and the best performances we could achieve. I would ask the member a rhetorical question, but of course under the standing orders I have to be careful. We know that when the former government came in they put a broom through a range of different GOCs. Based on the logic of the member for Hinchinbrook, the member for Hinchinbrook must explain Leo Zussino, who headed up Gladstone ports. What did the member for Clayfield do? He put in Mark Brodie, the 'chicken man'. I am interested to see what credentials he brought to the role and what Leo Zussino did wrong.

The point is that the government of the day has gone through a process. We have asked for expressions of interest, and we have very clearly said that this is the team that we need to make the sort of decisions we need going into the future. I make the point to the member for Hinchinbrook yet again. The member for Hinchinbrook comes in here asking about the performance of the Port of Townsville and the performance of Ports North, but they wanted to sell them. I will not foreshadow the motion for tonight, but they continue to ask questions about ports, water and other utilities. They wanted to sell all of it, and then they have the hide to ask what is happening with dividends and the performances of those business. I think the LNP have a lot of gall to lecture this government in any way, shape or form about our decisions and what we want to do with our strategic utilities, our ports and our water and electricity. It is very sad to see that this is the way they approach it. We have made the very clear leadership decisions that were required going forward, and we are very confident that everyone who has been appointed to a GOC board has the skill set to deliver as we expect they should, because these are government owned corporations, they have a commercial focus, and we want to ensure that that commercial focus is being driven in the best way possible.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Hinchinbrook and the member for Clayfield have been making continuous interjections. That is disorderly behaviour. You are both warned under standing order 253. I call the member for Pumicestone.

Health Services

Mr WILLIAMS: My question is to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Will the minister advise the parliament how the government is addressing the significant number of long-wait patients?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Pumicestone for his question. As the member for Pumicestone knows, when we came to government we found that 100,000 of our fellow Queenslanders were waiting beyond the clinically recommended time for a specialist outpatient appointment or diagnostic treatment in a Queensland hospital. We did not know that; that was a legacy of the member for Southern Downs. One hundred thousand people were waiting beyond the clinically recommended time just to get in to see someone so they could start their treatment path. We did not wait around; we acted straightaway.

In March we made available \$30 million to hospital and health services to get that money into the front line to start addressing that long waitlist. That money is having an impact, and I am delighted to report to the House that as at 1 July the most recent specialist outpatient data was issued which shows that Queenslanders waiting longer than clinically recommended for a specialist outpatient appointment has fallen from 100,000 to 82,088. That is a reduction of almost 20 per cent in about six months. That is significant, but there is much more work to be done and the government knows that. That is why we are taking a very careful approach to this. There is \$361 million in the budget over four years to develop a long-wait strategy to attack that long-wait list, so people do not have to wait years and years to get in for a specialist outpatient appointment.

What are we doing? We are not ignoring people. We are not telling people what to do, which is what happened under the last government. We are working with people to develop this strategy. Last Wednesday I convened another wait-time summit with leaders across the health system—chairs of hospital and health services, chief executives, front-line hospital staff including specialists, nurses and allied health practitioners, representatives from the primary-care sector, which will play an important role in managing the patient journey, and consumer representatives.

We will look at a number of things including business rules about how people come into a hospital. They have not changed since 2010. Nothing happened under the watch of the Leader of the Opposition. He let those business rules be completely ignored. That is the critical interface between primary care and what GPs do and how people come into public hospitals. So we will work with people to fix up those problems—these things that have been left behind and were simply ignored by the now Leader of the Opposition, just as he ignored the 100,000 people.

We are going to reform the system. The system will be balanced, it will be fair and it will be fair dinkum for people. That is what Labor governments do. We are not going to ignore 100,000 people. We are not going to leave them in the waiting room and pretend they do not exist. We will get them on a treatment path. That will take a lot of work. I cannot guarantee that the list will ever be down to zero, but we will absolutely apply ourselves to that, as will the staff in public hospitals. We will work with people and not against them.

(Time expired)

Blueprint for Agricultural Education

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My question without notice is to the Minister for Agriculture. Given the Labor government claims it is focused on creating jobs, can the minister clarify why funding for the Blueprint for Agricultural Education 2015-2020 has been cut?

Mr BYRNE: I thank the member for the question. I have in fact engaged members of Katter's Australian Party on this very same question. The components of that blueprint that had been accepted have been rolled into further programs that are being delivered by this government. Fundamentally though, the program did not deliver and was never matured in such a way that made any real contribution to agricultural development in this state. This government has looked at a number of policies, if you like, that we inherited from the previous government—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr BYRNE: Well, the program did not actually deliver anything except some schools pieces. It was a program that had not actually matured anything that was worth carrying forward. We have rebranded many of our projects and programs that we took to the election. I refer to our food and fibre policy, which I think the member for Nanango should spend the time to actually look at. I would be happy to take questions about this government's policies rather than about the legacies of the previous government. That is not a policy we took to the election. What we promised was to look at agriculture and to develop a set of policy settings that we would deliver for industry.

It is interesting to note that those policies—such as the food and fibre policy and various other measures that we have run out under the agriculture portfolio—have been widely and greatly appreciated by industry. I keep coming back to this point. Every time I meet with peak bodies and producers—those people who have been impacted by BJD or other issues—the single commentary I get is, 'We can never vote for you, but the fact is that we get treated a lot better by Labor than we were ever treated by the Liberal National Party.'

The Liberal National Party rolled out meaningless policies that delivered nothing for the bush. They took the bush for granted. They took agriculture for granted. The policy settings were drivel. Members opposite should have a look at BJD. They know full well the circumstance of BJD. We kept

our fingers off it because we tried to encourage the then government to do the right thing and deal with the problem, but after 2½ years of dealing with BJD the then minister had not moved the problem forward one iota. He had not got industry buy-in and had not been able to develop a set of solutions that meant anything. Half of the affected producers were up in arms over the government's response to BJD. Let us just be realistic here. We brought a proposed policy setting to the election campaign. We are delivering on that and industry is very supportive of it.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Nanango, you will join the member for Hinchinbrook and the member for Clayfield with a warning under standing order 253A for your continual interjections. I raised with you yesterday the matter of continual interjections. It is disorderly behaviour.

Small Business

Mr POWER: My question is to the Minister for Small Business. Will the minister update the House on the Palaszczuk government's commitment to supporting Queensland's small businesses?

Ms JONES: I thank the member for Logan for his question. I know that he is a passionate advocate on behalf of small businesses in his electorate, as I think every member of this parliament is. I think everybody in this House knows that small business is the backbone of our economy. We have more than 400,000 small businesses here in Queensland. More than 97 per cent of employment that happens in the private sector in Queensland happens in small business. That is why I am very pleased to announce that the 2016 Queensland Small Business Week will be held from Monday, 22 February to Saturday, 27 February 2016. I know this is something that many of the businesses I talk to are looking forward to, as is CCIQ, with which I have been working in coming up with this date.

We know that if you invest in small business and you grow business confidence, you grow jobs. I refer to the comments made by the Treasurer here this morning with regard to the NAB survey. The survey results show that for the third time in a row Queensland leads the nation in business confidence. That is because we are working very closely with the private sector to grow jobs in this state.

Under the previous government we saw businesses closing and businesses suffering. I know from when I doorknocked the small businesses in my community—I am sure many members of parliament will reiterate this—that they were doing it tough because of the way the former government ran down the economy in Queensland.

Our focus is on working with small businesses to ensure this event gives them the skills they need to grow their businesses for the future. From the feedback I have received so far, many of them would like to upskill with regard to getting involved in the digital economy. When you look at small businesses in Queensland you see that we do not have a very good take-up rate in terms of small businesses directly interacting and transacting with their customers and clients over the internet. That is the subject of one of the workshops we will be offering. There will be workshops, conferences, webinars, training sessions, networking functions and open days. It really is an opportunity for small business owners to come together to share their skills. Of course, it is also a great way for government to be working with the small business sector so we can hear those ideas about how we can work in partnership with small business to develop new opportunities for growth.

Here again today we have seen a clear contrast between our government, which is working together to deliver jobs, growth and business confidence in this state, and an opposition which is determined to tear down confidence in this state. We will not partake in what we have seen here today—focused on petty political tricks as opposed to real, competitive ideas that are about growing this state and our economy. We are focused on working in partnership with small business and we will continue to do so.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Southport, you will join those three other members I mentioned earlier in relation to a warning under standing order 253A. Not one of your interjections was taken by the minister.

Drought

Mr KNUTH: My question without notice is to the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. Queensland is suffering the worst drought in history, and many landowners are unable to use their water entitlements to grow fodder for starving stock as a result of the government shifting the goalposts for clearing vital portions of their land. Will the minister investigate the strict impediments preventing clearing to enable graziers to save their stock?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Dalrymple for his question and I understand his passion for his local community and passion for the communities out west. There is no doubt that we are suffering from one of the worst droughts on record and our government is making sure that we are supporting our farmers and our agricultural producers in the west to the fullest of our ability.

In terms of water allocations, my ministerial statement yesterday about the Great Artesian Basin strategic reserve release of water and further statements I will make regarding the extra release of water will help the communities out west. I understand the question entirely with regard to the release of water and it is also to do with the vegetation management framework. This government will not be rushed into vegetation management with rushed recommendations or rushed legislation. We have taken a concerted approach to the people out west, especially in these hard times. We have allowed clearing for fodder purposes. We have established a round table where people from the bush, conservation groups, natural resource communities and Indigenous groups can sit together and work out how to best manage vegetation management in this state. Specifically, the member for Dalrymple is referring to irrigated high-value agriculture and high-value agriculture exemptions which allowed clearing under the previous government's legislation. We have to be very careful that in allowing this to proceed it is for the purpose designed. If someone is clearing for irrigated high-value agriculture, we have to make sure that the soil is of the right type and we have to be sure that the farmer is going to produce those crops that have been put in his application. These are just simply checks to ensure that we get the right balance between what agricultural producers require and what the general population of Queensland expect in terms of our vital resources such as vegetation but also in supporting our rural communities during these hard times.

Flinders River, Water Resources

Mr CRAWFORD: My question is directed to the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. Will the minister please update the House on when the tender process is expected to commence for the release of unallocated water in the Flinders River?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Barron River for the question. The member for Barron River is a representative who served his local community with absolute distinction in his previous role and he is continuing to serve his community with that same distinction. This question follows on from the previous question from the member for Dalrymple about how this government is assisting people in Western Queensland. On 22 August I announced the release of the amended gulf water resource plan and gulf resource operations plan which identify further general unallocated water reserves of 239,650 megalitres in the Flinders catchment. The release of this water will provide much needed economic stimulation to North Queensland. The expansion of agriculture benefits communities through increased jobs, townships through increased commercial activity and families through increased security. The release of this water is therefore of vital significance to the development of North Queensland and is an example of the Palaszczuk government's food and fibre policy in action.

Public consultation meetings to discuss the gulf unallocated water release process had been held in Hughenden and Julia Creek on 21 and 23 September respectively. The Department of Natural Resources and Mines is also hosting a further meeting at Richmond on the morning of 16 October. This additional consultation will allow stakeholders to shape the tender processes the department will undertake in the final quarter of this year. I strongly suggest to all those in the Richmond area who are interested in the Flinders release to attend and discuss this important issue with the department. The department is currently consolidating and considering the above consultation, which the Richmond consultation will also feed into. This will assist in the development of the terms of sale tender documents. Those terms of sale tender documents are expected to be finalised and made publicly available in the forthcoming weeks. These documents will specify the eligibility criteria and the conditions under which water will be made available. A call for tenders will follow shortly afterwards. I am more than happy to arrange a departmental briefing for the local members in that area if required.

In reviewing the Gilbert and Flinders unallocated water resources, the CSIRO and the department of natural resources undertook extensive water and soil science. This science examined the requirements of the gulf fisheries, the environment and existing waters whilst allowing for the sustainable expansion of irrigated agriculture. I am quite pleased with the work of my department in this area and the way that we are engaging with the local community. I am also pleased that tenders will be called for shortly because, as everyone knows, water is vital to those in the bush.

Domestic and Family Violence

Mr MILLAR: My question is to the Minister for Communities. Minister, when victims of domestic violence in small towns seek refuge, the current practice is to relocate them and their children to shelters in larger regional centres. Given this practice, can the minister advise how many additional places have been funded for rural domestic violence victims seeking shelter in Townsville, Mackay and Rockhampton?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for the question. Obviously domestic violence and making sure that women in regional Queensland have access to not only the shelter they need but also the support services they need is something that this government sees as a top priority and something that I am incredibly passionate about. I am happy to get the member the figures for the places that are funded for regional Queensland and I announced earlier this year on International Women's Day—the first announcement I made as minister—that this government would urgently implement the recommendations in the *Not now, not ever* report to invest in two new 72-hour crisis shelters—one in Townsville and one in Brisbane. At this point in time I am happy to update the House that both of those new shelters will be operational by the end of this year. I am also pleased to report to the House that twice this year I have stood with the Premier and announced additional funding for DVConnect. DVConnect is the statewide helpline for women who are escaping domestic violence. They can ring DVConnect from anywhere in the state and it will—

Ms Davis interjected.

Ms FENTIMAN: Earlier this year we announced that on top of recurrent funding for DVConnect—I take the interjection from the member for Aspley—there would be \$1.2 million just to deal with the increase in calls that it is experiencing and just a few months later the Premier announced an extra \$1.5 million to deal with the additional increase in calls, many of which are coming from regional Queensland. That is on top of its recurrent funding and an extra, as I said, \$2.7 million. I would encourage any woman anywhere in Queensland—whether in an urban setting, in a regional setting or in a rural/remote setting—to call DVConnect if they are experiencing any kind of violence. I would call on all members of this House and all Queenslanders to trust their instincts and to call DVConnect if they believe a neighbour, a friend or a family member may be experiencing domestic or family violence.

We know that the more this issue gets momentum and the more this issue is being talked about more and more women will be reaching out for help, and we have to ensure that we have the support services they need. That is why I am so pleased that an audit is already underway and is due to report back to the government in November on all statewide services—that is support services, that is refuge places. KPMG will be reporting back to the government in November. I am happy to say that that will inform our investment going forward to ensure that there are no service gaps for women and children experiencing violence. We want women to pick up that phone and seek help, and it is when a woman seeks help that is the most dangerous time. We know that as a government we absolutely have a responsibility to all Queenslanders to ensure that those women and their children are safe. So please rest assured that this is a top priority for me and a top priority for this government.

Science

Ms LINARD: My question is directed to the Minister for Science and Innovation. Will the minister advise the House what the state government is doing to encourage more young Queenslanders to pursue a career in science?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. I know the member is committed to securing the best possible opportunities for young people in her electorate, so I thank her for the question. We know that science and innovation will play a key role in providing the jobs of the future for young people in our state, and earlier today it was a great pleasure to see the Premier and the Minister for Education launching a discussion paper on coding and robotics in Queensland schools. Encouraging more Queenslanders to study science is one of the key challenges we are tackling as part of the Palaszczuk government's Advance Queensland initiative. Exciting scientific advances and inspirational role models are some of the most effective tools we have to encourage young people to pursue these fields. We are talking about discoveries like last month's announcement by NASA of the discovery of water on the surface of Mars—

A government member interjected.

Ms ENOCH: Yes, mentioned by the health minister earlier. We are also talking about inspirational Queenslanders, such as Dr Abigail Allwood, who is at the very forefront of these discoveries. After studying at the Queensland University of Technology, Dr Allwood has become the first woman and the

first Australian to be appointed a principal science investigator on NASA's next rover mission to Mars in 2020. I am sure that the important work that Dr Allwood is leading will encourage many more Queenslanders to follow her example.

But if we are going to develop, attract and retain world-class talent, we need more than role models. On a recent visit to Brisbane from the United States, Dr Allwood warned that Australia risked losing the next generation of homegrown scientists, engineers and technologists if it did not join other nations involved in space exploration. That is why we need to be planning now so that we can tap into the enormous potential for the science and technology sectors that will come out of space discovery and exploration. That means doing more to support our next generation of scientists and researchers as well as growing tech leaders whose work could contribute to space exploration.

The Palaszczuk government knows that more has to be done to attract and retain the best and brightest minds to Queensland. We are committed to doing that through the \$180 million investment that we are making through the Advance Queensland initiative. The Palaszczuk government is committed to meeting the challenges and opportunities that are arising out of a fast-changing world and securing the future of our state. That is why we on this side of the parliament are committed to public education, where it does not matter how much you earn or where you live, you can access great learning opportunities related to coding and robotics to prepare for the future industries in Queensland.

Dart, Mr J

Mrs STUCKEY: My question without notice is to the Minister for Sport and Racing. Jamie Dart was promoted to the role of Acting Chief Steward for Racing Queensland despite having previously been a steward for greyhounds at the time of live baiting. Is the minister sure that the racing industry has confidence in this appointment?

Mr BYRNE: I thank the member for the question. I can answer it very simply and say yes, I am confident. I am confident because the reputation of the individual mentioned has been heavily scrutinised. The police unit that was set in place to investigate the allegations that came from the *Four Corners* program very clearly expressed support for that appointment, as did everybody else who has had any knowledge of the individual concerned. So I can assure the member that there was very thorough consideration.

I think it is rather unfortunate that someone whose reputation has managed to sail through all of this journey is being theoretically sullied by being asked about the credibility of his appointment—an appointment that was recommended by people who know about such matters and one that I was happy to endorse.

Mrs STUCKEY: I rise to a point of order. The minister is misleading the House. I ask him to withdraw. I did not impugn anyone's reputation.

Mr SPEAKER: Are you saying that he has impugned your reputation?

Mrs STUCKEY: I find his comments personally offensive.

Mr SPEAKER: And you ask that they be withdrawn?

Mrs STUCKEY: I ask him to withdraw.

CHAIR: Minister, will you please withdraw the comments.

Mr BYRNE: I withdraw. The last thing that I would ever want to do is offend the member. The fact is that, when the nomination was revealed to me, it did concern me that some would choose to make this nefarious connection between a previous role with greyhounds and the present role imagined within Racing Queensland. It is a pretty ill-informed, low, difficult line to follow to suggest that this appointment in any way, shape or form is not appropriate. I have complete confidence in the advice that has been provided to me that has been completely, utterly and thoroughly interrogated. There is nobody of any standing or credentials who has a reputation intact associated with the industry who is making critical comment.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Further Answer to Question; Draft Queensland Economic Action Plan

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (4.04 pm), by leave: The director-general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet confirms that the document tabled by the Leader of the Opposition has not been provided to the Premier's office. The document was an early

draft of an internal working document prepared by an individual officer. It was not cleared by anyone in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and does not reflect the department's approved policy advice.

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 13 October (see p. 2149), on motion of Mr Pitt—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (4.05 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, introduced into the House by the Treasurer on 7 May of this year. The objectives of the bill, as outlined in the explanatory notes, purport to focus on implementing the Palaszczuk government's Improving Safety for Queenslanders at Work policy. That was the same justification that was used for the IR bill, which was debated earlier this year. But we all saw the real motivation behind that, did we not? After robust debate in this House, it became quite clear that the bill was more about the government cashing in IOUs to its union mates than improving the safety of Queenslanders at work. And here we are again debating legislation with the sole aim of appeasing union heavyweights rather than improving the Queensland economy and creating jobs.

Some of the key amendments to this legislation will allow work health and safety entry permit holders immediate entry to a workplace, removing the 24-hour notice requirement; allow health and safety representatives to request the assistance of any person if the health and safety representative requires access to the workplace, removing the 24-hour notice requirement; and require employers to notify the regulator when a worker is absent for more than four days due to a work related incident.

At the outset, it should be acknowledged that, yet again, we have a bill before the House that does not have the confidence of the bipartisan committee. Yet again, we have a committee report that fails to recommend that the bill be passed. Despite a thorough consultation process with a wide range of stakeholders, the committee simply could not recommend that this bill be passed.

Upon close examination of the legislative intent of this bill, it becomes apparent why that was the case. A number of submissions, which I will speak to further, have been critical—one might say damning—of the legislation proposed by the government, which exposes employers to unnecessarily onerous practices that cause work to stop or slow down. The CCIQ finished its submission by urging the Queensland Legislative Assembly to refrain from passing this bill. The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry summed it up well when it said—

Legislation should encourage co-operative rather than adversarial approaches. It should not be an enabler of misuse ... should not be used as a tool to obtain workplace relations outcomes and WHS legislation should not provide such an opportunity.

When in government, in April 2014 the LNP introduced the 24-hour notice requirement for entry to a workplace, because we understood the need to level the playing field and provide fairness whilst still recognising the importance of workplace health and safety—I repeat: still recognising the importance of workplace health and safety. The ACCI acknowledged this when it said that this move 'recognised the need for early genuine consultation' and that it 'strongly supports 24 hour notification'.

Over the past few months the number of unsavoury union related incidents highlighted by the media is both staggering and sickening. An alarming number of incidents have also been brought to my attention. It seems that whenever I am out and about in the electorate, somebody has a story to tell—whether it is at the local butcher, or at Anzac Day this year, when one would expect that the only conversation was to be about our diggers. I was told of recent threats at a mine site in our state where a site manager was told that, if he put \$10,000 in a paper bag and left it behind the bar in the workers club, he would not have any trouble.

That happened on Anzac Day in the electorate of Currumbin. It was another example of thuggery and standover tactics. No wonder Labor support the watering down of criminal bkie laws; they endorse antisocial bullying behaviour themselves. Shutting down worksites costs those involved an exorbitant amount of money and countless jobs. There is the obvious loss to the employers, but there is also the employees on site who do not get paid if they do not work. So every single time a union forces a strike or unjustly shuts down a site there are steelies, concreters and other tradesmen who do not take home any wages. Without a 24-hour-notice period we are sure to go back to the old days of shutting down worksites without just cause. Or perhaps we will see more antics like the CFMEU-backed illegal strike

on a \$60 million worksite all because project managers refused to fly the CFMEU flag; or at Bond University on the Gold Coast where CFMEU tactics saw a crane company lose up to \$780,000 worth of business. The *Courier-Mail* editorial on 30 May recognised the welcome sight of cranes swinging across the Brisbane skyline, but also acknowledged that times are tough and that is why 'attempts to stifle this by unions hell-bent on something as trivial as flying a flag must be condemned'. This behaviour hurts everyone except a handful of handsomely paid union officials. Even if bigger companies can absorb days lost to strikes, the smaller businesses with a handful of tradies working for them see their wages dry up and their families punished as they struggle to make ends meet.

The ABC program 7.30 on Friday, 4 September once again revealed thuggish tactics that are the hallmark of unions like the CFMEU and recent reports have indicated that CFMEU strike action has been extremely questionable. They face up to \$20 million in fines for almost 100 days of allegedly illegal strikes and work stoppages. But we have a Labor government in Queensland rolling out the red carpet for them. One tradesman told me a story of unions throwing their weight around on a worksite on the Gold Coast. The union representative came onto the site and threatened to shut it down due to a minor electrical issue that could have been easily rectified. But get this: the irony in this story is that the union rep waltzed onto the worksite without high-vis or the legally required PPE gear. One set of rules for them and one for everyone else it seems. The LNP were committed to achieving a balance and the 24-hour-notice requirement realised this. Now we have a government that does not just turn a blind eye to it; no, it actively praises the unions and gives them greater power, greater access and all at the expense of our economy and our small businesses.

I now turn to the red-tape requirements that the bill seeks to impose. The submission by QTIC outlined its concerns. Specifically they said they could see no additional benefit of amending the clause and that current parameters were sufficient. They rightly pointed out that creating this additional requirement would stretch small businesses already under enormous pressure. The ACCI said that it placed a disproportionate regulatory burden that is not justified by work health and safety outcomes. The City of Gold Coast submission said that additional resources as well as modification to documentation and incident reporting software will be needed. This will come as a cost to the organisation. The impost of supervisors will also impact on business delivery and detract from their key role of supporting workers, including monitoring their health and safety. CCIQ's submission said that these amendments will increase costs and make it harder for business to achieve improved safety outcomes and best practice approaches. So while those opposite stand in this House and claim to be defending workplace rights, they are, in fact, endangering them. They are hurting employers and costing precious jobs. How many Labor MPs in this House have praised their union comrades even though they behave like thugs, intimidating and assaulting employers? How many belong to unions such as the AWU which has the hide to say they stand up for workers when they condone ripping them off? We have peak industry bodies raising real objections to the amendments proposed here today. When will this government listen to the public and consult, as opposed to bowing to the commands of their union mates?

All honourable members in this House recognise that a worker has the right to a safe and a healthy worksite and that is not in dispute. What is in dispute is the motive of those opposite. Day after day we read the impassioned pleas of business leaders for this government to get the state going, to stop the bland talking and deliver some action. However, amendments such as these are going to cost our state dearly and restrict growth and jobs at the hands of this Palaszczuk union controlled government.

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (4.14 pm), in reply: Firstly, I want to thank all members of this House for their valuable contributions to our debate on the Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. This bill meets the government's election commitment to prioritise and improve work health and safety protections in Queensland. I am very pleased that we have been able to debate this bill during Safe Work Month. This is Queensland's annual awareness month that encourages all working Queenslanders to get involved in work health and safety.

This government believes that every worker has the right to go to work expecting to return home safely to their family and friends at the end of each day. When it comes to safety, many hands make light work. We all need to work continuously towards improving our workplaces, not just in Safe Work Month but every month. We believe in genuine consultation, cooperation and respect in the workplace. We also recognise the long-term benefits of providing safe and productive workplaces where everyone shares the responsibility for improvements in work health and safety to prevent work related injury and disease.

Queensland has a diverse workforce. It is comprised of workers from all different walks of life: young workers, workers from other countries, workers from non-English-speaking backgrounds, workers who, unlike most of us in this House, work every day in high-risk industries. The removal of the right for a health and safety representative by those opposite last term was a great shame. It was removing an important protection for all workers. Health and safety representatives are incredibly important in developing safety cultures in workplaces. That cannot be understated. They are ordinary workers elected by their peers, prepared to undergo specialist training to assist in identifying and managing safety risks in their workplace. Despite this valuable role, the LNP placed vulnerable workers at risk when they removed the ability of an elected health and safety representative to assist them understand risks associated with particular circumstances.

This bill will help improve safety protections for all workers, including young workers and workers from non-English speaking backgrounds. This bill, among other things, empowers a trained health and safety representative to prevent workplace accidents from dangerous workplace activities that pose a serious and imminent safety risk by giving them the ability to direct unsafe work to cease. This will allow workers to be supported and advised by more knowledgeable, trained representatives who are better placed to identify hazards and potential risks in the workplace. This change also restores consistency with the nationally harmonised model of work health and safety laws. In addition to empowering trained health and safety representatives to assist workers directly, the bill also allows health and safety representatives to request the immediate assistance of any person at the workplace, removing the unnecessary requirement for 24 hours notice. This amendment will improve safety in the workplace by providing immediate access to external representatives who can provide more detailed and informed support to at-risk workers.

In addition, this bill returns the meaningful role that work health and safety entry permit holders play in inspecting and assessing potentially unsafe sites, helping to prevent workplace injuries. It does this by allowing entry permit holders immediate access to a workplace where they have a reasonable suspicion that safety breaches are occurring. This government will not tolerate the misuse of work health and safety laws by any rogue party, whether it is an employer, an employee or a worker representative for industrial purposes. However, I remind this House that in many circumstances in many workplaces immediate access is critical. Accessing a worksite to prevent safety breaches from occurring or continuing can prevent serious injury or even prevent fatalities. There is a strong evidential base for reasonable right-of-entry laws. The national review of the national model work health and safety laws found there was considerable evidence that entry permit holders play a valuable role in securing improved work health and safety outcomes and provide substantial support for elected representatives at the workplace.

During the debate those opposite have once again tried to make a bill that will improve work health and safety protections for Queensland workers all about their ideological opposition to workers and their unions. Twice yesterday the member for Mansfield referred to a poll about interest groups that influence the Labor Party, the same poll where 53 per cent of people said property developers and 52 per cent of people said mining companies have too much influence over the LNP—more than any interest group has over Labor. This bill is not about polls, it is not about the LNP's opposition to employee representation, it is about the safety of the constituency in every corner of Queensland at every type of workplace. This bill is about safety in workplaces and ensuring that workers and their representatives have a meaningful voice when it comes to the safety of their colleagues and also the safety of themselves.

The requirement to notify is to allow, where appropriate, for the investigation of incidents and potential breaches in a timely manner. Workplace Health and Safety Queensland also uses notified incidents as an opportunity to build intelligence and an evidence base to assist workplaces with information and guidance and to assist with compliance and preventative measures to minimise recurrence. Some of this information is also published in safety alerts to raise awareness of particular hazards.

The incident notification requirements currently in the act capture a range of serious work related incidents. However, they do not account for a number of other injury types, such as serious work related musculoskeletal disorders and work related mental disorders. Work related musculoskeletal disorders continue to be the most commonly compensated work related injury in Queensland and right across all Australian jurisdictions. This reason alone justifies the need for increased information of these types of incidents to assist in targeting prevention activities, including audits. In addition, it is also going to assist Queensland achieving its milestone under the Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012-22 of a 30 per cent reduction in musculoskeletal disorders.

The bill also meets an important election commitment made by the Palaszczuk government to improve electrical safety for workers by reinstating an independent Commissioner for Electrical Safety and two supporting committees for electrical safety education and electrical equipment, which were removed by those opposite. Amendments to the Electrical Safety Act 2002 reinstate the position of the Electrical Safety Commissioner. As members may recall, this important role manages the Electrical Safety Board and its committees and also provides direct advice to the department and advice to the minister on electrical safety matters. The Electrical Education Committee and the Electrical Equipment Committee, which were shamefully abolished by those opposite in 2012, are also reinstated by this bill. Those committees play a vital role in giving advice and making recommendations about the promotion of electrical safety in workplaces and in the broader community, and about the safety of electrical equipment.

Overall, the provisions in this bill meet the election commitments made by the Palaszczuk government to improve safety for all working Queenslanders and also employers. Despite the member for Coomera's suggestion that our election commitments are made for the union movement, we on this side of the House have listened and have certainly developed our policies with the people. We took our policies and ideas to the people. Do you know what? They supported us. We believe in a workplace environment that relies on genuine consultation and on cooperation and mutual respect between employers and workers to improve health and safety and to ensure everyone goes home safely to their family and friends at the end of every day. I commend the bill to the House.

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

AYES, 46:

ALP, 43—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Power, Pyne, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

INDEPENDENT, 1—Gordon.

NOES, 42:

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

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 15, as read, agreed to.

Clause 16—

 **Mr WALKER** (4.28 pm): This is the provision in the bill that was referred to during the debate in relation to duplication of reporting requirements. There are a number of reasons that the opposition opposes this provision, the first being the duplication itself. This provision actually allows for the duplication of information that is already being collected by WorkCover and, therefore, goes against not only good practice for business in this state but also the government's own stated intention of reducing red tape. At this time the point needs to be made, and it was made during the debate, that the Labor government itself removed this provision some years ago in an attempt to reduce red tape, yet here they are turning their backs on that provision and once again reinserting it.

I think all members of the House today have received a letter from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland restating, in the strongest possible terms, its concern about this provision in particular. I draw the attention of honourable members to that letter if they have not already seen it, although as I say it has been sent to members of the House. It reiterates the point that workplace health and safety legislation is the second major area of regulatory burden for businesses in Queensland, with 70 per cent of businesses stating that workplace health and safety regulation has a high or moderate impact on their business operations. The CCIQ believes that the inclusion of burdensome notification requirements such as these undermines the policies of the previous Labor government, as I have said, and in effect duplicates reporting requirements that already occur through WorkCover. The House should not impose this additional burden on business. Business is saying to us, in the clearest possible terms, do not do this. It does not add anything to the regime. It simply adds to the burden of red tape and the House should reject it.

Mr KNUTH: I wish to ask the Treasurer virtually the same question on this requirement for employers to notify the regulator of the absence of a worker for more than four days. As the shadow minister has said, they are doubling up here as Workplace Health and Safety has already been notified. Can the Treasurer explain why they have to notify two bodies?

Mr PITT: As both the member for Mansfield and the member for Dalrymple have correctly identified, this is about business giving an undertaking to notify the regulator when a worker is absent from work for more than four days due to a workplace injury. I have heard the arguments put forward and I understand the red-tape argument that has been put forward. I acknowledge that that is the argument that those opposite are putting forward. Of course, we do not see that there is nothing new here at all. The claim that is made is that there is nothing new here and that this clause does not add anything. I disagree with that.

This amendment ensures that the regulator has increased intelligence around work related injuries and I do not think we can understate the importance of that. I say that because musculoskeletal disorders and work related mental disorders are not currently captured through the notification requirements as they currently stand. I certainly understand that work related mental disorders, that is, people experiencing mental ill health as a result of the workplace, is a very important issue and it is important for the department to get as much information as possible to ascertain how to deal with that and how to improve systems and processes.

When members say that it does not add anything, I strongly disagree with that. I think that that is not quite correct. For me, this is a very important part of why we have put this provision back in. Musculoskeletal disorders continue to be the most commonly compensated work related injuries in Queensland and right across all jurisdictions in Australia. This is a very important area. This is reason alone for this provision to be included. I ask all members to support it on that basis.

It is estimated that this amendment will result in approximately 2,000 additional notifications per year. Members may say that that adds to the argument around red tape. What I would argue is that it will not have any significant impact on those employers who already have the systems in place to make notifications about work related injuries. Across the entire state I do not see that that increase in notifications, which is an estimation, would increase the department's workload in any significant way.

We are certainly providing employers with the best possible options in terms of the one-stop shop. They have the option to lodge a claim and notify of an incident at the same time either online or by phone through the one-stop shop. Whilst there may be two processes they can do them in a very effective and efficient way. We do not see that this is a major burden at all on businesses.

The Finance and Administration Committee made one recommendation with regard to the new incident notification requirement. The recommendation stated—

The Committee recommends that the Department of Justice and Attorney-General work to improve ease of access and reporting systems for employers, including self-insured employers, and develop education and communication strategies to ensure employers are both aware of the requirements and the reasons for them.

We accept the committee's recommendation. We certainly support that recommendation. Action has already been taken to streamline that notification process for self-insurers. Further education and awareness programs are planned by the department in order to promote the use of the one-stop shop by employers.

We see this as a very important clause which we ask members to support. This amendment is not something that does not add; it adds considerably through those two particular areas.

Division: Question put—That clause 16, as read, stand part of the bill.

AYES, 44:

ALP, 43—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Power, Pyne, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

INDEPENDENT, 1—Gordon.

NOES, 44:

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

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

The numbers being equal, Mr Speaker cast his vote with the noes.

Resolved in the negative.

Clause 16, as read, negatived.

Clauses 17 to 22, as read, agreed to.

Clause 23—

 **Mr WALKER** (4.39 pm): This is the provision in the bill that deals with the right of entry. A substantial part of the debate on the second reading has been about this provision. The point very simply is this. This is a right of entry provision which essentially benefits the CFMEU. It has been said quite clearly during the debate and the committee reported on the number of incidents which involved the construction industry.

We have seen through recent events, particularly through the royal commission, that the CFMEU is not to be trusted in any shape or form. Former premier Peter Beattie has said that the Labor Party should serve the CFMEU with a notice to show cause why it should not be expelled from the party. Instead, what is happening here is the CFMEU is not being served with a show-cause notice but with an invitation to continue to create havoc.

There is no need for this provision. Government workplace health and safety officers can adequately monitor the workplace health and safety of workers in the construction industry. Workers themselves have the right to call on a dangerous situation and to cease work. Unions will still be able to attend on giving 24 hours notice if this provision does not go through. So it is a fair and sensible provision to leave as is. There is no justification for changing it and for delivering this blank cheque to the CFMEU in a circumstance where all Queenslanders know exactly what is going to happen.

It is clear from the evidence given to the committee by the Master Builders Association, by the chamber of commerce and by the housing industry as to exactly how this is misused. Every member of the House knows it, and we should not take the retrograde step of going back to a circumstance where this union, about which we have heard so much, can continue to create so much havoc in this important industry for Queensland.

Mr PITT: I am somewhat disappointed with the opposition to this clause by those opposite. I understand that they had a position in government and they made changes. We have been very clear about the fact that the changes they made were based on a false premise. Very clearly the former attorney-general, when looking at these laws and introducing them, had talked about there being harmonisation with the Fair Work Act and with model laws. What I find interesting about that is that that was never the case. The Fair Work Act certainly allowed people to have right-of-entry access without requiring 24-hour notice, and why? Because it was always about safety. It has always been about safety.

This clause is about reinstating that access for work health and safety entry permit holders to immediately enter a workplace where they have a suspected safety contravention. I cannot stress to members of this House enough that this is about safety, it is about safety and it is about safety. If those opposite think that it is okay to stand by and allow 24 hours to elapse before a work health and safety entry permit holder can go into a site where they actually have a suspected contravention, I think that says a lot. That is very concerning because this is about safety.

I am hearing a lot of discussion over that side. They keep talking about a particular union. They can put forward claims about a particular union where they have those opportunities. We have always said that we would not tolerate anyone misusing or breaching these laws and we would certainly not see anyone use it as any kind of industrial weapon.

Let me make it really clear that this clause does not give work health and safety entry permit holders unconditional right of entry. It does not give anyone unconditional right of entry. What it does do is it limits its actions to what is necessary to achieve the statutory objective. I come back to the fact that this is about safety. It is about safety. It ensures entry permit holders can have meaningful access to a workplace, particularly in urgent cases. For example, if an entry permit holder has a reasonable belief that workers were being exposed to a hazard, such as working at heights, which poses a serious or immediate risk to their health and safety, it was necessary to warn them. That is what we are trying to achieve with this amendment. It is concerning that those opposite are making this about a royal commission, making it about a particular union. It is clear that they are clouded in their judgement. They are not focused on the fact that this is about safety.

If there is dispute over their entry to a workplace, an inspector can make a judgement about whether there has been misuse of the right-of-entry provisions. There is a provision to see the inspector do that. Additionally, in a case where a permit holder has misused their entry powers, the act provides for the regulator, the person conducting business or undertaking, or other persons affected by the right of entry to apply to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission to revoke or suspend the entry permit holder's permit. This is important because what they are trying to do—and we heard this used a couple of times—is use a sledge hammer to crack a nut. What this is about is ensuring that this provision is in place. They are saying that everyone will be misusing the provision as opposed to people who may actually misuse it. There are provisions there to account for that.

I think that this is all about, as usual, an ideological approach. They hate unions, and I think they hate workers sometimes because this is about safety. Very sadly, they are going to oppose this on ideological grounds just to say that they were right when they were in government, when clearly everything they talked about in terms of harmonisation was always wrong.

Division: Question put—That clause 23, as read, stand part of the bill.

AYES, 46:

ALP, 43—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Power, Pyne, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

INDEPENDENT, 1—Gordon.

NOES, 42:

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

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 23, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 24 to 27, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. CW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (4.51 pm): I move—

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

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

Hon. CW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (4.52 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Resumed from 2 June (see p. 992).

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (4.52 pm): It is indeed a true honour to stand in the House and give my speech on the address-in-reply after being re-elected for a second term by the people of Chatsworth. With the parliamentary time delay of several months in making this speech on the address-in-reply compared to the opening address earlier this year, it has changed the context somewhat. Given that several former surrounding electorate colleagues from the 54th Parliament were

not successful at the last election, I fully realise that it is indeed a privilege and not a right to serve in this hallowed chamber. I am truly indebted to the people of Chatsworth for giving me the opportunity of serving as their state member in this 55th Parliament.

As I did in my inaugural speech three years ago, I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today, the Jagera and Turrbal peoples. I again reaffirm my allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and to her representative, His Excellency the Governor Paul de Jersey, the institution of parliament and the electors of Chatsworth who have entrusted me with another three years of electoral representation in this august chamber.

Politics is a tough and brutal business, but one needs to show respect for the institution of parliament and the voting result and wishes of the people. The old political adage 'oppositions do not win government; governments lose government' was no better illustrated than by the state election result earlier this year. Even though this speech on the address-in-reply has taken several months to get the call, despite the passage of time I still take this opportunity to once again thank the valuable contribution given by defeated and retiring members from the 54th Parliament and congratulate all returning and new members of this parliament. Although I now sit on the opposite side of the chamber in this 55th Parliament, I remain equally committed to doing what is best for the Chatsworth electorate, which I proudly serve. My passion to make the local community I represent a better place in which to live will be the focus of what drives me each and every day as a parliamentarian.

In preparing this speech on the address-in-reply, a logical starting point was to revisit my inaugural speech delivered a few years ago. The key theme which ran through my first speech was the notion of responsibility. I spoke of my responsibility to my seat of Chatsworth to uphold my core Liberal values, taking responsibility for one's own actions and risk, responsibility towards our children and future generations and to the first Australians. This key theme of responsibility will be used as a point of reference throughout this address-in-reply.

Like all members of parliament, I listened with keen interest to the Governor's opening speech on 25 March outlining the Palaszczuk government's agenda given that the Labor Party consistently stated in the election campaign that it would not sell assets, reduce services or increase taxes. Given that I have a business degree and a master's degree in property economics, I was very eager to discover what this magic fourth economic solution must be. The Governor's opening speech lasted 31 minutes, according to Hansard records, and it was undergraduate dross. This is not a reflection on the Governor, as he merely reads what is prepared by the government of the day. I read with interest the section dealing with the debt action plan, focusing on paying \$12 billion worth of the state's \$46 billion general government debt over the next decade using the retention of revenue from government owned corporations.

With the state budget handed down a few months ago, we now know this was a hollow projection as this will not be achieved according to the government's own projections over the forward estimates. As for the section 'building our regions', what a joke. This growing state needs decent infrastructure. How is this need going to be funded? I look forward to the release of the government's forward infrastructure plan while maintaining an ongoing program of capital works estimated at \$9 billion a year. Again, show us the money, as the budget papers told us very little. Queensland is now an infrastructure-free zone. Compare and contrast development in this state with New South Wales.

As I have repeatedly stated in this House, there is nothing wrong with government debt as long as it is being applied to state building assets that have an economic utility across several generations of taxpayers, thereby avoiding unfair intergenerational debt. Amounts of \$1¼ billion towards the Health payroll system, \$2.6 billion for the Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme and \$1.2 billion for the Gold Coast desalination plant—projects which are costing Queenslanders \$150 million a year in interest repayments and \$33 million a year in care and maintenance costs alone—are the past failed Labor government's gifts that keep on giving. It is absurd and irresponsible.

As I have equally stated in the past, I do not believe in opposition that you merely disagree for the sake of it. If the government does something in the best interests of the people, it is churlish and irresponsible not to state that fact. Therefore, I applauded the government's intention to respond to the recommendations by the task force on domestic violence chaired by Dame Quentin Bryce, as outlined earlier in this year's opening address by the Governor. There have been several heartfelt speeches made in this chamber from both sides on the scourge of domestic violence. It is without doubt morally reprehensible, and both sides of politics and the general community need to work collectively on this area of public policy. It is a travesty and grossly irresponsible, however, that the Palaszczuk government's credentials on this important social issue have been sullied and tainted by virtue of the

fact that they accept and court the support of the member for Cook, despite their faux indignation and outrage. We offered a pragmatic solution to overcome this issue, but again it was not supported by Labor.

Over the last few years, I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to meet many new people in both my capacity as the local member for Chatsworth and through my additional responsibility formerly as the assistant minister for public transport. Being able to make a real difference to someone's life or one of their family members through the actions of being a state member of parliament is the greatest satisfaction of the job. As I stated in my inaugural speech—

Our role and responsibility as a government is to provide an opportunity deposit slip for all Queenslanders and not an entitlement chequebook. It is our responsibility as the government to be an enabler of opportunity and not a provider of assumed entitlement.

I wish to place on record my sincere thanks and appreciation to the former premier, Campbell Newman, and his wife, Lisa, for the many years of public service they devoted to both City Hall and the previous few years in state politics. I wish them both, along with their family, all the very best for the future.

Whilst I acknowledge the good work the previous LNP government did, I would like to take this opportunity to focus on the Chatsworth specific challenges that I encountered as the local member. I was proud to be instrumental in securing the Carindale park-and-ride—a must do on my list when first elected in 2012. For years, residents had been pleading for the unused Crown land to be turned into a park-and-ride. However, due to senseless ALP policy, this plea was never answered. Given that some of us come from the real commercial world and adhere to the notion of the time-quality-cost paradigm, the Carindale park-and-ride was opened in July that same year under budget and on time—a relief not only for commuters but also for households surrounding the Carindale bus interchange, as cars were no longer clogging the streets. Interestingly, patronage also increased significantly as a result of the Carindale park-and-ride construction, as it was now easier to park and catch buses from this busy transport hub.

It was one of my proudest achievements during my first term to be a part of the historic public transport fare decrease policy. The axing of the carbon tax meant a five per cent fare decrease for commuters.

An honourable member: For the first time ever.

Mr MINNIKIN: I take that interjection from the member. That meant on average a Chatsworth resident travelling from Carindale in my electorate into the CBD saved around \$100 per annum. That is more money in their pocket which means more of an incentive to hop on a bus instead of jumping in the car. Obviously, the economic proposition around price elasticity of demand was beyond the comprehension of past Labor transport ministers, including the current Premier.

Even though I am a member of the opposition in this chamber, my action plan for Chatsworth still forms the basis of my vision for the next three years in office. Vision is not a word that figured prominently in the Governor's opening speech. In relation to our responsibility to the First Australians, it was an absolute privilege to be part of the previous LNP government that offered Indigenous Australians the ability to acquire freehold land title, with landmark legislation introduced into this chamber. Indeed, this landmark legislation was something I will look back upon with immense satisfaction once my time in this place is over. I was proud to be part of the LNP government who introduced it.

The action plan that I took to the people of Chatsworth at the last election consisted of five key issues that were and still are critical to everyone in my local area. Firstly, I mention storage accommodation in the sports hall for Belmont State School, one of two independent public schools in my electorate. I hope that the current government can move past the union's whims and keep this excellent initiative going for the sake of better education in Queensland. Secondly, despite missing out in the budget, I will continue to fight and lobby for new classroom buildings at Camp Hill State Infants and Primary School, which coincidentally is another independent public school. There is a chronic need to construct an outside school hours care building, as this program is at more than peak capacity as they have become victims of their own success.

Thirdly, I will continue to fight for a grant to upgrade the Rowland Cowan Basketball Stadium located within the Clem Jones Centre. The Spartans basketball team deserve a first-class facility to match the high-class basketball they play across the country in the SEABL league. Even though I secured \$90,000 for a changing room upgrade in our term of government, there is still much more to be done and I intend to try and do just that.

The second last item on my action plan regards cost-of-living relief with electricity price hikes. The ALP ran a campaign misleading Queenslanders over the leasing of assets, yet they initially planned at one stage to merge all three energy corporations which had been questioned at the time by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. We now know what they have done in the 2015-16 budget with their shifting of \$4 billion of government debt on to the balance sheets of state-owned businesses. Stay tuned on this genius piece of public policy!

Lastly, over the past three years, I have been working tirelessly with the Gumdale State School community to put the motions in place for their much talked about master plan to occur. As mentioned in my budget reply speech, I lobbied hard for funding to be committed to stage 1 to improve amenities for local students and teachers centred around creating much needed building canopy space by constructing a new sports oval on adjoining department of education land. I achieved this goal during my first term and I am pleased that funding has been provided for in the current 2015-16 budget. I am also pleased that tenders have now been called for this project and I intend to see it through to its conclusion.

As we all know, all politics is local so in relation to my electorate responsibilities of Chatsworth and as outlined in my recent budget reply speech, the traffic congestion along Old Cleveland Road will continue and residents will ruminate this fact as they now pay extra for their car registration. As I have previously advised the House, Old Cleveland Road is a major thoroughfare through many electorates—both LNP and ALP held—so it is time for the Labor government to come through with a solution. They failed in the recent budget so commuters can thank the ALP for delays in travel times for the foreseeable future. I note with interest the Brisbane City Council ALP candidates are now trying to neutralise this issue with a ‘two bit’ solution. It is my responsibility to continue with these issues on behalf of the Chatsworth community.

Other issues I intend to pursue during the 55th Parliament include Commonwealth-state relations, competitive federalism, and housing supply and affordability, especially for first home buyers. This ridiculous blame game between federal and state governments, especially in the key areas of health and education, is beyond a joke and urgent reform of our constitutional responsibilities is paramount. I will be following the white paper on this area with close interest.

There is one aspect of being a politician that unites all of us in this chamber, regardless of our ideological beliefs. None of us can aspire to high office without the help of our wonderful supporters. I wish to place on record my sincere thanks to several important people. Firstly, to the local LNP branch members, thank you for your dedication and professionalism during the state campaign earlier this year, with a particular call out to the magnificent young members of the Chatsworth flying squad who were out assisting every morning with roadsides, doorknocking or letterbox dropping. To Luke, Julia, Hayden, Katherine, Katrina, Tristan and Harrison, I give my sincerest thanks.

There were several days during the state campaign back in January when the mercury was rising and the weather was particularly hot and uncomfortable, but my dedicated support team continued to hit the pavements and letterbox drop targeted areas of the electorate. Although the campaign was fully funded and will be again in the future, money can never buy the human spirit. To the many supporters both from within the Liberal National Party and personal friends who assisted with the pre-poll in the weeks leading up to election day, I give my deepest thanks. I acknowledge Drewe, Kerri, Ken, Jan, Steven, George, Paula, Marion, Paul, Kev, Matt and many others. I also acknowledge the numerous supporters throughout the Chatsworth electorate who enabled me to erect sign sites along their front yards and fences. I love Australian democracy.

My mother, Denise, was exceptional in her support throughout the entire campaign and my love for her knows no bounds. The support received from my mother-in-law, Corina Mole, was also incredible throughout the campaign and I thank her from the bottom of my heart. As was the case several years ago when I first ran for preselection, my greatest support base is my immediate family. My two sons, Harrison and Lachlan, worked tirelessly around their school and sporting commitments to assist with my re-election. Whilst I was extremely proud and impressed with their work ethic and dedication during the campaign, nothing politically will ever surpass my pride in watching them grow into fine young men. As I mentioned in my inaugural speech, I would give up my life for them in a heartbeat.

I described my wife, Roslyn, in my inaugural speech as my ‘rock of Gibraltar’. How do you summarise someone who means so much to you in a few sentences given my time remaining? Well, I will give it a go. Everything I have done politically could only have been done with the support and assistance of my wife of 22 years, Roz. I value her wisdom, encouragement, friendship, attention to

infinitesimal detail, love and uncompromising belief in always striving to be your best. She did a phenomenal job throughout the campaign, and my eventual success on the day is due in no small part to her efforts. I thank her from the bottom of my heart.

Our ideological battles here in this hallowed chamber are an important part of the overall democratic process, but as the approximate 1,200 names on the honour board of past members of the Legislative Assembly attests, our time here is, relatively speaking, short lived as a proportion of our entire life's experiences. It is incumbent upon all of us, therefore, to use our privileged time here responsibly.

In closing, I dedicate my second address-in-reply speech to the memories of my father, Jeff Minnikin, and my father-in-law, Harry Mole. Sadly, both men passed away towards the end of last year. Both had a profound influence on me in many different ways. If I can be half the man that either of these two gentlemen were, I will leave this place very satisfied indeed.

I am honoured to be returned for a second term as the state member for Chatsworth and will continue at all times to be responsible for my deeds and actions in this wonderful place in which I absolutely adore serving. As Hal Colebatch stated, the high privilege of democracy cannot be maintained unless the equally exalted responsibilities attracting to it are understood and observed.

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (5.10 pm): I have now been in this House for 15 months. It has been a time of great change—change in my life and change for the better in Queensland with the Palaszczuk Labor government. Like my friend and colleague Yvette D'Ath, I am here as a result of a by-election during the term of the previous government. As Yvette will admit, they were exciting times, but none were more exciting than the election result of 2015.

I am here for a reason. That reason is to represent the people of Stafford, the electorate that is strong in its people. They are active in the community and have a vibrancy that is directed towards helping their neighbours and the community in general. Even our local corner store owner, Mr Dang, is a hardworking pillar of our area who makes some of the finest takeaway for those late nights getting home. This spirit is reflected by people like Jack Poole, who is president of our local Meals on Wheels; Val Smith, President of Community Access Respite; John Smith, a local real estate agent who is a powerful community worker. There are many, many charity and community groups in Stafford who all deserve acknowledgement.

Our schools are our lifeblood. They are the very being of Stafford. They all have their own strengths and their own character and this is what makes our community richer.

As a doctor who has worked many years in our hospitals, I am just so proud that we have one of Queensland's premier hospitals right here in my electorate. Prince Charles Hospital is the epitome of a community hospital. It bats above its weight in expertise and in research. It is a world leader in the development of mechanical heart replacements led by Professor John Fraser. I also acknowledge a very accomplished physician at that hospital, a man who at the very pinnacle of his career chose to enter politics. This well-read and highly educated man was my predecessor, Dr Chris Davis. At every visit to Prince Charles, I am asked how he is going and I can report that he is well and fighting fit. However, who can forget how he was treated by those opposite when he stood up for the people of Stafford, when he stood for accountability and integrity when those opposite had none? Let's just pause and reflect on how other members of parliaments in Australia were treated in very similar situations. Kevin Rudd stood up against his government at that time; he stood proud for Griffith in his fight against the second runway at Brisbane Airport. Sharman Stone is a federal Liberal MP who stood against the closure of SPC at Shepparton, again against her own government. Those two were local MPs who stood up for their electorates against the policies of their own government. What happened to them? Nothing. One went on to become Prime Minister of Australia. Their protests were accepted. They had a right to stand up for their community. What happened to Dr Chris Davis? He was sacked. A fine man was forced to stand down. It was a shameful episode in the history of those opposite.

The Palaszczuk government has been active and responsive and is getting on with the job of governing for a better Queensland. We are a government that is achieving for this state, a government focused on job creation, restoring services, building the economy and reintroducing fairness, transparency and accountability. As Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, I am proud to be responsible for these two very important portfolios in achieving our government's goals. I am very proud to be part of a government that supports economic development, the mining and agricultural communities, and the creation of jobs now and jobs for the future. The development of the Galilee Basin presents a massive opportunity for job creation and economic

development in Queensland. It has advanced with the close of consultation on the draft environmental impact statement for the Abbot Point coal project. Abbot Point currently has a capacity to export 50 million tonnes per annum and the proposed expansion will increase this capacity by 70 million to 120 million tonnes per annum. The capacity of the port of Abbot Point has been fully contracted. This is an expansion that will enable the port to cater for any future users and so it can handle additional coal from proposed Galilee Basin mines. Not only will this proposed expansion help develop the Galilee Basin; this proposed expansion will also create up to 164 jobs during construction for the local community.

We are not allowing the dredge spoil to be disposed of into the beautiful Great Barrier Reef World Heritage area and, unlike the previous government, we are not dumping it in the Caley Valley Wetlands. We are committed to protecting the Great Barrier Reef and maintaining its integrity so much so that the Palaszczuk government has committed \$100 million over five years to protect it. Our revised plan for Abbot Point would see the dredge material, instead, be placed on industrial land next to the existing coal terminal and beneficially reused at the port.

Unlike the previous government and consistent with our election commitments, this government is not paying for approval costs, capital dredging costs or dredge disposal costs. These costs will all be met by the proponents. Considering the significant environmental analysis already taken at Abbot Point, the Queensland government will deliver a final robust EIS to the Commonwealth. I anticipate that the federal environment minister will make a final decision on the Abbot Point proposal by the end of this year. As I said earlier, the environmental impact statement process has included 21 business days for public consultation. I would like to point out that this is more than double the consultation allowed under the previous government.

This is what the Palaszczuk government is all about: a balanced approach to delivering the infrastructure vital to Queensland's economic future, protecting the environment and bringing the people along for the journey. Our government is also committed to having sustainable resource communities where workers have the choice of where they live or work. Last week the parliamentary committee handed down its report into fly-in fly-out and other long-distance community work practices in regional Queensland, and I thank the member for Mirani in his eminent capacity as chair of that committee. In addition, an expert panel conducted an independent review into FIFO resource industry operations. The panel was very busy travelling to many parts of Queensland affected by resource industry FIFO operations.

We have listened to the people and agreed that people should have a choice. If they want to live in resource or regional communities, they should have the opportunity to apply for jobs in resource communities. I would like to note the extensive consultation by both the FIFO panel and the parliamentary inquiry and their efforts in preparing their reports. The government will now use the reports to develop a whole-of-government policy framework for regional resource towns and communities. I anticipate delivering a response to the recommendations early next year.

We also listened to the constituents of the Gold Coast when they said they did not want the Wave Break Island cruise ship terminal to go ahead. No-one was in any doubt where a Labor government stood on this project. We went to the election committed to protecting Wave Break Island, and that is what we have done. More to the point, my Department of State Development is still working closely with ASF and we have identified another investment opportunity on the Gold Coast for them consistent with the framework around the IRD process. We have invited a detailed proposal from ASF for development of a five-hectare site at Main Beach between Sea World and the Gold Coast Fishermen's Co-operative. ASF is expected to respond early next year with a detailed master plan proposal which will go out for full community consultation. Not only have we saved Wave Break Island, but we have kept the project alive by working openly and honestly with proponents to identify for them a particular area of that original site to continue with the proposal.

The government has also been working to finalise the process in respect of the Queen's Wharf project. This will be a massive boost for Brisbane and the Queensland economy, and I expect financial closure very shortly indeed. Queens Wharf is a multibillion dollar redevelopment which will revitalise the north bank of the Brisbane River, but it is the 2,000 construction jobs and the 8,000 ongoing jobs once completed that will really stimulate this economy. It will also deliver an additional 1.39 million visitors per year to Brisbane and provide \$4 billion extra to the gross state product. It is a transformational project. There are 12 football fields of open space in the development, and that open space is accessible to all members of the Brisbane community. From the sky deck to below, access to the public is open.

We are a government that listens to the people and we listen to the facts. This is what we are doing in our review into the approval processes and environmental impact statement for Acland stage 3. It is my highest priority to ensure that the approval process for that mine has been administered correctly. To that effect I have also been proactively meeting with all of the stakeholder groups that have an interest in this proposed mine. I also anticipate that, with the government's recent restoration of objection rights for mining projects, those people who have submitted an objection about the New Acland Coal Mine Stage 3 should have their concerns heard by the Land Court. In conjunction with my colleague Minister Miles, we will be making a balanced and unbiased decision on the mine when I am presented with all of the facts from the review, when I have received a comprehensive briefing from the department for the proposed mining lease applications and when I receive the recommendation from the Land Court.

Since assuming my ministerial duties not only have I met with New Acland Stage 3 stakeholders, but I have been meeting with stakeholders all over the state. Mr Speaker, I travelled to Mareeba in April and was fortunate to discuss economic developments in that shire. I met with members of the local government, the Mareeba Chamber of Commerce, Regional Development Far North Queensland and office staff of my department. I also listened when told about the future challenges that the region faces with water management, telecommunications and distance to markets and local road infrastructure as well as the opportunities for the future. I have made other such trips to Townsville, Gladstone, Roma, Dalby, Toowoomba, Mount Isa, the Cooper Basin, St George, Goondiwindi, Aurukun, Mount Morgan and Moranbah. I have met with local governments all across Queensland, from the Tablelands Regional Council in the north to Redland City Council in the east and Mount Isa City Council in the west. I have met with members of industry and the business community both big and small. I have met with constituents and constituent groups with special interests. I have also been meeting with environmental and natural resource management groups.

I have even met with international stakeholders, from Indian business proponents to the governor of China's Heilongjiang province. As I mentioned this afternoon, last month I travelled to Peru and the US on a trade mission with seven Queensland businesses. Addressing the Perumin Mining Convention in Arequipa was an exceptional opportunity to pitch Queensland as a resource investment destination and our METS companies as business partners. In the US I met with aeronautics giant Lockheed Martin to identify upcoming opportunities for Queensland companies in the production of F-35A Joint Strike Fighters. I am keen to see more Queensland companies winning contracts here in the future.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to forward-thinking policies and programs like Advance Queensland that will continue to give Queensland businesses a winning edge. I was quite proud to see the coding initiative introduced by the Premier this afternoon. That initiative will stimulate the growth of our children to become adults of the future who have the technological base that will drive Queensland as a diverse and intellectually proud community.

I have pledged to strongly represent the interests and speak on behalf of all stakeholder groups to ensure their voices are heard. I am part of a government that proactively consults and listens to all different groups in the state, as all groups have a stake in the economic and environmental sustainability of Queensland. This is a key difference between a Labor government and a conservative one: we do as we say. We are committed to those election commitments we made during our campaign and we are still getting on with the job.

All levels of Australian government recognise the opportunities that lie ahead for Northern Australia, positioned as it is at the intersection of the growing Asian and tropical axes. The future of Queensland's economy and our growth opportunities are interconnected with the future of North Queensland. In May I announced the first new coordinated project declared in Queensland for 18 months. White Horse Australia Lindeman gained coordinated project status for its proposal to revive Lindeman Island. In June I released our new MOU with the proponents of the Etheridge Integrated Agricultural Project in the Gilbert River. Also in June the Coordinator-General approved BHP Mitsubishi Alliance's Red Hill Mining project north of Moranbah. Another exciting proposal for North Queensland is Stanbroke's \$200 million Three Rivers Irrigation Project. The draft terms of reference for this project were released by the Coordinator-General for public consultation from 1 to 31 August 2015. Regional Queensland is going ahead under Labor.

I again acknowledge the Attorney-General. She shares my vision and this government's vision for a less violent society. We have evidence based measures that are proven and effective to reduce violence in our society; they have simply been ignored by those opposite. Our initiatives are supported by all agencies—police, medical, research and community groups—but not by those opposite. Instead they gave us clubs and pubs with the ability to open until 5 am, only worsening society's problems and

placing unnecessary demands on our fine police, ambulance and hospital staff. In the news only the other day we heard of paramedics being assaulted. With a sensible statewide approach we will be able to reduce interpersonal violence reliably. There is a causal relationship between alcohol and other drug use and domestic violence. The reduction in alcohol and other drug harms should overflow to assist in the reduction of other blights such as domestic violence.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my retiring colleagues. As you recall, there were only nine of us in the previous parliament and we all became very close indeed. As any new parliamentarian knows, that time can be difficult and daunting, especially when faced by such a raft of numbers as those opposite had at that time. I would sincerely like to thank my retired colleagues Tim Mulherin and Desley Scott. They provided great mentorship for me during that time.

A number of people have been integral to my success. I would like to thank my campaign team and campaign director, Terry Sullivan, the SEC and local branch members who all campaigned tirelessly for my election; my electorate office staff, Eileen, Susan, Robert and Janet; and my ministerial office staff, Adrian, Jan, Kristy, Helena, Michael, Simon, Corryn, Anton, Josh, Rebecca and Dave. They all work hard to ensure that I can serve my electorate and my portfolios effectively and productively.

Lastly but not least, as always, I would like to thank my beautiful wife, Pam, who has put up with an awful lot for me to get here. Even today she was out doorknocking for the local council candidate. My wife is a real trooper and I love her dearly. Of my four sons, my eldest is a teacher for the hearing impaired; my second graduates from medical school at the end of this year; my third is a proudly-serving police officer in Toowoomba; and my fourth is presently studying at QUT right next door. I am so proud of my four boys. I would do anything for them, and I am so proud of where they have got to in their lives.

Lastly, I would like to thank the voters of Stafford for once again placing their vote with me. I will stand up for them and represent all of their interests to the very best of my ability.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (5.27 pm): I rise today with enormous gratitude to the voters of Mermaid Beach to present my address-in-reply, having been re-elected to represent the people of the Mermaid Beach electorate for the duration of the 55th Parliament. However, in doing so I would like to severely condemn the Leader of the House for taking six months to have this particular address-in-reply put on the agenda, treating the Governor's speech—the Queen's representative in Queensland—as a political football and making it a fill-in when it should have the highest priority to this parliament. Obviously some of the matters that were conceived at the time when this address-in-reply should have been delivered will not be as relevant today as they were six months ago.

First and foremost today, I congratulate my fellow members of parliament upon their election or re-election, as the case may be. I welcome our new LNP members to these hallowed halls. They are in for an exciting ride in this tightly hung parliament when, more than ever, every vote on every issue or bill will be counted.

Clearly, the people of the Gold Coast voted to see the Liberal National Party continue in parliament with confidence from a sensible LNP business and tourism growth perspective—a perspective that is particularly important for the people of the Gold Coast and my electorate of Mermaid Beach as one of Australia's favourite holiday spots.

I would like to congratulate Lawrence Springborg, the newly elected leader of the LNP—he was at the time this speech was conceived—on his elevation. Safe and experienced hands are required to deliver a clearly alternative government. Lawrence delivers these attributes in spades. I have every confidence that Lawrence will be a stable and calming leader for the LNP, continuing to hold the inexperienced, bungling and clueless unionised Palaszczuk Labor government to account until the next election. We use the term 'Labor union government', as it is clear who is pulling the puppet strings with the rushed debate on industrial relations and obviously union demanded measures as the first big pay-off of the union orchestrated election campaign.

It is with that in mind that I support the amendment moved to the address-in-reply. This goes back a while. For members opposite who cannot remember six months ago, the member for Southern Downs moved an amendment to hold this government to account on the election promises made relating to debt and debt reduction. I remind members in the House of the amendment that was moved. We were asking for a quarterly report to be tabled on gross state debt and total debt repayments, ensuring gross debt will reduce each financial year. We were also asking for the publishing, prior to the next sitting day, of a formal definition, including minimum value, of what constitutes a state asset as it relates to Labor's 'no asset sales' pledge. We have now seen that 'no assets sales' pledge turn into a 'no major asset sales' pledge. That was not said before the election.

I support the amendment moved by the member for Southern Downs in total. I would like to see debt and debt reduction high on the agenda of this particular Labor government. In terms of the asset sales pledge that they asserted, I heard from the member for Stafford about an asset sale of some five hectares down on The Spit—for sale direct to a developer. It is not even calling for an open tender process. That is the particular type of governance we will see from this Palaszczuk Labor government all the way through the 55th Parliament.

Secondly, I thank the constituents of Mermaid Beach who have once again put their faith in me to lobby the clueless state government on their behalf and entrusted me with bringing their voices strongly and loudly, as I have done for the previous nine years, to the House.

I also acknowledge the constituents who do not vote for me and reassure them that I will, as I have in the past, represent their concerns to parliament with as much effort as for those who voted for me.

Mr Bleijie: Chicken dance.

Mr STEVENS: They obviously loved it very much. I have a 13 per cent margin, as opposed to some other members who lost greater amounts.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr STEVENS: I am not referring to the former Attorney-General at all! None of these particular parliamentary efforts could happen without the support of my lovely wife, Ruth, and my family. I thank them wholeheartedly for being part of my *raison d'être* of partaking of the political world.

The 2015 campaign was a tough one, especially for my supporters and volunteers, whose hard work through the hot summer days and nights helped me retain my seat in parliament with a 13 per cent margin. Without their help my re-election would not have been possible. It is help that I never, ever take for granted. This of course extends to the wonderful electorate office staffers, who throughout the busy campaign were busy doing electorate office work and successfully held the fort. Many thanks to Lisa, Ashleigh, Katie and Victoria.

My final thankyou goes to the Liberal National Party, of course, who give me the opportunity to represent both the party, through my role as Leader of Opposition Business in the House, and the people as the member for Mermaid Beach. My LNP branch members are a tower of strength to my Mermaid Beach representation, and I thank each and every one of them for their ongoing support.

With such a tightly balanced parliament, the Palaszczuk Labor government has undoubtedly not received an unfettered mandate from the people of Queensland. While expectations are high when you receive a clear mandate, they are perhaps even higher without one. I and the people of Mermaid Beach will be watching the Steven Bradbury-esque Palaszczuk Labor government closely after the many successes in the previous LNP House in bringing safety, security and peace very noticeably to my electorate, Mermaid Beach, through the efforts of LNP government members.

An example is the VLAD laws introduced by the LNP in the 54th Parliament. They have been an unbridled success, with many of my constituents commenting how they felt reassured and safer within their own neighbourhoods and indeed their homes. I take this opportunity to again thank the hardworking former attorney-general, Mr Jarrod Bleijie, member for Kawana, and the former police minister, Mr Jack Dempsey, and the members who developed that legislation and put it into the parliament.

Many will remember the upwardly spiralling crime and bikie gang presence during the Beattie-Bligh era—a perfect example of Labor failure contrasting with Liberal National Party accomplishment. I rose in this House nine times to warn the Labor governments at the time of the growing problem of bikies out of control on the Gold Coast and I was ignored. They put in a horrible little law that had no effect and no teeth and was not enforced. Unfortunately, it was only when these strong laws were put in place that we actually addressed the issue.

Under the failed stewardship of the Beattie-Bligh Labor government, whose focus was everywhere but the Gold Coast, the bikie gang problem was excused with spin, bodgied-up crime figures and sloppy legislation, giving law-breakers a smack on the wrist and releasing them back into the community to reoffend and reoffend, exemplified by the bikie brawl at Broadbeach which had men, women and children cowering in the dining and entertainment precinct of one of the most popular family destinations of Australia's favourite playground.

In contrast, the secure, stable and capable LNP government instigated a decrease in crime levels through hard work and strong legislation, in conjunction with the Rapid Action Police Patrol, or RAPP as it is known. Legislation saw the social environment improve, particularly in the vital tourism sector,

with customers and visitors returning to businesses without fear of violent, vengeful retaliation by members of criminal bikie gang organisations lurking around, threatening and intimidating innocent residents and visitors. It is the RAPP, run by experienced superintendent Jim Keogh, whose actions have directly benefited the Gold Coast and which has been the main driver enforcing the legislation. Thank you, Jim. I am sorry that under the watch of this vengeful new police minister you have been recalled to Brisbane. I urge this inexperienced and union directed government to carefully consider all of the actions they may contemplate in reversing this successful legislation.

Additionally, and particularly within Mermaid Beach and indeed the Gold Coast, a return to the beautiful, peaceful and family-friendly vibe was also helped through the long-awaited introduction of the party house legislation. Indeed, I have stated on multiple occasions that the behaviour associated with those party houses was deplorable, offensive and unacceptable. Under previous state Labor governments, I tried and tried to have appropriate legislation introduced to outlaw the behaviour. But, again, the Labor government did not care about the Gold Coast and Mermaid Beach. These unruly, intoxicated and aggressive young people who have no inhibitions to act in a way that is totally unacceptable under society's standards, have impacted dramatically on people's lives and on residents of my electorate. During the previous Bligh Labor government the issue was ignored and hidden under the metaphorical 'they are all LNP members' rug, with all attempts by concerned Gold Coast residents to bring this matter to light, even suggestions of assistance by the Gold Coast City Council, being flatly rejected.

The Gold Coast's temporary local planning instrument outlawing these party houses could only be enacted with the support of the LNP party house legislation. These party houses have been impacting our residents for years and a solution in the best interests of suffering communities was needed—a solution that was delivered by a cooperative and proficient LNP government. On a personal note, several constituents have contacted me to relate how pleased they have been with the noticeable change to their neighbourhoods and the long-term leasing of several homes for normal residential living rather than the short-term party house letting—an obviously successful LNP driven outcome.

With the successes of the two abovementioned legislative changes for the Gold Coast by a sharing, caring LNP government comes a new challenge for the Gold Coast and the people of Mermaid Beach. The Coolangatta airport, owned privately by the Gold Coast Airport Pty Ltd, is proposing a foolish scheme to install the outdated instrument landing system technology and acquire a new flight path over prime tourism and residential real estate. I have previously risen in this House to advise the people of Queensland of the thoughtless attempt to sell this highly intrusive flight path as being necessary to avoid flight cancellations and aircraft diversions, and what a crock that is! The outdated technology is merely a spin tool for the Gold Coast Airport to acquire a new flight path and appeal to the outdated planes of Asian airlines with old technology incorporated into them. Only 13 diversions were recorded in 2014 out of 35,000 landings. While I fully support the tourism industry on the Gold Coast—indeed, more flights from Asia would increase our tourism numbers—I do not do so at the expense of destroying the peace and tranquillity of residential areas by burdening them with aircraft noise where none previously existed and where none is necessary.

Through my longstanding public service firstly to the Gold Coast city as a local councillor and secondly as a current state member, I can sincerely say that the implementation of this flight path would detrimentally affect our flourishing tourism industry and indeed the upcoming 2018 Commonwealth Games, in addition to the peaceful residential communities of Nobby Beach, Mermaid Beach, Broadbeach and Mermaid Waters. After speaking with many concerned residents, I hope that the federal government takes on board the many concerns that have been expressed to it. Indeed, the local federal member Mr Steven Ciobo, the member for Moncrieff, has lobbied hard to have the federal government reject this new flight path, as has the local councillor Paul Taylor and the Gold Coast City Council. This horrible intrusion into the Mermaid Beach area is not welcomed, not warranted and should not be part of our future airspace.

A special mention must go to the newest member on the Gold Coast, the member for Gaven, Sid Cramp. Sid did a great job—well done, Sid—winning the seat of Gaven. When I first met Sid, he was a hopeful preselection candidate in Gaven and it has been wonderful to see him now transition as the expert member for Gaven, and we certainly had some issues there over the past couple of terms. The Gold Coast is again seen as a sea of LNP blue—I love that: a sea of LNP blue—and I love swimming in that ocean!

I also want to extend my sincerest thanks and continued admiration to our former premier, Campbell Newman. Campbell came into power after more than a decade of Labor mismanagement and poor choices—turning around black holes of Labor ignorance such as the critically ill healthcare

system and an ever-growing fiscal black hole, returning the great state of Queensland into a positive, growing economy with a health system that actually works and nurses who actually get paid on time and the correct amount. To Cam and your lovely wife, Lisa: Queensland and Mermaid Beach thank you for your wonderful contribution over a quickfire nearly three-year stint as premier and I wish you the very, very best for your future career.

In closing, the next three years are sure to be very interesting. I look forward to the challenge of supporting my fellow LNP members as the Leader of Opposition Business in this House and I am delighted to be re-elected to this House as the LNP member for Mermaid Beach. I will continue to represent the constituents of Mermaid Beach to the best of my abilities with all my passion in terms of issues that affect them. I encourage any Mermaid Beach electorate residents to seek out my office at any time for any issues or concerns that they may have.

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (5.44 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise this evening to make a contribution to the address-in-reply debate and acknowledge the traditions of the address-in-reply—an opportunity to express your appreciation to Her Majesty's representative and thank them for the words contained in their speech, which is in effect the government's speech. So it is an opportunity to respond to and understand that. In my personal view it is not really in the appropriate traditions that that speech be amended. They are the words from the Governor. It is the Governor's speech and to amend the Governor's speech seems to be a rather presumptuous thing for people to seek to do, so I note at the outset that I am opposing the amendment moved in the name of the Leader of the Opposition.

I want to speak to the importance and opportunity of joining the 55th Parliament, and it is a great pleasure to be able to serve as the member for Sandgate. As I said in my contribution to the confidence motion debate, I really do appreciate the great honour that the electors of Sandgate have given me in supporting my candidacy so strongly and allowing me to join this 55th Parliament which includes a very impressive group of diverse individuals across-the-board. It is a great opportunity to serve with such a very interesting and capable group of people across-the-board on both sides of the House. That is an important thing that we should all acknowledge and appreciate—that is, the opportunities that are granted to us to serve our communities and to serve with others in this place.

I am in particular very impressed by the diversity of backgrounds and life experience and the capabilities of my colleagues in the parliamentary Labor Party. I am very pleased that we have this opportunity to be on the government benches to serve our state and ensure that we continue the stewardship that Labor has delivered over the past 26 years or so of modernising this state, of taking this state out of the Dark Ages and into the brightness of the future. I am very confident that the Palaszczuk government will continue to play that role, and in that context I express my appreciation and honour to serve the Palaszczuk government as Leader of the House and as Assistant Minister of State Assisting the Premier. It was of course my privilege to serve in the 52nd Parliament and the 53rd Parliament. I skipped the 54th Parliament, but I have heard that that was a bit of an unpleasant period, so maybe it all turned out well in the end.

It is no great secret that I have only lived in the Sandgate community for a few years, but my connection with the area goes back much further to my early years when I attended Sandgate preschool in Lagoon Street which is now part of my daughter's school, Sandgate State School. It has been immensely satisfying to return to this great part of the world and for my family and I to have been so warmly embraced by the local community. Even more so, it was incredibly humbling to be elected to represent this wonderful electorate.

Mr Pearce: And a good member too.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I take that interjection. The historic bayside suburbs in my electorate are rather famous for their justifiable parochialism. Sandgate, Shorncliffe, Brighton and Deagon have a unique seaside village or 'country town by the bay' atmosphere and charm. Historically, they have developed a unique identity, distinct from the surrounding areas. These days, the iconic Sandgate Town Hall has become very much a hub for a vibrant local arts and music scene supported by groups and individuals far too numerous for me to mention. For instance, every year the parklands surrounding the lagoon in the heart of Sandgate play host to the famous Einbunpin Festival—a showcase for what makes my community so special. I am very proud to have been a member of the festival organising committee for the past few years. That festival is just one of the many events on the area's local calendar, including the Sandgate Bluewater Festival, which revolves around the iconic Brisbane to Gladstone Yacht Race, which starts off at Shorncliffe. I know that the member for Gladstone would appreciate how important that yacht race is each and every year at Easter time.

Mr Butcher: Always good at the yacht club.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I acknowledge that there is always a good time to be had at the yacht club in Gladstone. The race has a great start at Shorncliffe.

Although local favourites such as Doug's Seafood Cafe have always been a great place to grab some fish and chips by the bay, in recent times Sandgate has developed its own real foodie scene, with great cafes, restaurants and even a laneway craft beer bar, the Cardigan Bar. Mr Deputy Speaker, I am sure you would be welcome down sometime. All of those establishments help to boost economic activity and local jobs. Those places add a great commercial vibrancy to Sandgate village.

Another local institution is the Bracken Ridge Tavern, which has been run by the White family for over 40 years. That family are icons in the history of family owned hotels in Queensland. The Bracken Ridge Tavern has moved on a bit from its Rum Jungle days, where I first experienced the Bracken Ridge Tavern. Now, with the Phoenix Bar, the Bracken Ridge Tavern is a real hub for the local community.

In addition, my electorate enjoys a fabulous natural environment that lends itself to the people in my electorate leading a healthy outdoor lifestyle. The Sandgate foreshore has always been a great place for exercise. Recently, it has become a key focal point for activities such as the increasingly popular Sandgate Parkrun, which is part of a worldwide institution that has found a perfect home on the bayside at Sandgate. The run up to Brighton and back is an integral part of a lot of people's Saturday mornings. Also, there is the Dawn Patrol, which is a great boot camp style initiative that promotes fitness, mateship and mental health for men. Just last Saturday, I had the great pleasure of sponsoring and presenting the prizes at the popular Sandgate Sunset Run, which is an offshoot of the Parkrun. This growing event, which in its second year, sees Sandgate come alive as teams of runners and walkers do laps of the War Memorial roundabout while spectators enjoy the festivities and cheer on the participants. Some competitors take the race very seriously while others adopt a more lighthearted approach, donning all manner of colourful costumes. In fact, the men's team that won the event did a bit of both by wearing their long-flowing mullet wigs while in two hours completing 40 kilometres around the Sandgate War Memorial roundabout.

Although Sandgate's sand flats and gentle waves will never be a surfing mecca, Moreton Bay and waterways such as Cabbage Tree Creek provide an aquatic playground for all manner of water sports, fishing and boating and a great opportunity for everyone to appreciate the beautiful environment that we enjoy in the Sandgate electorate. We have great advocates for Sandgate's local environment—groups like the Keep Sandgate Beautiful Association, which, since the late 1960s, has been an integral part of advocating for the environment in my local community.

Equally, inland from the bayside area of my electorate there are some newer communities—communities such as suburban Bracken Ridge and the emerging areas of Fitzgibbon and Taigum. I am particularly proud to have been involved in seeing the Fitzgibbon Chase community grow from nothing to being a model of a sustainable and affordable urban place. I oversaw the development of this master planned community when I was planning minister in the previous Labor government alongside the then local member Vicky Darling. I am proud of the community that has flourished there under the plans made by the former Urban Land Development Authority and its successor body, Economic Development Queensland. It is very pleasing to see in the recent state budget an additional \$11.9 million for affordable housing at Fitzgibbon Chase. In the recent months, I have also overseen the completion of the connection between Fitzgibbon Chase and Bracken Ridge via a completed Norris Road. This area and the newer suburbs of, as I say, Bracken Ridge and Taigum particularly provide a great place for first-time home owners and young families to raise their children.

While I am noting those families, it is important to note that my electorate boasts a number of great government and non-government schools. A whole range of primary schools, state schools and Catholic schools provide tremendous service to their local communities. There are terrific high schools such as Sandgate District State High School, Bracken Ridge State High School, St Patrick's College at Shorncliffe and St John Fisher College at Bracken Ridge.

As well as great educational services, the Sandgate electorate is a very active community. For instance, a whole lot of sporting associations and organisations play an important role in my community. The Sandgate Hawks is a great AFL club. Recently, that club has had some great victories in the under 13s and under 14s competition, including a goal kicked after the buzzer by young Matthew Stride, which has made him a local hero in the area. That was a great goal that was kicked by him after the bell. Over many years the Sandgate-Redcliffe District Cricket Club has been a really important part of the cricket culture of Brisbane. At its home ground, the Deagon Sportsground, the Sandgate-Redcliffe District

Cricket Club has provided a great opportunity for a whole range of cricketers, from those in the very youngest levels right through to elite cricketers who have gone on from that club—both men and women—to be state representatives and Australian representatives.

Mr Costigan interjected.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I will get to my family later. The Brighton Bulldogs soccer club, the Ridge Hills soccer club at Bracken Ridge and the Brighton Roosters Rugby League club are also key parts of the community as is the large and growing Bracken Ridge Little Athletics. There is also a whole swathe of swimming clubs and, indeed, great local scout troops and guide groups that provide opportunities for young people. Just a touch outside of my electorate, but something that I am very passionate about and had a great opportunity during my absence over the past few years to become a lot more involved in is Northside Wizards Basketball. That association covers all of the northern suburbs of Brisbane. I was very proud to have played a role as a board member, and I now continue as a committee member, of Northside Wizards Basketball in their work to provide the opportunity for the great game of basketball to be available to young people and also some older people who get out there and still have a bit of a go.

I am increasingly immensely excited about the increasing cultural diversity of my community. My area across the north side is indeed a very diverse community, with a whole range of people from different ethnic backgrounds, but most particularly significant numbers of Filipino Australians and also Australians with a subcontinent background, particularly Indian and Nepalese people, people from Sri Lanka, and people from the Punjab. That is why it is so great that a whole lot of religious institutions in my electorate service these communities. They provide an opportunity for many people in those communities to celebrate their faith and their culture. Taigum is the home of St Paraskevi, the Greek Orthodox Church. Also in Taigum is the Sikh Gurdwara, which has been there for some time. A new Gurdwara will be built in the very near future. Also, at Deagon there is the Taoist Temple and just outside my electorate there is a Hindu temple at Boondall and a mosque at Bald Hills. Of course, those communities join the broad array of Christian churches, both Catholic and Protestant, that have played an important role in my community right across the north side for many, many years.

All of this feeds into and contributes to important social cohesion and capital and it also helps develop a level of community resilience. I think this has been ably demonstrated in the way the community has rallied and come together to support each other as well as those further afield. I have been pleased to be part of events and activities to support recovery efforts after the May flood event which very devastatingly affected areas of the north side of Brisbane. It can be devastating when your home or business is inundated and things need to be dealt with. It was wonderful to see the way the community came together to help those people. We also saw the community come together for a fundraiser to respond to the Nepalese earthquake and embrace the local Nepalese community and understand that there were many families who had fears for their extended families in Nepal. It was great to see the community come together to respond to that need. The next time we come together I will continue my remarks and wrap up on a couple of comments about the election on 31 January.

Debate, on motion of Mr Hinchliffe, adjourned.

MOTION

Electricity Industry



Mr POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (6.01 pm): I move—

That this House condemns the state government for their raid on the dividends of electricity companies and for increasing their debt levels that will lead to higher power prices for electricity consumers in Queensland.

The actions of the Minister for Energy and Water Supply, fully supported by the Premier and the Treasurer, sees us returning to the bad old days of Labor managing our electricity companies. Despite his best attempts to try to spin the story around, the Minister for Energy and Water Supply has been caught out with his hand in the back pockets of Queenslanders, ripping out over \$3 billion worth of dividends this year, at the same time that both Energex and Ergon are going to the Australian Energy Regulator begging for more money. The last time that something like this happened in Queensland was under the former Beattie and Bligh governments.

The minister at some stage in this debate will trot out the statistic that electricity prices rose 43 per cent under the LNP government. He is right. They did. But he will not tell members why and nor will he tell members the scale of the increase over the full five years of the price path. Despite his best attempts to rewrite history, the minister would know, and Queenslanders must know, that the Australian Energy

Regulator sets the price path in five-year increments and that the last price was set in 2010 and who was the Premier then? Anna Bligh! After active intervention by the then Treasurer, Andrew Fraser, we saw the Australian Energy Regulator hand down determinations that led to price increases in the order of 180 per cent over the next five years in Energex, 220 per cent if you are in the Ergon area and 164 per cent in Powerlink. That, ladies and gentlemen, is Labor's record when it comes to electricity prices and they are at it again.

Labor has loaded up the electricity companies with government debt. They have used the mortgage to pay off the car loan. Labor has delayed market deregulation in South-East Queensland, a move that would have seen electricity bills some \$600 to \$900 less per year based on what we see in southern states. Labor either overinvests, as it did in the lead-up to 2010, or underinvests in the network, leaving it to the companies to borrow more. Labor implements poorly thought through renewable energy policies. Just before the minister jumps in, let me say that everyone supports renewable energy, but Labor botches every policy attempt it makes in this arena. Last time it was the solar feed-in tariff, a scheme that is still to cost non-solar users more than \$3.5 billion through the life of the program. This time it is a solar program that crows about generation costing between \$80 and \$100 per megawatt hour when generation in Queensland is, at its worst, some \$58 per megawatt hour. The difference again having to be picked up by Queensland electricity consumers. Under Labor electricity generation is costing between \$50 and \$60 per megawatt hour. In New South Wales it is \$40 to \$50 and in Victoria it is \$30 to \$40.

Now we know under Labor 100 per cent dividends, some \$3.5 billion, is being stripped out of the electricity companies to balance Labor's mismanaged budget and all while Labor tacitly endorses Ergon's legal challenge of the energy regulator. The only possible outcome of these government endorsed activities will be an AER price determination that will see prices rise again. Queenslanders will pay more for electricity because this Labor government and previous Labor governments do not know how to run our electricity companies. Compare that with the LNP government's record.

The draft determination we look at at the moment is based on the good work we did over the previous three years. The flatlining of prices is a direct result of us stripping out some \$7 billion worth of overinvestment in those electricity companies. Those opposite cannot go around telling Queenslanders that they have done the right thing and kept the ownership of these government owned corporations in government hands and at the same time say that they cannot do anything about electricity prices. If one owns them, one can influence the outcomes in the interests of Queensland electricity consumers. Unfortunately, the minister is only interested in protecting the ETU and the union bosses.

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (6.05 pm): I move—

That all words after 'House' be deleted and the following words inserted: 'expects the final determination of the Australian Energy Regulator on 30 October 2015 will lead to more stable network prices for electricity consumers in Queensland'.

What an extraordinary contribution from the member for Glass House. After 43 per cent increases over the last three years under the Newman government—at a time when it was building its tower of power; spending money on itself but not doing anything about energy prices in Queensland—he comes in here with this motion condemning us in terms of our dividends from the energy companies. But what did the member say on radio last week? He was asked by Steve Austin what he thought about the policy of using dividends to pay down debt. This is the quote from the member for Glass House—

It is an election promise, yes. They said they would use dividends from these electricity companies to pay down debt.

Thank you for your support, member for Glass House. You have explained to the chamber that what we are doing is exactly what we said we would do at the last election. We said we would keep our assets in public hands and that is exactly what we are doing. In fact, if the member for Glass House was one of Snow White's accomplices he would be Drowsy because we announced this three months ago on 14 July in the budget. It has taken the member three months to discover the fact that we have regeared the energy companies to ensure that general government debt actually falls. It has taken the member three months to pick up on it. That is really quick. No wonder the member is on that side of the chamber.

At the heart of this motion is the opposition trying to say that dividends are driving prices and that is absolutely incorrect. What we are seeing this year is a drop in electricity prices for the first time in years of half a per cent on average across this state. Those opposite would have killed for numbers like that in the last three years. For three years they did nothing about it. That is why they are on that side of the chamber, not this side. The people of Queensland saw through the LNP policies and backed our public assets staying in public hands.

That is what they said and, having done that, they have greater confidence in prices being kept down. The regulator will make a decision and the regulator has made it very clear that it is committed to better outcomes for consumers. The regulator has said that to me directly. There will be submissions from energy companies, councils and community groups. That is a normal part of the process. We will see much better outcomes for energy consumers than during the past three years under the government of members opposite.

We are seeing a very sneaky game from the opposition. No longer can they say that they are against selling public assets. They dumped Strong Choices after the most catastrophic loss in Australian election history, so they cannot say that directly. However, what they are now doing is trying to undermine public assets in every way they possibly can. I draw the attention of the House to recent comments the Leader of the Opposition made on ABC 612. It seems that ABC 612 is the happy hunting ground for LNP slip-ups. I will table a media release that quotes the opposition leader, the member for Southern Downs. He was asked about public assets sales in New South Wales. He said—

If I can just make a comment on NSW and the situation down there. I think it will become more and more stark as we go on from here over the next 12, 18 months, two to three years, and possibly beyond about the benefit of this—

he is referring to asset sales—

for NSW in contrast to what this Government has proposed. That may force people to come to a different conclusion in the future ...

I table that document.

Tabled paper: Media release, dated 29 September 2015, by the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy and Water Supply, Hon. Mark Bailey, titled 'Opposition Leader Lawrence Springborg leaves door open for LNP asset sales plan' [1390].

The Leader of the Opposition was publicly canvassing the sale of our public assets once again. They dumped it six months ago and they are backflipping now. They know that their government and their policies left Queenslanders behind. That is why they are sitting on that side of the House. That is why they have a 19 per cent swing against them. That is why Queenslanders will continue to back this government and better power prices for Queenslanders.

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (6.11 pm): I rise to discuss what Queenslanders and Queensland businesses can ill afford: rises in electricity prices. Labor is ripping nearly \$3.2 billion from energy suppliers and the hip pockets of Queenslanders. This is really going to hurt a lot of people. Stories are coming to light regarding the massive increases in electricity prices. On a state-by-state comparison, Queensland is the unlucky state. According to this document on the price of electricity, Queensland is losing future growth opportunities due to Labor's price hikes. Queensland businesses are at a huge disadvantage when we compare our energy costs with those of Victoria and New South Wales. This document shows that in the past 12 months in Queensland, 'Base Cal Futures' have risen by around \$15; in New South Wales they have risen by only about \$7; and in Victoria they have risen by about \$5. I table that document for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, regarding Base Cal Futures for Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria from 29 September 2014 to 25 September 2015 [1391].

The electricity supply accounts and contracts for approximately 450 sites across Queensland are being hurt financially by the current wholesale electricity market price of between \$50 to \$60 a megawatt for 2016 and beyond. Labor is really destroying business opportunities. One business owner in Hervey Bay is talking about getting a diesel generator to generate electricity at peak hours so that he does not have to cop the price of peak-hour electricity.

My office has received numerous complaints about rising electricity costs. To give an example, a franchisee restaurant owner told me how astonished he is that his business in Gympie is \$800 cheaper to run than his business in Hervey Bay, simply because of different energy service providers. It is not far from Gympie to Hervey Bay. The shops are the same. They are set up in the same way, with the same refrigerators, cookers and so on. The thing that really got to him was the network fees. Each week at the Gympie store, the difference in the network fees can be between approximately 49 per cent and 55 per cent, and in Hervey Bay the network fees can range between approximately 54 per cent and 63 per cent. I will table that document, just to prove the facts about what is going on around the place. It is pretty hard to explain what those network fees are to some of the people who come in to the office.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, regarding network charges and electricity bill prices in Hervey Bay and Gympie [1392].

The other thing that I find extraordinary is the solar feed-in tariff. For one resident at Dundowran, the solar feed-in tariff has dropped from around \$356 a quarter, which is what he used to get, to \$208 credit. It then dropped down to \$88 and, in the last bill, it dropped down to \$18.90.

Mr Crawford: Has he checked his machine?

Mr SORENSEN: He has checked his machine. He had people out to check the solar panels. I have been told that, if power surges go through the electricity, you cannot pump the electricity from your solar panels back into the grid and that is the reason for it. Since he made the complaint, it has changed a lot. That might be a sneaky little way of not taking back the electricity.

I am running out of time. This is just a money grab. Perhaps those opposite are just fattening up the energy companies to sell them off, because they have done it before and they will do it again. Premier Palaszczuk was a member of the Bligh government when that government did it. I guarantee that they will flog off the energy companies.

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (6.16 pm): Tonight I rise to speak against the motion and in support of the amendment moved by the minister. Like moths to a flame, the LNP is going after electricity prices. The opposition's record on electricity prices is very poor. Under the LNP, electricity prices rose 43 per cent. They had a plan for our electricity assets; it was just the wrong one. They wanted to sell them off, but the Queensland public spoke loud and clear at the last election. They did not want them sold off. However, that does not mean that we cannot or should not run those entities as efficiently as possible.

In 2015, the Queensland Treasury review of state finances found that the network businesses, Energex, Ergon and Powerlink, had on average a gearing level of 55 per cent. That is well below comparable private sector peers, whose average is 75 per cent to 80 per cent. Consequently, the government is targeting a gearing ratio of 70 per cent for Ergon and Energex, and 75 per cent for Powerlink.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock one moment. Members, there is too much discussion in the chamber. If members want to have a conversation, please leave the chamber.

Mr BROWN: The government also will increase its monitoring of those businesses to ensure they maintain a stand-alone investment credit rating of at least BBB and will continue to be self-supporting businesses with sufficient funds to meet their obligations. There will be no impact on electricity transmission or distribution prices, which are independently regulated by the Australian Energy Regulator. Also, there will be no impacts on investment in current or future infrastructure. However, the higher debt level will promote a greater discipline by those businesses when making investments.

In this financial year in Queensland, electricity prices have fallen, on average, by half a per cent. It is the first time in many years that electricity prices have stabilised, rather than seeing double-digit surges year in, year out. Many consumers will pay less for power consumption, seeing a small reduction rather than an increase. That will provide relief for family budgets.

In Australia, electricity revenues of all electricity network businesses are set by the Australian Energy Regulator. The facts are that under the Energex and Ergon submissions, the AER revenue determinations are expected to have a minimal impact on consumers. Dividends from government owned corporations are not taxes and they do not impact on prices. They are a return on taxpayer investments. They help subsidise electricity for regional Queenslanders and fund concessions for vulnerable consumers, helping them to make ends meet.

In 2014-15 the government made community service obligation payments of approximately \$600 million to Ergon Energy retail. Without this subsidy regional Queensland electricity customers would pay much more for their electricity than they currently do.

The Queensland government also provides financial assistance through a range of electricity concessions. Despite the federal government's previous decision to cut funding for concessions, the Queensland government has made up the shortfall and continues to fully fund a range of rebates and concessions to help households with their energy costs. These include rebates to pensioners and seniors for electricity of \$321 and natural gas of \$68 per year. This year the Queensland government will be spending over \$170 million to help vulnerable customers.

The fact that these businesses remain government owned enables this support to be provided. Electricity customers would pay the same price under private ownership, but any profits would not be returned to the people of Queensland. We gave a commitment to Queenslanders that we would responsibly reduce debt without selling our income-generating assets.

The LNP scoffed and said it could not be done. The debt action plan of the Queensland government released as part of the 2015-16 state budget proved them wrong. That is why we made the decision at the time of the budget to increase their dividend payout ratios from 80 per cent to 100 per cent which, along with the debt changes, decreases the overall general government sector debt by approximately \$4.1 billion.

This one-off change in dividends was well canvassed in the budget papers and publicly reported on. We have asked the businesses to return 100 per cent of their profits to their shareholders—the people of Queensland—to get our budget back on track. Reduced debt benefits all Queenslanders with lower interest and a stronger credit rating longer term, meaning we are in a better position to invest in the infrastructure and services Queensland needs for the future.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (6.21 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Glass House. When it comes to electricity prices the time has come to say enough is enough. My constituents, and that includes large electricity consumers, are at the stage where they are coming to me with proposals to go off grid because they can no longer afford the skyrocketing electricity prices in Queensland.

The government's decision to raid the dividends from Energex and Ergon to prop up its budget should be seen for what it is—a blatant rip-off. Queenslanders are hurting enough without facing the ever-increasing price rises in electricity which are sending many businesses and farmers to the wall.

I recently visited the Sun Metals refinery in Townsville, one of the largest consumers of electricity in Queensland. It is a business with an annual electricity bill between \$50 million and \$60 million a year. It is a business that employs several hundred employees and is integral to the Townsville economy.

Falling commodity prices coupled with skyrocketing electricity prices mean this business is facing a bleak future. There is only so far we can pull the belt in before we choke the life out of an organisation. I fear for the future of this refinery and the staff who work there. They are not the only one. The neighbouring copper refinery owned and operated by Glencore is in a similar position.

In case members have been living under a rock, our resources sector is doing it tough at the moment. One of the biggest contributing factors is the price of electricity. These companies and others like them are central to Queensland's economy, particularly in regional Queensland. We need to be looking at every avenue to help them in these trying times. That should start with electricity prices.

I cannot believe this government is pulling nearly \$3.2 billion out of energy suppliers and the hip pockets of Queenslanders. Unlike Labor, the LNP worked hard to drive down the cost of living by removing \$7 billion of expenditure from the electricity companies. These efforts were reflected in the Australian Energy Regulator's draft determination for the 2015 to 2020 period to keep costs low. The federal regulator will soon be bringing down the Queensland decision regarding prices and we should expect more bad news for our consumers.

I recently had a delegation of farmers attend my office to express their dismay with the exorbitant electricity prices they are being forced to pay and lack of interest from this government in examining ways to reduce these costs. These farmers are so desperate they are resorting to diesel pumps which are now cheaper to operate than electric pumps. They produced electricity accounts showing increases in the order of 300 per cent over the past 10 years, with most of that increase coming in the past 12 months.

Our farmers are the backbone of our country and in the middle of a screaming drought the last thing they need are crippling electricity bills. It does not stop there. Our sporting clubs, charities and community organisations are all feeling the pinch at a time when there has never been a greater need for their services.

Unlike our southern counterparts, we have no choice in North Queensland when it comes to electricity providers. We have Ergon and that is it. North Queenslanders have been told to grin and bear it. Let me say that the revolt is coming. They are now coming into my office looking for relief. All they are seeing on the horizon is dark clouds.

This government talks about economic development and diversifying our economy, yet they are happy to turn a blind eye to the electricity providers who, like sharks in a feeding frenzy, are feasting on ordinary Queenslanders so that they may deliver ever increasing dividends to this government. The more the government pulls out of the Energex and Ergon coffers the more these providers are looking to gouge ordinary Queenslanders.

I have a very simple message for the government: stop using our families, our pensioners, our farmers and our businesses to fund your election commitments and pay down your debts. Electricity should not be seen as a cash cow that can be milked at whim. If this government is fair dinkum about easing cost-of-living pressures then I would suggest reducing electricity prices would be a good place to start.

 **Mr WHITING** (Murrumba—ALP) (6.26 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the amendment to the original motion moved by the minister and against the original motion. It is very clear that the original motion is the height of hypocrisy. Under the LNP electricity prices rose by 43 per cent. It was painful out there in the electorate.

Not stopping there, they took a very clear policy to the last election with regard to the dividends from our electricity assets. They were going to sell off our GOCs, including the dividends. There would have been no dividends for the government to help to pay for essential services such as schools, hospitals and roads. There would have been higher dividends for their mates in the private sector. These private owners would have increased prices and cut jobs in order to satisfy their demand for return on investment.

The Palaszczuk government took a different policy to the last election. We said from day one that we would demonstrate that there is a better way. We gave a commitment to Queenslanders that we would responsibly reduce debt without selling our income-generating assets.

The LNP scoffed and said it could not be done. The debt action plan released as part of the 2015-16 state budget has proved them wrong. In the budget the government was explicit about our determination to regear our energy GOCs to operate more commercially. With these businesses remaining in public ownership we have an obligation to ensure that they are run as efficiently and effectively as possible and operate with a comparable level of debt to their private sector peers.

That is why we made the decision at budget time to regear the energy network GOCs and increase their dividend payout ratios from 80 to 100 per cent, which will result in a reduction in general government sector debt of approximately \$4.1 billion. I will say that again. It will result in a reduction in general government sector debt of \$4.1 billion. This one-off change in dividends was well canvassed in the budget papers and publicly reported on.

Why are we able to utilise dividends from GOCs for debt reduction? The electricity network businesses are going through a period of structural change, where the network no longer needs to be expanded at the same rate as before. All of the network businesses are forecasting lower levels of capital investments which means that they will no longer need to reinvest their retained earnings from previous years to help pay for this capital expenditure. This means that we can ask the business to return 100 per cent of their profits back to the shareholder—and that is the people of Queensland. That will help get our budget back on track. Reduced debt benefits all Queenslanders.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr WHITING: My goodness me! They still cannot get over the fact that they are not in government. They think that they are going to wake up one day and suddenly be back in government. Let me tell you a harsh truth: you have only won one general election since Joh Bjelke-Petersen was a premier—and that was in 2012. You are not very good at winning general elections—one in a generation. If I were a betting man, I would not put money on them. They have not got the form in winning general elections. They think that they are the government in exile like Napoleon on Elba ready to waft back into Paris on a wave of acclaim.

The budget papers show in the forward estimates that the dividend will decrease over the coming years, not increase, primarily as a result of AER determinations about allowable revenues. The LNP knows full well that the revenues electricity generators can raise are determined not by the debt levels but by the AER. The AER sets a limit on what companies can raise, and that rolls through to network prices.

I just want to rebut what the member for Burdekin said about rural Queenslanders. We subsidised power in regional Queensland last year to the tune of \$600 million. The outlook is positive when it comes to electricity price rises. We recognise that we can do more, and there is an issues paper out on that today. Only Labor has a viable plan to keep assets in public hands while putting downward pressure on electricity prices. I heard the member for Glass House talk about the bad old days. They took concessions off pensioners, \$100 million was spent on Strong Choices and there was a 43 per cent rise over their time in government.

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

AYES, 44:

ALP, 43—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Power, Pyne, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

INDEPENDENT, 1—Gordon.

NOES, 42:

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

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr SPEAKER: For any further divisions, the bells will ring for one minute.

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

AYES, 44:

ALP, 43—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D’Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O’Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Power, Pyne, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

INDEPENDENT, 1—Gordon.

NOES, 42:

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

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as agreed—

That this House expects the final determination of the Australian Energy Regulator on 30 October 2015 will lead to more stable network prices for electricity consumers in Queensland.

Sitting suspended from 6.38 pm to 7.40 pm.

FISHERIES AND ANOTHER REGULATION AMENDMENT REGULATION (NO. 1)

Disallowance of Statutory Instrument

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, before I call the member for Nanango, I note that we have some special visitors in the public gallery. I welcome you to parliament, and I would urge you to not disrupt the proceedings so that members can make their contributions without any interference.



Mrs FRECKLINGTON (Nanango—LNP) (7.40 pm): I move—

That the Fisheries and Another Regulation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2015, subordinate legislation No. 125 of 2015, tabled in the House on 15 September 2015, be disallowed.

Straight up, I want to set the record straight. We are not opposed to exclusion zones as long as it is by these principles, and it would be good if the Minister for Fisheries listened intently to this point. They should be based on science. They should be based on consultation. They should be based on agreement and, where agreement is reached, compensation. It was imperative that the LNP opposition move this disallowance motion to put the pause button on this rushed, ill-conceived, ill thought out process. Without this debate tonight, there was no opportunity for anyone opposed to this regulation to have their say. This is proven by the general outline of the amendment which says that no prior consultation with commercial fishers has been conducted as there will be no changes to obligations. I am looking forward to hearing the minister justify his lack of consultation.

This disallowance motion is not opposing net-free areas in general. I have committed to working with both recreational and commercial fishermen and do not believe that the positions of each group are mutually exclusive. I understand the importance of the recreational fishing sector for tourism and local economic growth, and I firmly believe there is a place for both in this debate. However, I stand tonight in this chamber to acknowledge those recreational fishermen and those commercial fishermen whose livelihoods are under threat in this House today. I stand here on behalf of those fishing families whose jobs and livelihoods will be ripped away by the Labor government through the introduction of this regulation. I stand here on behalf of the small businesses who will also be directly impacted such as the cold stores, the ice-makers, the transporters, the wholesalers, the retail seafood shops and the restaurants.

I ask: why is Labor so anti small business? Why is Labor so anti primary production? Why do they always set out to make a nightmare of the lives of hardworking, everyday Queenslanders? They are treating our commercial fishermen like they are criminals, like they need to be gotten rid of. This policy was introduced by stealth just three days before the election. Labor claimed it was well known. We know that is not the truth. What we do know is that just before the January 2015 election an email was distributed heralding a big announcement that was signed off by backroom party powerbrokers. Labor then released three days later their sustainable fishing policy listing their zones. Little did our commercial fishermen—over 53 hardworking commercial fishermen—realise when they woke up that by the end of this year their small businesses would be gone and their lives would be torn apart, and again with no consultation.

The LNP has been following this process ever since with complete disbelief. Labor have barreled through, disregarding the much anticipated and the much regarded MRAG fisheries review, claiming they have a mandate. What of the MRAG? Had the LNP remained in government, this MRAG review would have guided our response. The angst, frustration, negativity and nastiness created by this Labor government simply would not have existed. MRAG was the first comprehensive, independent review of fisheries management in Queensland. It overhauled 20 years of existing legislation. There were 17 public meetings attended by more than 500 people. There were 279 written submissions. There were people from both sides of the argument. Our former government's ultimate aim was to have a world-class fisheries management system for the benefit of all Queenslanders, but the minister just sat on this report for months. Where is it now? It is sitting on his desk rotting away while he randomly slots in a few band-aids down the coast of Queensland pretending he knows how to fix our fisheries.

That brings me to the lack of consultation during this process. On 16 July I asked the minister a question on notice about how many fishermen he had consulted with in relation to this. He provided a vague list which did not specify any commercial fishermen or anyone from the industry, and there were surprisingly no minutes of any meetings. Labor has completely and categorically failed to consult with the commercial fishing sector, and it has failed to consult with its communities. In response, the QSIA launched a petition that was signed by some 26,000 people. You might think that this number of people might start the minister or this government thinking, 'Maybe we should listen to the people of Queensland,' but, no, the response was again distant and arrogant. Nothing will stop Labor from getting rid of these primary producers.

The minister says that it is all about tourism. He says that these primary producers—our fishermen—should just get a charter boat. I am not sure where they are going to get the money from. He said on radio that this policy is to give tourism in Central Queensland a real shot in the arm. The department says that it is about the relocation of fisheries resources from commercial fishermen to recreational fishermen. For the chair of the Agriculture and Environment Committee, the member for Ipswich, it is about the issue of sustainability, which is one of the reasons the government came to that decision.

There has been no listening to the science. There has been no consultation. Because of this lack of consultation by the government, I have made it my priority to visit, meet and talk with as many of the affected people as possible. I would briefly like to give some of those people a voice. Russell and Rhonda Marriage of North Mackay, a commercial fishing family for over 34 years, have said—

This industry belongs to each and every Queenslander. The sole reason this industry exists is to supply fresh local seafood harvested from our waters to our people.

Ben Gilliland from the Sunshine Coast, in an email to the department, states—

I think you guys need a reality check into the angst, anxiety and I am seriously mentioning mental illness, the Government and DAFF are causing to professional fishers. No information, no plan. We are all out here, sitting on the edge.

Margaret and Graham Stevenson state—

If this plan goes ahead, we will be the displaced, the dispossessed, and discriminated against, all for a party policy claimed to be an election promise that the majority of the population went to the polls knowing nothing about, and which is hypocritical, unfair, unjust, indefensible, unjustified and un-Australian with speculative promised outcomes.

Vicki Bush from Glenmore Seafoods in North Rockhampton, which I am sure is in the minister's own seat, said—

This net free zone closure will effectively mean that we have worked our butts off for 3 years for nothing. Overall 36.6% of our sales through the shop today was from Estuary fish. How can I service the loans for my business if this amount of income is taken away from me?

Then we have the Trinity Bay fishermen. Bruce Batch, a long-time commercial fisherman—

Mr Costigan: Second generation.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Yes, second generation. This story is quite unbelievable. Mr Batch made an agreement with the Labor government in the year 2000. This deed guaranteed him a lifetime right to fish in Trinity Bay until he retires from the industry or until he passes away. Mr Batch and five other fishermen have their names written in the current Fisheries Regulation 2008. This arrangement was facilitated in good faith by the then minister for primary industries, Henry Palaszczuk, and the former member for Mulgrave, Mr Warren Pitt. Those two gentlemen did this deed in good faith with those fishermen. They put it in legislation. I wonder what Mr Palaszczuk and Mr Pitt are thinking right now. Mr Batch has now been advised by this minister and the Premier that this deed means nothing.

I wrote to the minister on behalf of Mr Batch to clarify the legal basis for the termination of these deeds. This was the answer from this government which claims to consult and to listen to people. This was the answer—

... the Government has amended the provisions of the regulations to remove the provisions that allowed a ... number of fishers to use commercial nets in the area.

Full stop. His livelihood was ripped away from him with no consultation. He relied on the good faith of Mr Palaszczuk Snr and Mr Pitt Snr. To get rid of the commercial fishermen, Labor has torn up these lifetime deeds. It goes to show what little regard this Labor government has for guarantees, promises and commitments.

I now turn to the compensation. For our Trinity Bay commercial fishermen, it is \$1,000 per day averaged over the number of days in the zone for three years. Mr Batch shared with me the goodwill payment he will be receiving. It is \$36,000, equating to just one-third of his worst fishing year in the zone. This compensation is an embarrassment and it is extremely disrespectful. The goodwill payment is only \$500 a day for the fishermen in the other two zones. Previously, compensation was based on the value of the catch. This is the first time it has ever been averaged by day. It simply does not work.

Then there is the mysterious voluntary buyback of the fishing licences in the zones. This just does not make sense to anyone. I would like to point out that this seems fairly compulsory to the commercial fishermen who are being told to leave. Commercial fisherman Dave Swindells, who is again from Rockhampton, said this during the committee's public hearing—

For me to do that netting, I still had to purchase a boat—an outboard—and thousands and thousands of dollars worth of nets ... how am I going to be compensated for all of my equipment?

The issue for many fishermen is that their time in these zones may only be a quarter or a third of their business's income. If I took away a quarter or a third of any small business's income, they become unviable, and there is no financial support being offered to any other affected businesses.

I could also touch on the sound, scientific evidence to support Labor's net-free zone policy but there is none. Indeed the data from the government's own fisheries experts shows that all key target species are being sustainably fished. To justify this move, the minister appears to be blatantly ignoring scientific advice from his own department.

What about the issue of displacement? The department has acknowledged that the exclusion of commercial fishermen from the zones means they will have to fish in other areas. It is like saying to a farmer, 'You can't grow your crops here anymore, but just go over next door to your neighbour's place. Plant them in his paddock.' This regulation is not just affecting fishermen working in the zones; it is affecting people in adjoining areas, as we will now see pressure from an increase of activity.

There was one further bombshell which arose during the committee's public hearing. There has been much talk about the availability of fresh local seafood in our fish shops, but the department said—

Due to the nature of the seafood marketplace, these businesses will be able to adapt should they wish by sourcing product from other regions—

fair call—

sourcing product from other fisheries or by developing new customers, potentially recreational fishers.

So the department is supporting the black market. It is illegal for a recreational fisherman to supply his or her fish to a fish shop.

This regulation needs more thought. We need to look at the process. We need to look at the science. When everyone in this House votes this evening, I ask that you think about those commercial fishing families whose livelihoods have been taken away by the stroke of your minister's pen. I ask for your support of this disallowance motion. Let us put some balance back in this process.

An incident having occurred in the public gallery—

Mr SPEAKER: Ladies and gentlemen in the public gallery, I would urge you not to express your opinions or views. I call the member for Ipswich.

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (7.54 pm): I rise to speak against the disallowance motion. For decades, the use of commercial fishing nets has caused conflict between Queensland's commercial and recreational fishers. Despite what the member for Nanango thinks, there is no middle ground on this issue. This is a matter with important ramifications for the sustainability of our fisheries, for tourism, for our environment and for economic growth, and it is time to take action. Over the years, there has been a lot of discussion about how to resolve this conflict but very little has been done to address it. It is time to grab the bull by the horns and with this regulation that is what this government has done.

In opposition, Labor committed to net-free zones as part of a package of election commitments to improve fishing in Queensland. The sustainable fishing policy committed to implementing three net-free zones—one in Cairns, one near Mackay and one along the Capricorn Coast taking in Rockhampton and Yeppoon. The regulation before the parliament delivers on this commitment. It delivers real and positive change. Importantly, it does so in a way that compensates the commercial fishing industry, with a payment for lost fishing grounds while also giving them the ability to sell their licence back to the government if they wish. This is why \$10 million was committed to finance the buyback and settlement schemes associated with the introduction of the three net-free zones. I stress that there is no compulsion involved. Commercial licence holders are entirely free to weigh up their options and make the decision that best suits their circumstances. Those who wish to stay in the industry will still be able to do so but must operate in other areas.

Some people oppose net-free zones on the misguided belief that there will be no local seafood for consumers. This is not correct. Commercial seafood harvest by nets from within the three zones accounts for just 0.1 per cent of Australia's total seafood production. That is just 0.1 per cent. The idea that these net-free zones will remove Australian seafood from our tables is absurd. The benefits of these net-free zones to recreational fishers—and hence to tourism and a range of local businesses in the regions concerned—are plain, not least to the recreational fishers themselves.

The recreational fishing group Keep Australia Fishing has called on the opposition leader and the shadow fisheries minister to withdraw the disallowance motion against the net-free zone legislation as a matter of priority. They have asked the LNP to withdraw this motion for the sake of recreational fishers and their families. They have asked them to withdraw it for the sake of healthy and abundant fish, clean and healthy waterways, and sustainable communities. But it appears such concerns do not register on the LNP's radar, and so here we are today. The Fraser Coast Fishing Alliance chair had this to say yesterday—

I cannot believe that the LNP have moved this motion of disallowance against your Net Free Areas commitment and have totally discarded letters of support from the likes of:

- the Queensland Tourism Industry Council;
- the Caravan Parks Association of Queensland;
- the Caravan Industry Association of Australia;
- the Tackle Industry of Queensland;
- the World Wildlife Fund;
- Australia Marine Conservation Society;
- Care Fish;
- Mackay Recreational Fishers Alliance;
- Fraser Coast Fishing Alliance;
- Queensland Amateur Fishing Clubs Association;
- Australia National Sports Fishing Association; and many other high profile endorsements.

It is important to remember that Queensland's wild fish stocks are a common-property natural resource; they belong to everyone. The challenge for any government is to balance the interests of a range of competing stakeholders, each with different objectives and needs, while ensuring that fish stocks remain sustainable and benefits to the whole community are maximised. Removing nets from these areas will help to protect these species and meet the government's commitment in the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan. The net effect of these measures will be a boon for the environment and a boom for regional tourism. But what we have seen from this lot opposite is a real disdain for the people of regional Queensland. Their opposition to net-free zones proves that the LNP cannot stand up for regional tourism or recreational fishing and they most certainly cannot stand up for the environment.

Cairns and Far North Environment Centre director Josh Coates had some choice words to say about the LNP's attempts to derail these net-free fishing zones. He said—

This is a cynical political move and is a huge snub to the many people who have worked for years to see this common sense approach to resource sharing and environmental protection in areas under significant environmental pressure.

From my involvement in the consultation process surrounding the net-free zones, I can confirm that Mr Coates is actually correct.

The government considered feedback from more than 6,300 public submissions received during the recent consultation process. As a result of all the feedback received throughout this process, there have been some adjustments to the boundaries originally proposed. At Seaforth the boundary of the zone has been amended slightly to align with the local dugong protection area. The boundary for the Capricorn Coast zone has also been altered to reduce the overall size of the area whilst still including the waters of Keppel Bay and the Fitzroy River. The government has listened throughout this extensive consultation and has taken all views into account. But the overall message from fishery stakeholders and the community on this issue is clear. During the consultation process 90 per cent of people were strongly in favour of the introduction of the zones. This overwhelmingly positive response has strengthened the government's resolve to fulfil our commitments by establishing these net-free zones.

The LNP recently released its own plan for creating net-free zones in Moreton Bay identical to plans the government has for the three zones that are the subject of this regulation. This disallowance motion just proves how hypocritical the LNP are on this matter. This motion is, indeed, a cynical political move from the LNP, as Mr Coates from the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre has observed.

In contrast to the opportunism and hypocrisy of the LNP, the Palaszczuk government is taking action to ensure our fisheries remain sustainable and benefit all Queenslanders. These new zones will be the first step in ensuring that Queensland takes advantage of the tourism potential of fishery resources. The zones will be good for tourism, good for the Great Barrier Reef and great for Queensland recreational fishing. I commend the regulations to the House.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the next speaker, I remind the member for Hinchinbrook you are already on a warning under standing order 253A in relation to interjections. The member for Gaven, I now put you on notice under standing order 253A. None of your interjections were taken. That is the official first warning. I call the member for Broadwater.

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (8.02 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House tonight to support the disallowance motion that has been moved by my good friend and colleague the member for Nanango. I know that since she was appointed as the first female shadow minister for fisheries she has worked tirelessly across the state. She has been working with communities on the LNP's plan that we took to the election, that we formed in government and that we are continuing with today, which was a strong plan that was based on consultation and on science. She has been making sure that we talk to people and we get agreement with people. At the end of the day, we are here because this minister has not consulted with people. He has not offered them fair compensation. The member for Nanango said that not only was it embarrassing, but it was disrespectful. As the member for Broadwater, an area that has a large amount of both commercial and recreational fishing, I am incredibly concerned about the emails that I have seen which indicate that the Labor Party clearly intends to roll out net-free zones right across Queensland. This is just a continued betrayal of the people of Queensland. Members opposite did not come out and tell people about the net-free zones with the lack of fair compensation in the lead-up to the election. What we will see is the Labor Party continuing to treat these primary industries and these amazingly talented fishermen, who do have their own trade, with absolute contempt.

What we have seen today is a continuation of the Labor Party wanting to absolutely trash people's livelihoods. The member for Nanango has given a great number of illustrations and that is just a handful of the many thousands that so many on this side of the House have heard. I think of people like Michael, who lives in Coombabah in my electorate, who is a commercial fisherman. He has a young family. What happens to him if this minister decides to rip his business out from underneath him? What happens to his family? What happens to his children?

I am very concerned about what this minister's plans are for fishing in this state. Clearly, this minister is not concerned about consultation. If he was, he would have paid credence to the petition that the member for Nanango helped table in this House a few weeks ago. He clearly does not care about consultation. He does not care about negotiating a fair agreement. Critically and, as the member for Nanango has said, embarrassingly, he does not care about fair compensation.

I am incredibly lucky to have living in my electorate Denis O'Connell, who is a life member of the Queensland Seafood Industry Association. He has taken the time to lobby me. Like so many across this state, he just wants to see balance struck. There is a way that we can make sure that commercial and recreational fishermen are able to enjoy what is a healthy stock and what is an absolutely fantastic pastime. As a young girl I used to go recreational fishing on the Broadwater with my grandfather. It is something that I miss being able to do. I know that the member for Redlands goes fishing in my electorate. I really wish he would tell me where he goes because he tells me that it is an absolutely fantastic spot.

What we do need to do and what I know the member for Nanango is advocating for and what the former minister the member for Toowoomba South advocated for was balance and consultation. We have continued to see the Labor Party ignoring people who do not say what they want to hear. The Premier comes into this House and says that this is going to be a government of consultation. We are going to listen to people. What about the commercial fishermen who are about to have their lives ripped out from underneath them? What about their families? What about the fish shops like the Harbour Seafood Market or Charis Seafoods at Labrador? What about those organisations that are impacted as equally as the commercial fishermen by the reckless decisions that are being made by this minister? We can see that with the swipe of his pen, this minister is hoping that people in Queensland fall hook, line and sinker for his mistruths and fallacies. I say to the minister that, like all members on this side of the House, we will make sure that the people of Queensland understand the mistruths that he is peddling. We will make sure that the people of Queensland understand the absolute contempt that he has for the primary producers of this state. We will make sure that each and every day we stand up for those families, those working families, so that Queenslanders right across this state have the opportunity not only to be able to recreationally fish but, if they want, to be able to eat good, local, fresh Queensland seafood. At the end of the day this is an absolutely fantastic resource that we have in Queensland. We need to work hard to protect it. The contempt that this minister shows is absolutely disgraceful. I look forward to supporting the disallowance motion.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (8.08 pm): The regulation that introduces sections 37, 42 and 223 of the Fisheries Act 1994 and sections 10, 11 and 44 of the Rural and Regional Adjustment Act further adds to systems that have evolved over time to manage and share access to Queensland fish resources, adding more complexity and does not support the best use or stewardship of our fisheries. The industry needs long-term investment and policy leadership, not rushed, short-term options.

At the outset I must reiterate to all that we are not opposed to net-free zones and never have been. History reflects that the National Party in Queensland started this process of fishing reforms many years ago. I speak to support this disallowance motion for very clear reasons. We have an opportunity in this state to finally get this issue sorted, because this regulation does not address the real and tangible issues that confront us. We will be back here year after year still debating the issues because we will not stop and reflect on the vast amount of material available to us to make informed, sensible decisions. This regulation has not introduced management or structural changes facing Queensland fisheries and only raises more concerns and ignites local issues of concern to many fishers

Queensland commercial fishers comprise mostly family-run businesses. They have invested in licences, both net and boat, and they pay annual fees to access state fish stocks. They need a secure, stable operating environment that provides certainty for investment in plant and equipment, and staff training. They need the same certainty that all businesses expect and deserve.

Recreational fishers need further recognition of the potential and contribution that is possible if allocation of an explicit share of key target species is to be made available, and we all acknowledge the important role that they have to play. Under the state government's rushed program this has not happened, and importantly it also appears that consultation with traditional owners and issues of cultural importance have been ignored in the rushed process.

The committee heard many references to the \$10 million fund to compensate or buy out commercial fishers to support an ideological notion to grow the economic benefits from recreational and charter fishing and tourism. Any data to support this notion was anecdotal at best and totally ignores the role commercial fishing plays in supplying fresh local seafood for tourists and those who do not fish for whatever reason. The committee heard from commercial fishers of the big potential loss of wild caught barra, which is eight per cent in the Fitzroy delta alone. I remind Madam Chair of her comments about the quantity of the catch.

We on this side of the House still support a voluntary buyback process which all think was the best way forward. We must ensure that all in this state have the right to a dignified exit from their industry if governments are going to interfere with their property rights. A review of fundamental legislative principles clearly identified problems. The committee heard that the process for fishers to access compensation was complicated and accelerated. In fact, there is less time available for fishers to review and make a decision to access compensation than there was on the consultation in the first place.

The somewhat complicated license buyback scheme is to be administered by QRAA. The buyback scheme target is to buy back the 46 licenses referred to to ensure that the commercial fishing effort does not move into other areas or into other fisheries. This is a desire with no science or logic, and we have clearly seen slow participation in buyback schemes under successive governments. The committee heard many times about the issue of displacement pressures on adjacent fisheries. This

issue again appears unresolved or even not thought through. I suspect it is the result of rushed regulation, and no consultation with the commercial sector will see us back here next year debating another net closure area.

A settlement scheme to be administered by QRAA was less than desirable, and we have heard tonight that people will not be fairly compensated. What was disappointing was the reference to the consultation. As we heard from the chair of the committee, there were approximately 6,000 responses to an internet survey using a survey tool, but they forget that there were 26,000 signatures tabled in this place supporting the sustainable harvest of fresh Queensland seafood. We cannot be selective with our data and we cannot ignore the people of Queensland who are asking for action from their government.

The most disturbing issue was the consultation—or lack thereof—and the apparent rushing through of the regulation. Questions were raised with the committee by affected fishermen and small businesses. With regard to the government's sustainable fishing policy, why would you destroy a business that is profitable and sustainable for an aspirational goal that may or may not eventuate? Statistics were widely utilised in discussions as justification for a particular stance on both sides and they were subjective, excluded key items and were cherrypicked, as we heard tonight from those opposite.

Issues such as the black market were raised, and that has to be of concern to the members of this parliament when we make this decision later tonight. All stakeholders that presented to the committee acknowledged that more work needs to be done, and the MRAG report was rightly raised many times by many people during the process. Of course we want to see that report off the minister's desk and not collecting dust as it is now. The committee also received evidence from the department about the sustainable quantities of fish that are available in Queensland. Why are we asking questions about a rushed regulation and refusing to discuss it with our friends in the commercial sector and those in the recreational sector?

We heard from interest groups with a particular interest in the Great Barrier Reef, and the department's response acknowledged the tremendous advancement in fishing practices. Nets are now more selective and do not do as much damage as was reported to the committee by self-interest groups. There is some evidence that protected species such as turtles, dolphins and dugong are an incidental capture as well as protected fish such as certain species of shark. We can manage this and we need to, but we are saying this is a rushed, damaged process and we do need to look at activities like boat strikes, barra trauma, bag limits and the black market activity that can occur with recreational fishing. Environmental impacts were spoken about by the WWWF, and of course we do need to make sure that we deal with this issue.

With your indulgence, Mr Speaker, I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated into *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The committee heard many times about the introduction and proposed increase in aqua culture as a solution to supply and business, but there was no acknowledgment of the impacts of intensive farming of seafood on the coast adjacent to the reef. This is in contrast to the GBRMPA identifying aquaculture as an activity that requires approval under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Protection Act (EPBC Act) and that such approvals are precautionary in principle, given the possible impacts of aqua culture on the reef as identified by GMRMPA and summarized by the draft Queensland Competition Authority report.

Of major concern to the committee was the briefing from the state Government's own Fisheries Department experts, including the Fisheries Manager, which included commercial logbook records (between 2012 and 2014) showing that the commercial catch in the three proposed accounts for 8 per cent of the Queensland east coast net fishery catch by weight, which is significant and also the fact supplied by Qld Fisheries that three zones account for 13 per cent of the total Barramundi catch by weight. The state Government appears to be ignoring this significant loss and has no plans as to how our local commercial seafood industry will be able to redress this potential shortfall.

During the committee process we heard many stakeholders discuss the exceedingly complex and inadequate policies and legislation that have evolved over time in the management of Queensland fisheries. The regulation and potential further proposed changes without a clear direction will continue the passionate debates over resource allocation, but more seriously as the conflict between sectors continues we will see a reduced confidence in Queensland fisheries management.

The committee heard from stakeholders reflecting insecurity about their rights. The lack of clear arrangements in the regulation for resource sharing means we will see conflict over shared fisheries with no process for resolution. As there is no formal structure to allow stakeholders to have their say on the future of our fisheries, we now in Queensland have stakeholders disconnected and disenfranchised from this Government and the Department, operating in a policy vacuum.

Unlike other States, rec fishers in Queensland do not pay a general licence. There appears to be acceptance among rec fishers for a fishing licence. It seems reasonable that we have a discussion regarding the monies from the rec licence being used to compensate displaced commercial fishers in any 'net-free' or 'rec-only' areas.

In considering and supporting the disallowance motion I recommend the Government commit to a more detailed examination of the Queensland east coast fishery with a view to a sustainable policy framework. We need a regular performance review to ensure management arrangements are meeting expectations of Government and stakeholders. What is needed is good fisheries management not the current lazy practice of set and forget. The main observation with this regulation is the clear perception amongst Queenslanders that the current government is unable to articulate a clear decision making process. In the absence of clear strategic policy framework we now have the politicisation of decisions. We cannot have strategic decisions, strategic direction and technical recommendations being made by a Minister in a policy vacuum without utilising and communicating with experts in the field.

We have an opportunity to sort this issue out, and I ask members to support the disallowance motion, because this regulation is not the answer, it is not in the best interests of all Queenslanders, and we can and should develop better policy.

In conclusion, I do support the disallowance motion and recommend the government commit to a more detailed examination of the Queensland east coast fishery. We do need a sustainable policy framework going forward. We do need regular monitoring, and we do need to get the stakeholders in Queensland fisheries not to keep putting in these crazy, lazy policies of set and forget that affect us all. We have an opportunity to sort this out, and I ask the members to support the disallowance motion because this regulation is not the answer. It is not in the best interests of Queenslanders and we should—and we can—do a lot better.

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (8.14 pm): I rise to speak against the disallowance motion. Fishing is close to the hearts of every Queenslander. We enjoy Queensland's fish and seafood throughout the year. Recreational fishers love wetting a line and bringing home a catch to their family. As elected representatives it is our duty to hear those views and to make a judgement whether or not the management of our fishery resources should occur. Our primary concern is to ensure that fish stocks remain healthy and that we do not put them at risk from commercial activity; however, we must also ensure that everyone has fair access to the commodity and that community expectations are met.

Net-free zones were a key commitment of the government's sustainable fishing policy which we took to the 2015 election. The key action was to introduce three net-free zones in north and Central Queensland. The boundaries have now been established for these zones near Cairns, Mackay and Rockhampton to commence on 1 November this year. There is no doubt that the implementation of these zones will shift access rights away from commercial net fishing. It recognises the higher environmental, economic and social values these resources can provide to the community when used for recreational fishing and fishing based tourism.

The Palaszczuk government has not said that commercial net fishing will be banned in Queensland, but we need to have areas set aside to allow these activities to prosper and grow. We all know that pressure has been building on commercial netters over a number of years. The community has demanded that they develop new techniques and refine their gear to reduce impacts on the ecosystems in which they operate and on other marine users. Until now many fishers have resisted management reform. Very few have actively participated in identifying solutions to manage the indiscriminate nature of gillnet fishing and the risks they pose to non-target species. The reality is that the community simply does not support them.

The message that the government received during a call for submissions on net-free zone boundaries was clear. Approximately 6,300 submissions were received during two months of public consultation, and 90 per cent of these were in favour of their introduction. With the member for Mirani, we met with professional fishers and members of the Queensland Seafood Industry Association during the consultation period. I also met with the small group of recreational anglers.

The issue is a very emotive one in my electorate and the divide between the two opposing groups is huge. At no point did there ever seem to be middle ground or a compromise that could be reached by either group. I was disheartened by the behaviour of some of the members from both the recreational fishing groups and the professional fishing groups, who personally attacked each other's character on social media.

Recent independent assessments of the inshore net fishery have been particularly unfavourable, with both the Commonwealth government and Coles supermarket identifying the inshore gillnet fishery as having unacceptable impacts on important conservation species such as dugong, turtles and sharks. Coles recently announced that it would no longer continue to sell some Queensland fish taken using gillnets because it contravenes its commitment to sell sustainably resourced seafood. While in opposition Labor decided that we would take the policy—to remove the nets from the water in these three zones and to give other resource users a go—to the people of Queensland.

The facts are that the policy is based on sound reasoning and demonstrated effectiveness based on studies of similar zones in other areas. As an example, the benefits of the net-free fishing zones can be seen in the Northern Territory. There, the charter fishing sector's total economic contribution was most recently estimated to be over \$26 million per annum, with approximately 80 per cent of that expenditure attributed to interstate and overseas tourists.

This government understands the objections that industry organisations such as the Queensland Seafood Industry Association have raised on behalf of the commercial fishing sector. However, the government must balance the objectives of all sectors along with the need for sustainable fisheries management.

The facts are that commercial seafood production by nets from within the zones accounts for just 0.1 per cent of Australia's total seafood production from wild harvest and aquaculture. Access to Australian seafood is not at risk from this policy. Seafood wholesalers and retailers who currently purchase Australian seafood from commercial operators will continue to be able to do so through existing markets.

It must be remembered that these zones will only exclude commercial gillnetting. Commercial crabbing, trawling and line fishing will continue to be able to operate in areas within the zones and provide fresh Australian fish and seafood to markets. Over time these fisheries have supported and implemented changes to reduce their ecological footprint, and this effort has been recognised by the government by allowing these activities to continue within the current net-free zones. Net fishers will not be excluded from all of Queensland. Commercial net fishers who want to stay in the industry will be able to do so but must operate in other areas. The need to address the impacts of their fishing will continue, and there must be a willingness to demonstrate the responsible use of the resource in order for access to be maintained. I do not support the disallowance motion.

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (8.21 pm): I am pleased to speak in this debate, which is coming to a head. I will have to remind myself the next time I follow the member for Mackay to have some No-Doz beforehand.

Mrs GILBERT: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find the member's comments offensive and I would like him to withdraw them.

Mr COSTIGAN: I withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Unconditionally, thank you.

Mr COSTIGAN: Without qualification. Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your guidance. Tonight I would like to place on record my support for a net-free zone in my electorate of Whitsunday, specifically on that stretch of coast between Cape Hillsborough in the south and St Helens in the north. That said, it was always on the proviso that impacted stakeholders, in particular commercial fishers, be properly consulted and adequately compensated. After all, these fishos have coughed up significant amounts of money for the right to fish, for the right to farm the sea, and provide high-quality, good, yummy, fresh North Queensland seafood for the good people of Mackay and the Whitsundays and indeed visitors to the place I call paradise. These are hardworking people, I might add.

I acknowledge the contribution by the shadow minister for fisheries, naming the likes of Rhonda and Russell Marriage, who are here tonight. There are many other families, too: Shane Clancy from Bloomsbury in the rural heart of my electorate; Wally Keating; Tim Fallows; the Aherns; and the Bakers. There are plenty of them and they all have families, too.

In October last year I made my position quite clear in providing a much anticipated letter of support as part of the MRAG fisheries review which, I might add, was an initiative of the former LNP government under the stewardship of my good friend the member for Toowoomba South, the then minister. At the time that support was certainly welcomed. I will come to that in a moment. The letter, dated 30 October 2014, states—

As the Government MP who represents Mackay and the Whitsundays, I would like to register my support for a net-free zone, as proposed by the Mackay Recreational Fishers Alliance.

So long as there is adequate compensation for impacted commercial fishers ...

I table the letter for the benefit of members.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 30 October 2014, from the member for Whitsunday, Mr Jason Costigan MP, to MRAG Asia Pacific, regarding a net-free zone proposed by the Mackay Recreational Fishers Alliance [[1393](#)].

That letter was very warmly received by the likes of Mr Lance Murray, the figurehead of the Mackay Recreational Fishers Alliance. It was reflected, I dare say, in cordial discussions at Cape Hillsborough last year, when the minister came to the cape at my invitation to hear the concerns and

aspirations of Mr Murray and his colleagues. It is worth noting that Mr Murray and co failed, as I understand, to secure a similar letter of support from the Labor flavoured Mackay Regional Council. I have to say that this is a most interesting situation when one considers that the husband of the Labor member for Mackay actually sits on that council. That is right: he has a seat at the council table. This person is also a failed former federal Labor candidate. Where was his letter? Where was the letter from the council? It has not happened. I have never seen one. I do not think anyone has seen one.

It is no secret that Mr Murray is no great fan of mine—I cannot stand here tonight and not say that—but this is democracy at work. We all have to accept that, no matter where we sit on this argument. But let us not forget—it is important that members here know this—that Mr Murray actively supported my predecessor in this place, the former Labor MP for Whitsunday, the then minister for tourism, who did next to nothing to boost tourism in my electorate of Whitsunday. In fact, under her watch tourism went backwards. As many members on this side of the House would recall, she only scored the Tourism portfolio to help sandbag her seat. We should also be mindful of the fact that Mr Murray himself is a failed local government candidate in his own right. I am just putting some perspective in relation to this argument.

That said, I certainly had the ears open. There was no wax in the ears. We sat down and spoke frankly, and I listened intently and carefully to his argument and that of his colleagues who are passionate about the net-free zone and representing the recreational sector, because I, too, want to see tourism boosted, especially right now as our region takes a battering with the downturn in the resources sector. Countless people are doing it tough like never before. We have retailers who are in the fishing industry selling good produce—people like Kelly Morgan, Mark Ahern and David Coracciolo. I think David might be in the gallery tonight. I acknowledge all of my constituents and those from neighbouring electorates who are here in the gallery tonight, regardless of where they sit in this debate.

At the same time, I listened to the other side of the argument from commercial fishers—people like Wally Keating, whom I have known for almost 30 years. He is a dyed-in-the-wool Labor man and he does not believe this is good form. He is on the warpath. He is not happy, and he expressed that alongside the likes of Keith Payne VC, Vietnam War hero, on the banks of the Pioneer River, where he stood his ground and said, ‘This is not on.’ Wally vented his spleen. He is such a Labor man that I reckon he wears red underpants from time to time. He is blowing up deluxe. He is going off like a frog in a sock because he is not prepared to cop it from the socialists. Why was Keith up in arms? It is because the livelihoods of commercial fishermen are on the line here. They are being done over. Their businesses are in peril. They have shelled out big coin to operate their businesses legitimately and legally. They have entitlements.

To all the recreational fishers in Whitsunday I say: I support the concept of an NFZ, but imagine if the government came knocking on your door and said, ‘Guess what? We are going to shut down your business or the business where you work.’ How would you feel about that? How would you pay the rent? How would you pay the mortgage? How would you feed your kids? How would you educate them? The mind boggles.

It is no different from our commercial fishos, who work damn hard for a living. They deserve a lot better. After all, fundamental property rights are at stake here. The last time I checked, that was very central to the LNP. It is part of our DNA. We stand up for property rights and primary producers. In conclusion, I say that commercial fishers deserve a fair go. That is not reflected in Labor’s plans here. Hence, I support the disallowance motion.

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (8.28 pm): I rise to speak against the disallowance motion concerning the Fisheries and Another Regulation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2015, subordinate legislation No. 125 of 2015. The regulation creates three net-free zones near Cairns, north of Mackay and on the Capricorn Coast covering a combined area of about 1,400 square kilometres. Fishing is part of Queensland’s lifestyle and fishing opportunities are one of the state’s best tourist attractions. The Queensland government is committed to creating additional economic benefits by recognising the total value of spending by recreational fishers and taking advantage of the potential for fishing based tourism. Queensland potentially has some of the best fishing experiences in Australia adjacent to significant urban centres and the Great Barrier Reef. This combination is a powerful tourist attraction and deserves development. The implementation of net-free zones will create certainty for all sectors, encouraging investment. Tourism based fishing businesses and recreational fishers will have defined areas to underpin their renewed support and growth. By removing commercial net licences from these areas, the catch of barramundi, king salmon, blue salmon and grunter that would otherwise have been caught will be available for recreational fishing. By leaving these fish in the water, the chances of catching a

fish will be dramatically increased and this in turn will support increased participation and growth in recreational fishing, allowing recreational fishing businesses and tourism bodies to plan for the future with confidence.

With this regulation the Queensland government has delivered on its election commitment and implementation of three net-free fishing zones in Queensland. As the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries stated, cabinet considered feedback from more than 6,300 public submissions received during the recent consultation process. He said that 90 per cent of the submissions were in favour of introducing net-free zones. As a result of all of the feedback received throughout the consultation process, there have been some adjustments to the boundaries originally proposed. At Seaforth, the boundary of the zone has been amended slightly to align with a local dugong protection area. The boundary of the Capricorn Coast has also been altered to reduce the overall size of the area while still including the waters of Keppel Bay and the Fitzroy River.

The minister has stated that there was significant public support for the introduction of the zones and that this is the first step in ensuring that Queensland takes advantage of the tourism potential for fishery resources. Some \$10 million has been set aside to help the commercial net industry adjust to the introduction of the three zones and some of that money has been allocated to buy back licences from fishers who want to transition out of the industry. As Central Queensland spokesman for the Queensland Recreational Fishing Network Kim Martin has stated, there are too many commercial fishermen in the state. For 30 years he has lobbied both sides of government to introduce net-free zones. As he said, net-free zones will lead to bigger and more fish for recreational fishing. Only the use of nets by licensed commercial fishing boats will be prohibited in the net-free zones. The net-free zones do not affect the use of nets by other fishers. Examples of activities allowed in the net-free zones are commercial crabbing, line fishing and trawling. These are still allowed where it was previously permitted to do so. The use of cast nets and bait nets by recreational fishers is allowed as long as these nets are lawful and comply with current length and mesh size restrictions.

The government must balance the objectives of all sectors along with the need for sustainable fishing management. We are here to govern, not to maintain a failed management regime that is not meeting the needs and expectations of the Queensland community. Commercial seafood production by nets within the zones accounts for just 0.1 per cent of Australia's total seafood production. Importantly, seafood wholesalers and retailers who currently purchase Australian seafood from fishers will continue to be able to do so through existing markets. Access to Australian seafood is not at risk by this policy. We must remember that net fishers will not be excluded from all of Queensland. Commercial net fishers who want to stay in the industry will still be able to do so but must operate in other areas.

For those commercial fishers who do want to stay in the industry, the Queensland government is funding a voluntary buyback of licences. Similar approaches in other states have been successful in improving recreational fishing and providing strong economic benefits. Studies in those states have shown an increase in the number and size of fish caught by recreational fishers once commercial nets are removed. The benefits of three net-free zones will increase the economic value of our fisheries resources and will help support our regional economies. Net-free zones will support economic growth in the recreational and charter fishing sectors, with corresponding growth in related businesses such as tackle shops and caravan parks. Over time the benefits created are expected to outweigh the economic loss from the activities of commercial netters.

Net-free zones will create certainty for all sectors and encourage investment. Tourism based fishing businesses and recreational fishers will have defined areas to support renewed growth. While commercial netting will be stopped in the three net-free zones, the general community will still be able to buy seafood from other commercial fisheries and from commercial netting activities outside these zones. This government will continue to protect and strengthen our management arrangements to ensure that Queensland's fishing resources are protected for future generations and ensure that there is a strong and vibrant fishing industry. That is why I oppose the disallowance motion.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (8.36 pm): Fishing is not just a recreational and tourism activity; fishing is a livelihood, a business and an industry that supports many families and is a major primary industry that is a major provider of quality product for the domestic market and a valuable part of regional economies. For over 20 years the industry has been weighed down with layer upon layer of regulations and an overburdensome and complex fishing management system built up by lazy Labor governments. Those governments were addicted to quick fixes and pandering to sectional interests. They did not consult with industry sectors. Decisions were ad hoc. This Labor government is doing it again. It is making decisions for only one interest group.

As an occasional recreational fisher, I thoroughly enjoy my time fishing. The government's regulation is a set-up. It says that this is about keeping promises—promises made at a minute to midnight, promises made without any consultation with a major stakeholder, promises based on a policy which is intentionally and deliberately one sided. The minister said that the ALP had consulted with recreational fishing stakeholders and that a copy was sent to all major stakeholders. The Queensland Seafood Industry Association, the QSIA, disagrees, saying—

There is evidence that the policy was developed well before the election and drafted to the exclusion of the commercial seafood industry.

We know this because the Recreational Fishing Network's spokesman Kim Martin said—

Paul, Lance and I have been dying to drop this bombshell but had to wait until all was signed off by the backroom party powerbrokers.

The policy was released on 29 January—two days before the election. It was not widely distributed and gave no time for the commercial industry to fully distribute or analyse the policy. It was sidelined. The minister's own department said that during the first series of meetings it became evident that the commercial fishers were opposed to the introduction of the zones and that the government had failed to consult them. When the LNP commissioned the MRAG report last year there were about 900 pages of legislation overloaded with exceptions made on the run for 1,500 commercial operations. With the stroke of a pen the government has made another destructively ad hoc decision based on cherrypicked data, misinformation peddled by the minister and relies on anecdotal instead of substantive evidence. It cherrypicked some 6,000 responses to an online survey yet dismissed 26,000 signatures on a parliamentary petition.

It is a nightmare that relies on unsupported claims that it will be replaced by other industries. Tensions are running high among the 2,000 commercial fishermen who had innocently trusted the government. A witness at the hearing stated—

... there have actually been guns drawn already up the coast where commercial fishermen are threatening to shoot each other because of them moving from one area into another.

These zones count for 13 per cent of the total Queensland barramundi catch, or 33 per cent of the east coast catch. Nearly 99 per cent of seafood caught in Queensland goes straight to domestic consumption. The department advises that in the future it is most likely that the supply chain will adapt and that product from other areas, or alternative product from other fisheries, will be made available.

Mr Boothman: Like Thailand?

Mr PERRETT: I take that interjection from the member. This is departmental speak for the black market and overseas. Expectations that the zones will increase fish abundance are unsupported. JCU Senior Research Fellow, Andrew Tobin, said—

There is no scientific information to support claims of improved fishing in most cases. Where scientific studies have been conducted, the results have been mixed—

and—

There is not necessarily a positive relationship between fish abundance and the number of recreational fishers.

Interstate evidence shows that in some New South Wales fish havens there have been just as many poor recreational catches now as there were prior to the removal of commercial fishing. In some areas of the Northern Territory, recreational fishing decreased despite the reported increase in available stock and that the uncontrolled growth of recreational charter tourism overfished some populations. In Victoria, recreational fishing has the potential to create fishing pressure on low stock levels.

With no supporting data, the government hopes that commercial fishing businesses will be replaced by some recreational charter fishing and tourism. The ALP Mayor of Rockhampton has admitted—

Preliminary information is talking about a direct economic benefit ... Obviously it needs to be assessed ... it is one of those things that you probably do not know until it happens.

Accessing compensation is complicated and rushed, with even less time allowed for fishermen to review and secure compensation than there was for consultation. There is no compensation for allied businesses. The effect on businesses supporting commercial fishermen has been ignored—industries such as transport, iceworks, retailers and suppliers to fishermen. This is a knee-jerk decision that will do nothing to address the challenges in the fishing industry.

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (8.42 pm): My father was not a great fisherman. He was not an expert in the field, but a cherished memory I have is my father teaching me to fish. He showed me how to fix the rod and add line to the reel, to thread the line through the runners to tie a blood knot and to get bait

and cast the line. If we were lucky—and mostly we were not lucky—we would catch a fish and he would teach us how to scale, dress and cook a fish. That taught us a love of nature and the sea and the patience to learn skills and to apply those skills with patience and diligence before getting any reward. I cannot think of any better life lesson that a father could give his kids.

I bought an Alvey Reels junior rod-and-reel combo for my own son and daughter and, while thinking of my father, I again threaded the line through the runners and showed my son how to add the sinker, the trace and the hook to the line. I watched as they learned the skills of patience and diligence and I was so proud that my son could catch his first fish. These are the opportunities that should be available for every Queenslander young and old and this government wants to ensure that it is available for all.

It should be mentioned in this debate that the recreational fishing industry supports many Queenslanders. I have already mentioned the world-famous Alvey reels, of which I am a great supporter. I do not know how many members in this place know that the reels are manufactured just down Johnson Road near my office in Carole Park, providing employment and, of course, a fantastic Queensland product. Wilson Fishing makes landing nets, gaffs and their famous bait pumps in Tingalpa and have done so since 1946. Recently, I spoke to the Minister for Innovation about a great local manufacturer in the Crestmead Industrial Estate, which makes an innovative retractable crab pot float. These were designed in Townsville, built at Crestmead and used all over the world.

In my electorate, I know that every Saturday morning locals stream through the door of BCF or Rays Outdoors buying GPSs, fish finders, rods and locally made Alvey reels or, as I did last Sunday, buy a life jacket for my four-year-old daughter. These manufacturers and retailers provide jobs all over Queensland and enable millions of Queenslanders to be involved in fishing. The Minister for Tourism would no doubt be disappointed if I did not mention the many tourism and accommodation operators who owe their business to fishing tourism throughout coastal Queensland.

During the last election campaign I told fishing enthusiasts in the electorate of Logan that I supported the policy that we took to the people to create three net-free zones to enhance recreational fishing in those zones. Today, I am disappointed that some members in this place seek to disallow this policy, which was voted on at the last election as a culmination of a very long process of discussion that has happened over 20 years.

The proposed zones will set aside an area where recreational line fishing enthusiasts will have a far better chance to catch the fish that they want to catch in an area that they can reach safely. I have never caught a barramundi, but I would like myself and my kids to have that opportunity and to have a small share in the Queensland barramundi catch. These net-free zones will make that more likely to happen.

In some ways the argument for net-free zones is quite simple. I would like to read from this piece of social media titled, 'Who wins with net-free zones in the bay?' It then has four ticks: recreational fishers, local tourism, Moreton Bay and the environment. Who made that argument? It was an LNP member who sees the value of net-free zones, and many of them do. Today, we have seen a split between the members of the party on the other side that is wider than their split over their future leadership. They are split over whether they support—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. This disallowance motion is about the process. I know the member is new to this place, but it is about the process. So relevance, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Nanango. I would urge the member for Logan to remain relevant to the matter that we are debating.

Mr POWER: I take the member for Nanango's point. She, too, was split. Throughout her speech, the member managed to be on both sides of the debate.

As part of our consideration of the regulation, the members of the Agriculture and Environment Committee listened to those who had reservations about the regulation as well as those who strongly supported the net-free zones. I thank them all for their input and participation in the process. I would also like to thank those who sent me emails, including those fishing families who feel very strongly about the policy. Transition can be difficult, even when there is—and I believe there is—a strong public benefit in a transition. I have spoken with the minister directly about those who are making this transition and I know that the minister has a strong understanding of their position.

There are some licence holders who primarily fish within these zones and many can substitute their fishing efforts in other areas just outside the zones or, if it is the right stage of their lives, can take the compensation and have their licence bought back. Of course, this process is voluntary. The buyback will ensure that those remaining in the industry will have enough area to work sustainably and do not face increased competition from net fishers who have been displaced from net-free zones.

I have heard claims from others in this House and from some of those who gave evidence to the committee that the reduction in the number of licence holders would damage the industry. However, I have also heard from many others who held licences and who used them in a limited fashion. There was also a consensus that the licence numbers should be reduced.

Fisheries Queensland has reported that, between 2012 and 2014, the previous LNP government bought back 74 commercial fishing licences. At that time the LNP minister for fisheries stated—

Industry has asked for a 50 per cent reduction of net licences, so we will work towards that target.

Not only was the LNP goal to reduce licences by 50 per cent but also at that time the spokesperson for the Queensland Seafood Industry Association was supporting the policy goal of reducing the number of fishing licences.

One submission that stuck with me from the presentations referred to the fact that we have talked for 16 years about spatial restrictions on activities to better manage our fantastic resources of fish stock. This government will fulfil the promises that it made and create net-free zones to enhance our fish stocks for a sustainable future. I urge the members of this House not to support this disallowance motion.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (8.48 pm): I rise to speak in support of this disallowance motion regarding the Fisheries and Another Regulation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2015. To say that this issue has divided Queensland would be an understatement. In my Burdekin electorate, I have received more calls and visits from constituents on this topic since I was elected than on all other issues combined. It has divided my community and set at war the recreational and commercial fishers who reside there.

The statistics say it all: 600,000 recreational fishers and 2,000 commercial fishers with 1,437 commercial fishing licences in Queensland. With 293 kilometres of coastline, the Burdekin electorate is home to some of the most productive fishing grounds and marine zones in Queensland. What we witnessed in the lead-up to the election on 31 January was a knee-jerk reaction from the government to appease the recreational fishing industry by proposing three net-free zones at Trinity Bay, St Helens Beach and at Yeppoon/Keppel Bay and the Fitzroy River. Importantly, and I refer to the committee report, the department was not involved in the development of the policy and could not advise the committee who the policy was distributed to or when it was distributed.

The Queensland Seafood Industry Association was also critical of how the fishing policy, which provides for the establishment of net-free zones, was developed. Importantly, the department did not commence work on the boundaries of these net-free areas until after the election. I note in the report that DAF staff undertook targeted consultation in the areas of Cairns, Mackay and the Rockhampton regions. I say: what about the Burdekin? What about Bowen and the Whitsundays? I have two of the largest barramundi breeding areas in Queensland in the Burdekin and Haughton Rivers, areas where hundreds of tonnes—that is right, hundreds of tonnes—of barramundi are caught annually. Where was the consultation with the people who fish in these areas? Even the committee noted that the department did not consult with stakeholders specifically on the regulation or provide a draft regulation to comment on and only consulted on the intent of the regulation.

The commercial fishing industry is a vibrant and integral part of the Queensland economy and we need to ensure that the needs and sustainability of this industry are considered as part of this process. I am not against net-free areas, per se, what I am against is a flawed process that does not take into account the diversity of the Queensland coastline and fishing habitats. Is it any wonder I question the methodology involved in proposing the three net-free zones? I have our recreational fishers calling for net-free zones in these areas because they feel they are being discriminated against and our commercial operators claiming their fishing grounds are under threat by other commercial fishers being displaced from the areas subject to the net-free zones.

Importantly, I question the science behind this proposal, the level of consultation, the detail surrounding the settlement scheme and the lack of evidence around the benefits of establishing these net-free areas. If you are to believe the government, one of the primary reasons for establishing these net-free zones was to boost tourism and yet we have the ludicrous situation where we have no net-free zones in one of the busiest and largest tourism areas in the state in the Bowen-Whitsunday area. I note

the department further advised that current statewide assessments of Queensland inshore fish stocks show that most are harvested at a level where there are no significant concerns about sustainability. Importantly, there is no baseline data on inshore species, the marine environment and recreational fishing which highlights the difficulty in measuring the success or otherwise of this proposal.

I also note that, without a buyback of licences, fishing catch and effort would be displaced into other areas or into other fisheries which is of serious concern in the Burdekin electorate. I note that for the commercial fishing sector the reduction in licences as a result of the voluntary buyback scheme will likely result in a corresponding loss of jobs in the sector. The proposed voluntary settlement scheme, which is designed to give fishers a payment depending on their level of fishing effort within the zones, is fraught with danger. I have anecdotal evidence that a commercial fisher in my area was completing logbooks for his fishing vessel whilst holidaying overseas. This highlights the potential pitfalls of this scheme and the mockery that this regulation has become.

This regulation was ill-conceived, rushed and clearly was designed in the dying days of the election campaign to garner votes. There was a distinct lack of consultation and the science behind the establishment of these three zones is clearly flawed and lacking transparency. We need to find the right balance and for that reason this legislation should go back to the drawing board and be framed in such a way that the proposal to establish net-free zones in Queensland is done in a professional, thorough and transparent manner with input from all sectors of the community. As part of that consultation we should be considering options such as re-investing boat registration fees into the development of boat ramps and the establishment of artificial reefs, which helps to develop our fishing and tourism industry.

Queenslanders love their fishing and we need to get this right. We cannot afford a war between the recreational and commercial fishing industry, which is what this legislation is causing. There are no winners with the legislation before the House. If we are to implement net-free zones along the Queensland coastline then let us do so in a manner that takes into account scientific evidence and data that involves extensive consultation with all sectors of the community and has at its heart the protection and sustainability of our valuable fish stocks and adequate compensation for our commercial fishers.

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (8.55 pm): I rise this evening to speak against this disallowance motion. Fishing is a part of my family's history. It is in our blood. My grandmother Mary loved fishing and she taught me to fish when I was a little girl. We did not have a boat so together we would sit on the beach, both with a line in the water, and she would tell me to talk quietly otherwise I would scare off the fish. She also told me about the importance of ensuring we have sustainable fisheries and to never take more than you need. My father-in-law, Rodney Lauga, tells me his dad taught him about the importance of sustainable fishing and, in turn, Rodney raised my husband, Wayne, with the same ideals.

In the past, when Rodney, Wayne and I have been out in Coorooman Creek with a few pots out, and we have pulled the pot up, if we get a big buck which has not yet filled into its shell—a floater, as we call it—I have always been taught that he must go back in the water for someone else to catch at a later date when he has filled in his shell. The proposed net-free zones have been discussed over the family dinner table and whilst out on the water—although the opportunities for that are few and far between in this job. Rodney believes that the net-free zones are a good thing, because if we are taking too many fish we will see a decline in stocks and that will affect everyone now and in future generations.

Some in Keppel would argue that stocks are already in decline and that it is becoming more and more difficult to catch a fish. I recall the story told to me about a television fishing show being encouraged to film a day fishing for barra in the Fitzroy River. The celebrity fishermen fished in the river for an entire day and did not catch a thing. Of course, good fishing television relies on actually catching something and unfortunately, despite being encouraged back to the Fitzroy for a second day of fishing, the celebrity fishermen were still not able to hook up. The reputational damage that this would have caused for our local area's fishing tourism must have been disastrous.

The argument that local people will no longer be able to source fresh local fish is false. I read with interest the representations made by Mr Kim Martin in the committee's examination of the regulation amendment that, of 44 seafood retailers, restaurants, hotels, clubs, fish-and-chip shops and supermarkets across the Rockhampton and Capricorn Coast area, only one fish-and-chip shop and one restaurant definitely had fish—in both cases barramundi—that had been caught by commercial net fishers in Central Queensland waters. The data shows that fish-and-chip shops predominantly sell Spanish mackerel and reef fish, which are both commercially line-caught species and will not be impacted in any way at all by the proposed net-free areas. Other species sold in many fish-and-chip shops are currently imported from wild fisheries and fish farms outside Australia. Only net fishing is prevented in the new net-free zones. Crabbing, line fishing and trawling is still allowed. This means that

there will be no impact—no impact, Mr Speaker—on the local supply of prawns, crabs, reef fish and many pelagic fish at our local fish markets, restaurants, clubs, pubs and fish and chip shops. This policy will increase fish stocks for recreational anglers and it offers a clear and fair exit strategy for licence holders. Recreational fishers will still be allowed to use cast nets. However, as is currently the case, these nets must be lawful and comply with the current length and mesh size restrictions.

The Fitzroy River has the capacity to be the largest wild barramundi fishery in the world and I look forward to encouraging visitors from around the world to experience the thrill of having a barra on the end of their line. The prospect of the largest wild barramundi fishery on the doorstep of Rockhampton and the Capricorn Coast, not to mention on the doorstep of the Great Barrier Reef, is a vision I and many others in my electorate look forward to becoming a reality.

Fishing tourism has an exciting future in Central Queensland from 1 November 2015. This policy is about creating additional economic benefits by recognising the total value of spending by recreational fishers and taking advantage of the potential for fishing based tourism. Central Queensland potentially has some of the best fishing experiences in Australia adjacent to Rockhampton, the Capricorn Coast and, of course, the Great Barrier Reef. This combination is a powerful tourism attraction and deserves development. The implementation of net-free zones will create certainty for all sectors encouraging investment. Tourism based fishing businesses and recreational fishers will have defined areas to underpin their renewed support and growth. As reported by Rockhampton Regional Council Mayor Margaret Strelow to the committee's inquiry, this policy is estimated to have a direct economic benefit of \$22 million to the Rockhampton region. Net-free zones will underpin economic growth in the recreational and charter fishing sectors. Another \$14 million or so is anticipated in flow-on economic benefits to related businesses such as tackle shops and caravan parks.

The government considered feedback from more than 6,300 public submissions received during the recent consultation process. Ninety per cent of the submissions were in favour of introducing net-free zones. Recently I met with several commercial fishers and I understand their concerns about the introduction of net-free zones, but reform is an election commitment and we are seeing it through. Furthermore, the government has set aside \$10 million to help commercial net fishers adjust to the introduction of the three zones and will be using some of that money to buy back licences from fishers who want to transition out of the industry.

I agree with my father-in-law Rodney: we must ensure that there is fresh fish to catch now and into the future for our kids. I want to ensure that there is fresh fish for everyone to catch, especially so that our future generations have a healthy sustainable fishery and can also experience the thrill of catching their own fresh barra in our mighty Fitzroy River and Keppel Bay.

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (9.01 pm): I support the motion before the House. I feel very sorry for the professional fishermen. Under 'Consultation', the explanatory notes of the Fisheries Regulation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2015 state—

No prior consultation with commercial fishers has been conducted as there will be no changes to obligations other than transitioning them from the Plan to the Regulation. A similar approach was taken when other Management Plans ...

That is no way to treat Queenslanders. Surely they could have gone out, said g'day to people and had some consultation. However, to tell them to bugger off is not the Aussie way to do things.

An old fisherman friend of mine always talks about sustainability. He talks about the way mud crabs have survived through the seasons. He told me a little of the history, so I went to the library and asked the staff to do some research for me and I thank them for that. It is very valuable to know that sustainable fishing will depend on science and not on the feelings of people as to whether or not they want to catch a fish or can catch a fish. It is good to look back at the history of what happened.

In 1891, the first limit was put on mud crabs because they were in short supply around Bribie Island and in the creeks running into Moreton Bay. The first limit was that male mud crabs have a minimum weight of three pounds and female mud crabs have a minimum weight of 10 pounds. I do not think in all my life I have ever seen a 10-pound mud crab. The act was amended accordingly. I table that document and I will table other documents when I come to them.

There was no rationale given for the proclamation, which was passed by parliament. The change to a linear measure for the minimum size of a crab was made in 1913, when it was decided that a male mud crab had to be five inches across the back and female mud crabs were not allowed to be taken. In 1926, the minimum size of a mud crab was raised to six inches for a male mud crab. These maps also list a lot of fish species and I table them for the interest of members.

Tabled paper: Queensland Parliamentary Library Research Brief, dated 23 September 2015, regarding mud crab regulations from the 1890s [\[1394\]](#).

History shows how mud crabs have been sustainable over many years because research was conducted and they made the decision not to kill the female mud crabs. I know some people laugh about it, but—as science will prove—this will come back to bite us one day. The best thing that ever happened to barramundi is the closed season. Today fishermen will tell you that the numbers of barramundi have increased because we have a closed season, which allows the fish to breed.

Tonight we are being led to believe that there are no closed fishing zones in Queensland. In Hervey Bay, we have a net-free zone. I do not think people catch more fish in that net-free zone than anywhere else. In Hervey Bay we have eight green zones. They are a no-go zone for professional and recreational fishermen. So there are net-free zones. In relation to net-free zones, a common complaint I hear is about people using bait nets off the Esplanade in Hervey Bay. People really dislike fishers dragging bait nets. If the government really wants to do something, it should do away with the bait nets as well, because it is one area about which I get a lot of complaints. It is quite interesting to see how many people object to bait nets.

Right along Fraser Island there would be a 70-mile net-free zone. In the debate tonight, we are being led to believe that we do not have any net-free zones in Queensland. Throughout this whole debate it has really disappointed me to receive mail such as this, the subject of which is 'Nets out of Queensland'. That is what this debate is all about. If members think tonight ends the debate, they need to think again. The lobbyists are not going to stop with these zones. It will be the crabbers next and then the trawlers. They will not be happy. At the end of the day, when all the professional fishermen are gone, the greens will turn on the recreational fishermen and that is when the fight will really begin.

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (9.07 pm): As a young boy who grew up in Brisbane, one of my fondest memories was of visiting my extended family in the electorate of the member for Burdekin at Home Hill and Ayr, which is where my grandparents lived. My grandfather would take me fishing at spots such as Barratta Creek, Saltwater Creek and Rocky Ponds and teach me how to throw a cast a net and rig my fishing tackle for a particular fish species, as well as teach me simple things such as patience. Back in those days, it was okay to take from the creeks whatever you caught, regardless of the size, quantity or even gender. For example, a jenny or female mud crab would be tied up and put in the sugarbag, later to be boiled in salt water and eaten for dinner that night. A barramundi could be caught all year round without size limits and without bag limits. This was before many members of the House were born, at a time when there was an abundance of fish in the seas and creeks and you were guaranteed to bring home a feed of fish for the family every time you went fishing. Since those days, we have had seasonal fishing where fish such as barramundi are off limits from midday on 1 November to midday on 1 February, allowing them to breed and replenish their stocks.

When I go fishing in the Great Barrier Reef I too must follow specific rules and regulations when fishing. These include no fishing in green zones, which are areas determined to be specific to support the habitat of fish stocks. The reef is also protected from fishing at various times of the year. In 2015 it is from 10 to 14 October and from 9 to 13 November. The former minister for agriculture, fisheries and forestry said that these closure dates coincided with the new moon when key coral fish species aggregate to spawn.

Finally, when I go fishing I adhere to bag limits. This limits the size and the number of fish species I am allowed to catch and keep. On several occasions I have returned back to the boat ramp to find the fishing inspector or fishos waiting to check my catch. These fishos have seen it all and they know every hiding place in any boat and I can tell members that they are thorough in their work. I can safely say that I have never been in the possession of undersized fish or crabs, exceeded my bag limit or had jenny muddies at any time.

There are many members in this House who can probably tell similar stories—we heard one from the member for Logan—of them either being taken fishing by parents or grandparents or them taking their own children or possibly their grandchildren fishing. It is not rocket surgery that the justification and reasoning behind these actions by various governments over the last 40 to 50 years has been to protect fish habitats.

I can remember when the green zones were increased in size and number in 2002. The fishing public were outraged. Now, some 13 years later, the fishing public have accepted these changes and, in fact, many fishers support these moves and now see the importance of having zones off limits to fishing and encourage fish habitats that support fish populations. If we were to allow fishers, both recreational and commercial, to take whatever they caught then the only fish that we would be seeing would be in museums or in picture books beside dinosaurs.

A government member interjected.

Mr STEWART: Absolutely. Fishing is part of the lifestyle of many Queenslanders and an important part of the Queensland experience for the state's many visitors. In fact, fishing and fishing charters form a component of the tourism industry in Queensland. We have heard today from the Premier and the minister that tourism contributes \$23 billion annually.

Queensland's fisheries resources are a common property resource—that is, they are not owned by any one sector and are owned by the Queensland community. In fact, the LNP member for Cleveland also agrees that we need net-free zones and proudly displays that on his Facebook page. I am happy to table a copy of that from his Facebook page. I applaud him for standing up for his values.

Tabled paper: Extract, undated, of Dr Mark Robinson MP's Facebook page, in relation to net-free zones [[1395](#)].

Therefore, it is the government's obligation to manage these precious resources under the principles of ecological sustainable development. We need to demonstrate not only that we are fishing sustainably but we are fishing responsibly and in ways that afford resilience for our natural systems. This regulation will boost tourism and give recreational fishers a greater opportunity to catch fish in regional Queensland like in the Barrattas, in Saltwater Creek and in Rocky Ponds alike. Therefore, I do not support this disallowance motion.

Mr SPEAKER: Unfortunately, I will need to call the minister at 9.20 pm.

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (9.12 pm): I rise to speak in support of the disallowance motion moved by the member for Nanango and I will explain to the House the reasons. On Friday, 21 August 2015 the Minister for Fisheries released the Palaszczuk government's final proposals for three net-free zones around Cairns, Mackay and Rockhampton. This was done without any meaningful consultation with commercial fishing operators and other stakeholders that will be affected. Many members on this side have already detailed that issue at length.

The minister claims that this is all about honouring Labor's election commitment. Really? This idea was dropped out via press release a couple of days before the state election in January. The Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines was Labor's fisheries spokesperson before the state election. I have searched the *Hansard* record and he did not utter the words 'net', 'free' or 'zone' in this House during the last term of the parliament and he certainly did not utter them one after another as if to articulate a fisheries policy. The record shows that he did utter the word 'fishing' once in this place during the last term, but not in relation to anything to do with a proposal for net-free zones.

The story that there has been consultation and this policy is supported by science is fabricated and false. The LNP does not support Labor's process, as the member for Nanango has already outlined, because it does not respect the property rights of commercial fishers and does not provide fair and reasonable compensation for the loss of area in which to fish.

I know some recreational fishers support the concept of net-free zones. Indeed, I have had some of my own constituents approach me about areas in the Hinchinbrook electorate—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. I do not want any more discussion across the chamber. If you want to have a conversation take it outside.

Mr CRIPPS: I have had some constituents approach me about areas in the Hinchinbrook electorate where they would like to see net-free zones declared. I understand and respect their views. I submitted their proposals in good faith to the previous minister for fisheries for consideration as part of the review of the Fisheries Act undertaken by the former LNP government.

I also note that there are other people who talk to me about their concerns with the amount of food that Australia imports from overseas, including seafood. This policy will contract the area available for commercial fishers to gain access to fresh seafood in Queensland. Balancing out these two conflicting issues needs a mature debate, informed by facts, not the political opportunism that we have seen from Labor.

I know some recreational fishers believe that they will catch more if there were less effort from commercial fishers in these areas. On the other hand, there are many people who want to eat fresh seafood caught in Queensland but are not necessarily able to go fishing themselves. Their access to domestic seafood should also be considered as part of this issue. I believe that many of those people were among the 26,000 Queenslanders who signed the petition opposing this regulation tabled by the member for Nanango during the last sitting of parliament. We also cannot dismiss the impact it will have on seafood wholesalers and retailers and other downstream businesses.

Queensland fisheries are internationally recognised as being well managed. We do have bag limits. We do have size limits. We do have seasonal closures. We do have different coloured zones that regulate the take of seafood by recreational and commercial fishers. In addition to these, commercial fishers, including operators in the net fishery, must adhere to a large volume of additional regulations.

Labor's proposal will impact on the livelihoods of families across Queensland due to the nature of commercial fishing licences. The issue of displacement of effort as a result of these particular net-free zones has not been widely discussed or acknowledged. This will put more pressure on the fisheries elsewhere, increase competition for the resource elsewhere and create more conflict between commercial and recreational fishers elsewhere. But perhaps that is Labor's intent.

That is why the LNP has pointed out the lack of transparency around the implementation of Labor's policy—no science and a token consultation process. The Palaszczuk government now intends to further undermine this important Queensland industry which has suffered for years from state and federal government interventions, increased regulations and unfair competition from imported seafood.

The concerns of recreational and commercial fishers about fair and equitable access to the resource deserve to be heard. Commercial and recreational fishers who do the wrong thing should be dealt with firmly. But in the 21st century, in a well-managed fishery, should we not be able to find a balance?

The former LNP government was well advanced with a comprehensive review of the Fisheries Act aimed at delivering modern, flexible legislation to manage the fishery in Queensland. The big question is: can we in Queensland have a sensible conversation about this issue without one group attacking the other?

One thing I will concede to the Minister for Fisheries is that he has been very effective at driving a political wedge between two groups of Queenslanders—recreational and commercial fishers. The Minister for Fisheries has cynically worked to create division between commercial and recreational fishers rather than showing leadership and trying to resolve this conflict.

We need a more constructive discussion about this important issue. Banning and excluding in this instance strikes me as the thin end of the wedge. I ask all fishers in Queensland, whether they be recreational fishers or commercial fishers, to think long and hard about this issue and ask themselves: if Labor is prepared to ban and exclude this here, what and who will Labor ban and exclude next and where will they do it? That was the point that the member for Hervey Bay was making in his contribution—that, if recreational fishers in Queensland think that Labor and the Greens will stop at the commercial fishing industry and not come after them in the long run, they are kidding themselves. On that basis, I commend this disallowance motion to the House and call on all members to support it in the interests of giving Queensland commercial fishers a fair go and respecting the property rights of those Queenslanders.

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing) (9.20 pm), in reply: What we have seen here this evening in this debate is the LNP hoist by its own petard. I have sat and listened to virtually all of the speeches this evening and I have no idea what the LNP position is. One minute we hear that they support net-free zones; the next minute they do not and they are concerned about the propagation. We have members of the LNP asking for net-free zones to be considered for their areas. We have members running their own campaigns in their own electorates in advance of net-free zones.

The entire basis of this argument is presented in such a fashion that if the LNP were genuine in their views about supporting net-free zones, which is a position they stated here this evening—and it has been on the table since the election campaign—one would have thought they could have come across the table and said, 'Listen, Minister, we see merit in the basic principle, in the basic idea here. We are little concerned about how we are going to get there. We are happy to sit down with you in a bipartisan fashion and talk about the implementation of these net-free zones.' But, no, there has been none of that. From day one there has been opportunism from those opposite. They have not had the fortitude to stand up and say what they really feel, so what we have seen is this supercilious argument—this fence sitting—this evening.

The government, of course, opposes this disallowance motion. I can assure the House of this: I am looking forward to the next state campaign particularly by the member for Whitsunday and his colleagues—those candidates up and down the coast. I can imagine the corflutes now: 'Bring back the nets—vote 1 LNP.' That is what this disallowance motion means in effect. You are spearing this proposal based on a perception. Those opposite can be sure that we will be reminding every Queensland voter and every recreational fisher exactly where the LNP stands on this issue that so

many in this state care passionately about and have advocated for for decades. Lance Murray of the Mackay Recreational Fishers Alliance perfectly summarised the sentiments of the recreational fishing sector when he said of this disallowance motion—

This LNP action has cast a dark shadow over recreational fishing in Queensland and is akin to an act of terrorism. Failure to introduce commercial gillnet free zones will set us back 20 years or more.

In fact, there can be no other interpretation of the opposition's ludicrous posturing on this issue. If this disallowance motion succeeds, the issue will be speared for decades to come. It has been interesting to watch the opposition's manoeuvring and the use of double negative language: 'The LNP is not opposed to net-free zones.' Then why can't the LNP simply come out, as one member did this evening, and simply say, 'The LNP supports net-free zones'? I will tell you why. It does not suit their political purpose. They have been bound up in the wishy-washy language the LNP used during the 2015 election campaign. In essence, the LNP went to the election saying it supported the status quo—a 'do nothing and hope that it all goes away' approach. Real policy was effectively placed in the too-hard basket hidden behind pointless verbosity that translated to no meaningful action whatsoever. That is despite the fact that they had their own MRAG report exclusively in their possession leading up to the election which they refused to table or make public. That basically sums up the LNP's recreational fishing policy in 2015.

The core argument to support this disallowance motion put by the LNP—and wait for it but do not have some sort of fit—is that it is about process. The LNP are concerned about process. This new-found respect for what the LNP understands by 'appropriate process' is a revelation to me and, I would imagine, to most of the rest of Queensland. How can I forget the LNP's decency and integrity, the respect for this House and due process demonstrated so recently when they were in government? I wonder how the tens of thousands of public servants felt when they were shown the door after the assurance that they had been given during the election campaign that they had nothing to fear. At least we deliver what we say in election campaigns and not the exact the opposite. This new-found commitment by the LNP to consultation is ludicrous, demonstrated by three years in government. Ask Liz Cunningham what she thinks. She has experienced the LNP's respect for due process.

Let's park these crocodile tears from the LNP's moral abyss on this issue just for one minute. Three years of LNP government process failed to deliver their 2012 election commitment, and I will come back to that in a minute. Of course at any time since the last election the opposition could have asked for a briefing. They could have said they supported us. They could have said anything to work towards the outcome in an effective fashion. There were no secrets, especially now if so many of them apparently support these zones. The opposition chose not to do any of that, making a deliberate decision to stand on the sidelines and throw mud for pure political purposes. Many in my electorate have reminded me repeatedly that our commitment to introduce net-free zones was a critical factor in their decision to support me. Many people who have never voted Labor in their lives now support Labor based on this policy. It is a positive policy, developed in opposition with full cognisance of the position of all stakeholders in this argument. Nobody could accuse Labor of being ignorant of the sentiments held by the various interests within the sector. After all, this debate has been raging for decades. For example, of the 150 representations put to the MRAG review, the much vaunted MRAG review, held by the LNP prior to the last election, 118 of them raised this issue—79 per cent of the submissions to the MRAG review raised this issue.

My ministerial charter provided to me by the Premier was crystal clear: introduce three net-free zones as per our election commitment and subsequently ratified by both the federal LNP and Queensland governments in the reef 2050 plan. For the benefit of those opposite who are in denial, that is the same reef 2050 plan signed and endorsed with an 'absolute commitment' by the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment, Greg Hunt. My charter did not say to me, 'Okay, Bill, let's have a gander at this issue. See if we can maybe land something in the fullness of time, in the never-never'—in the way that the LNP approached the policy. It is ironic that the opposition suggest that the process has been rushed given that in the three years they were in power they spent \$9 million on the buyback of commercial licences and still entirely failed to deliver their 2012 election commitment. It has been put to me by many stakeholders, including commercial interests that I have met with, that the present extended government consultation process has been so long that it is has exacerbated stress levels.

There has been fulsome and detailed communication with all interested parties. The government has gone to extraordinary lengths to keep engaging and consulting to the maximum degree possible within the constraint, the ultimate limitation, that the net-free zones would be introduced. I congratulate the departmental officials for their tireless efforts in circumstances of increasing friction and misinformation. It is interesting to contrast the policies taken to the elections by other parties in this

debate. In 2012, the Katter's Australian Party policy was to introduce net-free zones adjacent to all communities along the Queensland coast. And, as I have just outlined, the Newman government, or the then Newman-led opposition, took nothing of substance to the 2015 election. Yet a number of LNP MPs, including the member for Whitsunday, actively advocated in favour of these zones as part of their election campaign.

The member for Whitsunday was out campaigning by expressing his support and assuring people that the zones would be introduced if the LNP were returned. It was not in any of their election commitments but apparently he was that influential. The member for Whitsunday has already quoted what he said some time ago in correspondence with MRAG—and I will put all of it on the record here. He said—

Long time recreational fishers along this stretch of coast have convinced myself that today's catches of various estuarine species are in stark contrast to what happened in the 1980s and 1990s and something needs to be done to ensure the sustainability of the species.

...

I strongly commend the Mackay Recreational Fishers Alliance on their proposal and as stated earlier, so long as the few remaining commercial operators who work in this area are given the opportunity to exit the industry with dignity, by way of appropriate compensation, then the net-free zone is something that should be embraced—

Mr Costigan interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister, one moment. Member for Whitsunday, the minister listened to you in silence. I would urge you to do the same.

Mr BYRNE: I will keep going because he did not talk about this and this is the best part. He also said—

Furthermore, I believe there is strong, local community support for the net-free zone, and, as a former resident of Seaforth, which is located along this stretch of coast, I know full well that residents, as well as tourists, are keen to see it approved by an LNP government.

I think the member for Whitsunday might be in a bit of trouble no matter which way this disallowance motion goes this evening. He won the seat by 200 votes and I would say that he will be gone at the next election. He did flag the issue of compensation, interestingly. He questioned the sustainability of species and confirmed that something needed to be done. For some reason he did not restate or, in truth, reflect on that view this evening. I wonder why.

As I alluded to earlier, it is interesting to reflect on the LNP's record on this issue. For the 2012 election, 'Safeguarding for our marine resources' was the title of the LNP election policy, and I assume it would have been produced by the shadow minister at the time. Who was that? It was the member for Cleveland. Despite the vitriol and hyperbole that we have had in the debate this evening, the member for Cleveland produced a 2012 policy that had some merit and substance, and I will remind the House what it said. The LNP promised a \$9 million voluntary buyback scheme targeting large mesh and gillnets—but here is the killer line of the policy—with specific focus on important recreational fishing locations and areas of high conservation value. That was their 2012 position. The 2012 LNP policy went on to state—

Importantly, the removal of these nets will deliver positive conversation outcomes for dugongs, turtles and inshore dolphins in the waters of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. It's time to change.

The sentiments were good. The implementation was woeful. It is a very typical LNP story. Since I have been the minister, much of my effort has been put towards sweeping up the LNP's failures from government and this is another one. The LNP spent \$9 million to minimal effect. That \$9 million came from the sale of DAF properties, by the way. The all-important special focus element, as I have highlighted, was completely forgotten. It was the bit that actually mattered and just fell off the back of the truck, and it was forgotten because the LNP government was incompetent and the minister was practically disengaged.

It is too bad that the member for Cleveland was overlooked in the Newman ministry, because I believe he would have kept faith with the community and honoured the election commitment. Despite the fact that he has a PhD in philosophy, he is probably the only person on the other side of the House who has a bachelor in marine biology. You would think someone with a bachelor in marine biology and a doctor of philosophy would understand what is necessary and his policy might have had some merit. I believe he understands the issue intimately. He understood then—and I suspect he understands it today—that the policy objective of the specific focus piece on important recreational fishing locations and areas of high conservation value was impossible to implement without regulatory action to close

those waters. I am in no way critical of the member for Cleveland and I do not seek to embarrass him further. I know that he will vote in accordance with his party position because that is the way of such things, but I bet on this issue he is with this side of the chamber wishing that elements of his 2012 policy were implemented.

I would like to contrast his actions, intention and the public position he has taken in the past months with those of the member for Nanango, who has travelled up and down the coast seeking opportunities to grab a headline and a photo, with these photo ops. They are so desperate to capitalise on the hysteria generated by a small number of operators that she has posed for newspapers holding trays of red reef fish, and I table one of those photos.

Tabled paper. Photograph, undated, of Ms Deb Frecklington MP and Mr Stephen Bennett MP inspecting fish [1396].

Unfortunately, none of those fish have anything to do with these net-free zones, but it is a good photo nevertheless and points to the fact that the shadow minister has no idea what fish she is talking about, and nor does the member for Burnett, the shadow environment minister. I have never heard the words 'climate change' pass his lips.

Compensation has been raised here repeatedly, and I want to conclude on this issue of compensation. Compensation provisions exist within the present act. They are extraordinarily generous. The provisions allow for an operator to claim up to the value of the last three years of taxable income by way of compensation payable as a result of government action. There is also the licence value or depreciation of the licence value as proven. This is an incredibly generous compensation package that exists in legislation—something that has not been mentioned. Many other regulated industries would love to have those provisions in the act. Nothing like this is available to any other sector. What has surprised me is the lack of inclination from those in the industry to avail themselves of this very generous legislated package. It appears most affected operators have crafted their businesses to minimise their tax. It is obvious that the declared taxable income of many operators is extremely modest.

Regardless, that fantastic compensation provision exists. The government's settlement scheme responds to this somewhat ironic situation and is quite separate from legislated compensated options. This evening I can reveal further adjustments to the scheme, informed by the compensation process, which provide an even more attractive set of choices. Following discussions with impacted commercial fishers in early September about the implementation plan for the net-free zones, I have decided that an additional scheme for those fishers who are most affected by the introduction of net-free zones is warranted. I expect the required regulations for this additional scheme will be considered by the governor-in-council before the end of this month and, if approved, eligible fishers will immediately be made an additional financial offer. If approved, this scheme will come from within the existing budget to be divided amongst those fishers who will be most affected by the introduction of the net-free zones. To be eligible for the new scheme, fishers must have accepted a payment under the existing settlement scheme, have net fished at least 60 days in the zones between 2012 and 2014 and must have fished at least 50 per cent of their total netting effort in the zones during that same period. The criteria will ensure that those fishers who rely on net fishing for a significant proportion of their income and who have relied on net fishing in the zones will have access to an additional payment. Based on commercial fishing logbook history records, I expect there will be between 26 and 30 fishers who will be eligible for this new scheme. Payments under the new scheme will be determined based on the number of net fishing days a fisher actually worked. Regardless of which zone the fisher operated in, they will not be treated differently under the new scheme as all eligible fishers will be treated equally.

As a guide, this means that for those eligible fishers who have worked in either the Mackay or the Capricorn Coast net-free zones their total payments from both the existing settlement scheme and this new scheme will be at least tripled compared to what they would have been offered under the settlement scheme alone. The total payment for those eligible fishers who have worked in the Cairns net-free zone will be slightly more than double what they have been offered under the current settlement scheme alone. The apparent difference between Cairns and the two other zones is an artefact of the fact that Cairns fishers are treated differently under the settlement scheme but not the new scheme. As an example, if a fisher based in Rockhampton is eligible for the new scheme and is also entitled to \$25,000 under the settlement scheme, they can expect to receive at least an additional \$50,000 from the new scheme, giving a Rockhampton fisher a total payment of \$75,000. Similarly, I can give examples for other areas.

Since there have been many comments about sustainability, it is my view and that of others that the science underpinning stock status reports requires considerable attention. Treating each species as one stock along the entire east coast is highly problematic. It does not allow fishing effort in given areas to be properly managed. It does not recognise the existence of regional non-mixing stocks of a

given species. It also deliberately ignores the targeting of spawning aggregations where stocks are declining. Put simply, the stock status reports have issues, and there are serious questions about the East Coast Inshore Finfish Fishery and whether it is a sustainable fishery. This is what the majority of people in these communities seek. I remind those opposite that 6,300 submissions were received by the government, with a formal recognised consultation process—

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. There were two hours of debate allowed for this disallowance and that finishes at 9.38 pm.

Mr SPEAKER: No. I made a ruling that it was 9.40 pm. I thought it was 9.40 that we were closing, and that is the clarification I was just given from the table. I call the minister for two minutes.

Mr BYRNE: I will move directly to the point I am trying to make here. As for the sustainability issue, yes, more science is required but I will say this: the government certainly opposes this disallowance motion. Yes, there is a science deficiency in much of the fishery management. That is admitted, that is acknowledged, but that is not a reason not to act. In fact, the precautionary principle should apply. If you do not have scientific evidence to undertake an action, the action should not be approved. I remember asking the previous national parks minister about the cardinal principle and he could not explain that so I never bothered asking him about the precautionary principle in terms of management decision-making.

The point is that this is good policy. It is well documented. The LNP's stance and refusal to engage the government, when three-quarters of the opposition apparently supports the policy in principle, stands as an indictment of the opposition's commitment.

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

AYES, 41:

LNP, 41—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Cripps, Davis, Dickson, Elmes, Emerson, Frecklington, Hart, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, McVeigh, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Perrett, Powell, Rickuss, Rowan, Seeney, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Walker, Watts, Weir.

NOES, 46:

ALP, 43—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Power, Pyne, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

INDEPENDENT, 1—Gordon.

Resolved in the negative.

MOTION

Order of Business

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (9.45 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That government business order of the day No. 2 be postponed.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

CRIMINAL LAW (DOMESTIC VIOLENCE) AMENDMENT BILL

CORONERS (DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE DEATH REVIEW AND ADVISORY BOARD) AMENDMENT BILL

Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill resumed from 15 September (see p. 1741) and Coroners (Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board) Amendment Bill resumed from 15 September (see p. 1742).

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (9.45 pm): I move—

That the bills be now read a second time.

On 15 September 2015, the Coroners (Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board) Amendment Bill 2015 and the Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill 2015 were introduced into the Queensland parliament. Parliament referred the bills to the Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee for consideration and requested the committee to report on its consideration of the bills by Friday, 9 October 2015. I note that the committee tabled its report on 9 October 2015. The government thanks the committee for its timely and detailed consideration of the bills. I now table a copy of the Queensland government's responses to both reports.

Tabled paper: Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee: Report No. 5, 55th Parliament—Coroners (Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board) Amendment Bill 2015, government response [1397].

Tabled paper: Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee: Report No. 6, 55th Parliament—Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill 2015, government response [1398].

Domestic and family violence is a scourge upon our community. It affects all parts of our society. Domestic violence cannot be accepted or excused. The responsibility rests with all of us to eradicate it from our community and give everyone the right to feel safe and protected. This government will do all it can to achieve the vision of a state free from domestic and family violence. The Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland, chaired by the Hon. Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO, was established on 10 September 2014. The role of that task force was to make recommendations to inform the development of a long-term vision and strategy to rid Queensland of this insidious form of violence. On 28 February this year, the task force released its report *Not now, not ever: putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland* containing 140 recommendations. The Queensland government released its response to the task force's report on 18 August this year, which accepts all 121 of the recommendations directed at government.

The bills before the House contain critical reforms to the justice system as part of the government's response to the recommendations made by the task force. They are practical measures which are informed by the findings of the task force and underpinned by this government's passionate commitment to create both systemic and cultural change in relation to domestic and family violence in this state. I thank the Premier for her ongoing leadership in this area and other ministers for their important work which continues every day. This government is determined to continue to raise awareness, to foster important cultural change and to deliver practical outcomes for those whose lives are so profoundly impacted by acts of violence by their loved ones.

I will deal first with the Coroners (Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board) Amendment Bill 2015. The committee made four recommendations about the bill and I will address each recommendation in turn. The committee's first recommendation—that the Coroners (Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board) Amendment Bill 2015 be passed—is welcomed. I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the strong support by many who made submissions to the committee and who participated in consultations on the bill for the board's establishment. I would like in particular to recognise the contributions of Ms Diane Mangan, Ms Di Macleod, Ms Betty Taylor and other members of the Domestic Violence Death Review Action Group who have campaigned tirelessly for an independent, expert based, death review board and who have been strong and passionate advocates in promoting the role such a board can play in preventing deaths due to domestic and family violence. I appreciate their input and feedback during the development of this bill and their early work in raising the profile of domestic and family violence related deaths.

Recommendation 2 is that the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services use the review of the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012 to draw on the knowledge and expertise of stakeholders to ensure that definitions are sufficiently clear and inclusive to capture the broad range of relationship contexts and circumstances in which domestic and family violence can occur. The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services is leading the review of the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012 to ensure a cohesive legislative framework for domestic and family violence in Queensland. This review was recommended by the task force and will focus on the issues identified by the task force. The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services will be undertaking consultation with stakeholders to inform this review.

Recommendation 3 is that the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, in conjunction with the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board, takes steps to ensure that the distinct but complementary functions of the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Unit and the board are clearly understood by the coroner, the board and the unit as well as by the courts, service providers, law enforcement agencies and stakeholders who work to prevent domestic and family violence. The unit and the board have quite different functions and roles. The unit sits within the Office of the State Coroner and is staffed by government employees of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General with specialist knowledge of domestic and family violence. The unit provides expert assistance to support the role of coroners in the coronial investigation of an individual domestic and family violence related death by ensuring information about the broader context of the death is gathered and examined.

The unit also maintains a database of domestic violence related deaths, including information about the perpetrators and victims. The unit assists the investigating coroner with those matters that proceed to inquest, identifies systemic shortcomings and preventive strategies. The role of the unit is to primarily assist the coroner in the investigation of individual deaths. In contrast, the board will consist of multidisciplinary experts and will be independent of the coronial process while drawing on the research and data capabilities of the unit.

An important function of the board will be to make recommendations to the minister for implementation by government and non-government entities to prevent or reduce the likelihood of those deaths into the future. The board may also supplement the information provided by the unit, for example, by commissioning its own expert reports. Once the board is established, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General through the unit will work with the board to ensure that appropriate and necessary operating arrangements and protocols are established, including written terms of reference for the board, to ensure the distinct roles of the unit and the board are clearly understood by all parties and by stakeholders and service providers.

Recommendation 4 is that the Attorney-General inform the Legislative Assembly during the second reading debate about how the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and the Domestic and Family Death Review and Advisory Board will ensure that the board's research and reports are made widely available and in an accessible format. Currently, coronial inquest findings are published on the Queensland courts' website and are publicly available and in an accessible PDF format. It is anticipated that the research and reports of the board, once tabled, will be presented in a similar manner through publication on the Department of Justice and Attorney-General's website or other suitable website. The Department of Justice and Attorney-General, through the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Unit, will work with the board once it is established to ensure its research and reports are distributed widely and promoted through relevant websites and networks such as through the Domestic Violence Prevention Council and its membership, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety and government agencies involved in the implementation of the *Not now, not ever* task force report.

The Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Unit will work with the board and stakeholders, once the board has been established, to ensure sufficient visibility and accessibility of the board's findings and reports. More broadly, the changes occurring as a result of the bill will be promoted to the public through a range of mediums including updates to the Department of Justice and Attorney-General's website, letters to key justice and community stakeholders and social media updates.

In conclusion, this bill provides a strong framework from which to effect real change and prevent future domestic and family violence deaths by delivering quickly on the government's commitment to implement these key priority recommendations of the special task force. I am pleased that the committee and the stakeholders who made submissions to the committee are overwhelmingly in support of the key components of the bill.

I turn now to the Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill 2015. This bill makes a number of amendments to increase perpetrator accountability and protections for victims further to recommendations of the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland. Specifically, the bill will increase penalties for breaches of domestic violence orders, provide for the signposting of criminal offences and convictions that occur in a domestic and family violence context and ensure that victims of domestic violence automatically fall within the definition of special witness under the Evidence Act 1977. The committee's first recommendation that the Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill 2015 be passed is welcome. Recommendation 2 is that if the bill passes, the

Department of Justice and Attorney-General monitors the use of the new maximum penalties for breaches of domestic violence orders and commissions research into their effectiveness as a deterrent to offenders committing domestic violence offences. The government acknowledges the concerns raised by the committee and some stakeholders that raising the maximum penalties will not in isolation address domestic and family violence in Queensland communities. As the committee has noted in its report, these amendments are part of a broader package of legislative and non-legislative reforms. For example, work is underway to review the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012 and to complete an audit of specialist domestic and family violence services across Queensland. There are also a range of other related initiatives that form part of the government's commitment to keeping our community safe, including a referral to the Queensland Law Reform Commission to investigate alternatives to incarceration, reinstatement of diversionary processes and creation of an independent crime statistics body. The amendments to increase maximum penalties for breaches of domestic violence orders in this bill do, however, send a clear message to offenders that this type of conduct will not be tolerated. It reflects community attitudes that domestic and family violence is unacceptable and strong penalties are required to condemn and deter this behaviour.

I am also pleased to be able to advise members that the government will issue a reference to the Sentencing Advisory Council, once reinstated in 2016, to consider the impact that the maximum penalties have had on the commission of domestic violence offences. The Queensland government has committed to reinstating the Sentencing Advisory Council. This important resource was lost when the council was abolished by the previous LNP government. The council was an important means by which Queenslanders' views could be heard by the government and informs policy development thereby strengthening public confidence in the criminal justice system. It will be through this new council that the recommendation of the committee will best be identified and actually implemented by allowing the Sentencing Advisory Council to monitor and report on the sentencing that is arising as a consequence of, hopefully, the passing of these bills through this parliament.

Recommendation 3 is that the Department of Justice and Attorney-General prioritises its audit of Queensland court facilities and, based on its audit, take steps to ensure that courts in Queensland can adequately accommodate domestic and family violence victims providing evidence as special witnesses, and their families. While I understand that the amendments in the bill with respect to the special witness provisions in the Evidence Act are welcomed, some concerns were raised with the committee about the availability of videoconferencing facilities across all Queensland courts.

The Queensland government has committed to a comprehensive audit of all Queensland court and tribunal facilities. This audit has recently commenced. The first phase will be an assessment of all existing facilities with a view to having an accurate baseline of exactly what is available in each courthouse location. This audit will incorporate all aspects of court technology, including the distribution of prerecording and videoconferencing equipment and facilities such as rooms allocated to support these technologies. The next phase of the audit is expected to involve the analysis of this information to identify precisely what facilities and equipment should be present at each courthouse given the case load and case type handled at each location. The department expects to complete the audit and provide a report to me by 30 June 2016. The audit findings will inform Queensland government priorities for investment in court facilities.

The final recommendation of the committee is that I clarify what protections are afforded to victims of domestic and family violence in court proceedings which do not involve the giving of evidence; for example, when applying for a domestic violence order. Ultimately how proceedings are conducted under the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Act is a matter for the courts. The Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012 allows a person to appear in person or be represented by a lawyer. Also a police officer or Police Service legal officer or authorised person—that is an adult authorised in writing by the aggrieved or an adult whom the court believes is authorised by the aggrieved even though it is not in writing—may appear and act for an aggrieved person in a proceeding. Accordingly, a victim of domestic violence will only be required to address the court if they are self-represented or are required to give evidence. Under the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Rules 2014, there is a specific provision in rule 22 allowing the court to direct that a party to the proceeding be allowed to appear and make submissions by telephone, video link or another form of communication.

The Department of Justice and Attorney-General can confirm that in practice technical facilities, including videoconferencing for protected witnesses, are utilised in domestic violence proceedings generally and are not limited to the giving of evidence. For victims and other protected witnesses, sections 150 and 151 of the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act contain safeguards for the giving of evidence such as by audiovisual link. There are also provisions in the Domestic and Family

Violence Protection Rules 2014 for the giving of evidence by affidavit. A number of Queensland courts also have physical facilities such as safe rooms—which I have witnessed myself at the Southport court—which may be available to minimise contact between a victim of domestic violence and the alleged perpetrator. The audit of Queensland courts will identify all of the court locations where such facilities are available. Other safety measures such as the use of security officers and security cameras are also available. Court staff are conscious of victims crossing paths with perpetrators and prioritise the safe passage and accommodation within court precincts of domestic and family violence victims on court days. An aggrieved can bring to the attention of court and registry staff any safety concerns while attending court or when leaving the court building.

Some legal stakeholders have also raised concerns with the committee about the power provided in the new section 12A of the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 inserted by the bill for a court to order that a previous offence for which the offender has been convicted be recorded on their criminal history as a domestic violence offence. I can advise members that this power is only enlivened once a person has been charged and convicted of a domestic violence offence after the amendments commence. Further, for a notation to be made in relation to past convictions an application must be made by the prosecution, and the court must be satisfied that the offence which the person has previously been convicted of did occur in a domestic and family violence context. While an offender may not have been aware at the time of the previous conviction that the particular offence may be noted to have occurred in a domestic and family violence context, a sentencing court can already have regard to a person's criminal history and must treat each previous conviction as an aggravating factor having regard to the nature of the previous conviction, its relevance to the current offence, the time that has elapsed since the conviction, and bearing in mind that the sentence imposed must not be disproportionate to the gravity of the offence in question.

The power of this provision to examine a person's past criminal convictions is its ability to flag to everyone looking at a criminal history that this is an individual with a history of domestic violence and to prompt them to make further inquiries so the issue can be properly considered. If the notation scheme only applies to convictions post commencement it will take many years before the benefits of the amendments will be realised, and I think this is a really important point. I do appreciate the views that have been raised by many parties in relation to this particular issue, but I do need to reinforce that this can occur right now. In putting forward an argument at sentencing, the prosecutor can bring to the court's attention previous offences and identify whether those offences are domestic violence related for the court to consider when weighing the sentence. This provision, if anything, seeks to ensure clarity around that provision and practice that exists now. Yes, the intention is to see that practice increase because we need to ensure that, if we are going to increase sentences, the court has all the information before it that it considers necessary when there is a history or a pattern of domestic violence in considering whether stronger penalties need to be imposed.

It is also the case that the benefit of a court considering such an application for a notation in relation to past convictions is not necessarily for the benefit of the magistrate at the time. The magistrate at the time will already be aware of it as a consequence of the application before it. This is about the next magistrate after that. That next magistrate and that prosecutor will not have to go back and have a look at all that history; it will be there and readily available. That is why it is so important that these applications can be made. It is not automatic; an application has to be made. The court has to be satisfied that those previous convictions relate to domestic and family violence. But if we do not allow that to happen, the next magistrate will not know and the magistrate after that will not know, and it could be years before we see the effect of these provisions. We have a responsibility not just to change the laws, but to make sure that the laws are working. That is why we are pursuing the amendments in the way that we are.

I again would like to thank the Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee for its consideration of these bills and acknowledge the very valuable contribution of all those who have made submissions on the bills and assisted the committee during its deliberations. I am pleased that the committee and the expert stakeholders are overwhelmingly in support of the key components of the bill.

I once again acknowledge all of those individuals who started this by coming forward during the task force to tell their tragic and heartbreaking stories. It was very difficult for those individuals to come forward, and I am sure many of them were concerned about their safety. We thank them for their bravery in coming forward to tell their stories so we could end up with such a comprehensive task force report. With the recommendations that we now have before us, we can move forward as a community, as a state, and start taking real action in relation to domestic and family violence.

Finally, I foreshadow that I will be seeking to make some minor and clarifying amendments to the Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill 2015 during consideration in detail. These amendments relate to clarifying matters in the scheme for noting offences as domestic violence offences and also facilitating a smooth implementation of the reforms. These amendments have been circulated in my name.

These bills represent the government's continued commitment to delivering on the recommendations of the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland. Learning from domestic and family violence deaths and improving the accountability of perpetrators takes us one step further along the road to a Queensland free from domestic and family violence. I commend the bills to the House.

 **Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (10.10 pm): These two bills, as the Attorney has said, do a number of things. The coroners bill establishes the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board to review at a systemic level domestic and family violence related deaths. The Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill increases the maximum penalty for breaches of domestic violence orders under the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012, task force recommendation 121; enables charges from criminal offences to indicate whether they occurred in a domestic violence context and provides for convictions for domestic violence offences to be noted on a person's criminal history, task force recommendation 119; and amends the Evidence Act 1977 to provide that protections for special witnesses may apply to victims of domestic violence, task force recommendation 133.

The opposition's position in respect of these bills is to support them, in line with our bipartisan approach to implementing the recommendations of *Not now, not ever*. However, we do oppose the retrospective nature of the penalty provisions. The Attorney has dealt with that. That is clause 18 of the Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill. I will speak to that shortly.

The LNP government is proud to have initiated the special task force, chaired by Dame Quentin Bryce, which produced the *Not now, not ever* report. We have given our full bipartisan support to the Queensland government's response to the 140 recommendations. The only way that we as a community are going to be successful in tackling the scourge of domestic violence is by working together across all levels of government, all states and all communities. We are also working hard to find other ways to improve the safety of people at risk of domestic violence through preventative measures. That is why the shadow minister for communities, Tracy Davis, has initiated a consultation process into a proposed scheme modelled on the United Kingdom's Clare's Law, which allows access to vital information about someone's violent past and crimes.

So how did this all happen? In September 2014 the former LNP government established a special task force, chaired by former governor-general Dame Quentin Bryce, to undertake a comprehensive and coordinated review on domestic and family violence. The focus of the special task force was to reduce and prevent domestic and family violence and to ensure that there is timely and appropriate support for victims.

What triggered this, in the minds of the former government, was that in 2013 there were 64,246 reported incidents of domestic violence in Queensland, up from 57,963 in 2012. There were 12,828 breaches of domestic violence orders, up from 10,997 in 2012. Last year, 18 of the 49 homicides committed in Queensland were related to domestic violence. This equates to over 180 incidents of domestic and family violence being reported in Queensland each and every day. In 2012-13 there were 17 homicides reported as relating to domestic and family violence. The annual cost of domestic and family violence to the Queensland economy is estimated to be between \$2.7 billion and \$3.2 billion.

At the end of February 2015 the special task force provided its report, with 140 recommendations. In August 2015 the government agreed to implement all 121 recommendations that are directed at government. The bills before the House have been fast-tracked by the government in response to the several recent high-profile acts of domestic and family violence in South-East Queensland.

Let us look first at the coroners amendment bill. This bill establishes an independent Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board to identify common systemic failures, gaps or issues and make recommendations to improve systems, practices and procedures. It will report to the oversight body every six months on these findings and recommendations, and it will be supported by and draw upon the information and resources of the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Unit.

The bill provides for the board's membership, and that can be up to 12 members including government and non-government entity representatives with specialist experience, qualifications and expertise required. They are appointed by the Attorney-General for up to three years. The advisory board will be chaired by either the State Coroner or Deputy State Coroner and must include at least one member who is an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

I note that some submitters, including the Bar Association and the Queensland Law Society, have a concern with the potential conflict of interest having the Coroner or deputy as chair of the advisory board. I understand that the committee has addressed their concern with its recommendation that the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, in conjunction with the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board, takes steps to ensure that the distinct but complementary functions of the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Unit and the board are clearly understood by the Coroner, the DR unit and board, as well as by the courts, service providers, law enforcement agencies and stakeholders who work to prevent domestic and family violence. The Attorney has turned her mind to that and has addressed us on that matter this evening.

In terms of reporting and publicly available information, the bill requires the advisory board to report to the minister annually and otherwise at the board's discretion. Again, the committee had a comment about that and a recommendation, and the Attorney-General has once again referred to that this evening.

In terms of consultation, the explanatory notes refer to the extensive consultation undertaken by the special task force in preparing its report. However, many of the recommendations in the *Not now, not ever* report are high level and they lack the detail contained in their implementation, such as with these bills. For example, the report recommends that the Queensland government considers the sufficiency of penalties to hold perpetrators to account for repeat contraventions of DVOs, yet the bills before the House detail how the government will respond to that recommendation with specific detail. In that context we note the comments from the Queensland Law Society about consultation. However, that needs to be juxtaposed with the government's intention to address an escalation of high-profile incidents of domestic violence in recent weeks.

There were several good points raised by submitters to the bill worthy of consideration in the context of the government's response to the full recommendations of the *Not now, not ever* report. These include the composition of the advisory board, the interaction between family violence and the role of the education sector, protocols between state and federal agencies on sharing information, the ability of the board to obtain information through the court system and enhancing the reporting and accountability of reporting similar to that of coronial recommendations.

In relation to the comments made by some submitters about the potential conflict in terms of the Coroner's role as chair of the advisory board, we note the comments from the department that—

... if the State Coroner was appointed as chair of the board, the State Coroner could not hear DV related matters. That is a way the conflict could be handled. This is a matter that the judiciary deal with every day. They are equipped, by the very nature of their role, to deal with conflict, and they are independent and able to do that with great sophistication.

We also appreciate that the advisory board in relation to previous or current coronial investigations will be applicable. There are strict provisions around the disclosure of confidential information by members of the advisory board. That is obviously important. The annual reporting obligations are in line with other similar annual reporting obligations of government agencies.

I turn now to the Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill 2015, which deals with implementing criminal law reform components of the government's response, specifically enabling charges for criminal offences to indicate whether they occurred in a domestic violence context and providing for domestic violence offences to be noted on a person's criminal history; increasing the maximum penalty for breaches of domestic violence orders under the relevant act; and providing that existing protections for special witnesses apply to victims of domestic violence.

At this point I draw to the attention of the House the statement of reservation from the deputy chair of the committee, the member for Caloundra, in relation to the retrospective nature of the penalty provisions contained in this bill, and I thank and appreciate the Attorney's explanation of her position in relation to this matter. I think that it is a matter on which people can differ and it is a matter of balance, but the opposition comes down on the other side of the coin. We do note the concerns raised by key legal stakeholders in relation to this issue and we do not support the retrospective nature of the provisions. The Queensland Law Society specifically raised points whereby unintended consequences

could exist as a result of these provisions—namely, that elements of the new offence may not have been explored at the time, for example if someone pleads guilty to an offence knowing the terms of that offence at the time of their plea. As Mr Budden raised in the public hearing—

For example, if it is an assault occasioning bodily harm from two years previously, the question of whether or not it occurred inside a domestic relationship may not have been explored. The two parties involved in the offence may have a different view as to whether or not that did occur in a domestic relationship. It will be too late at the later offence for that to be explored given that what has likely happened in those circumstances is a plea of guilty has been made on an agreed statement of facts and a very brief statement of facts, probably through a QP9 or something of that nature.

The danger we see is that you have pleaded guilty to an offence which can be turned into a different offence or a greater offence and the elements of all of that have not been addressed in the initial phase. However, if you move forward from this point—if any offence could be reclassified after this bill comes through—then you are well and truly aware and your legal advisers can say, ‘Are you in a relationship with this person, because this may be something that comes down the track and we need to explore this now?’ whereas that opportunity is denied with an offence that happened two or three years ago.

The Queensland Law Society and the Bar Association recommend that the provisions apply going forward and are not retrospective. We would support that amendment. We support the ability for someone to have a conviction classified as being a domestic violence offence and being recorded on their criminal record. However, the issue of reclassifying an offence is of significant concern to the opposition and for that reason we cannot support clause 18 of the bill. We support the special witness protection for domestic violence victims because the bill gives victims the certainty in understanding how a court process will work and what they may need to do as part of a court process, and that includes the possibility—a daunting one—of facing the perpetrator. Like the Coroner’s amendment, there were similar recommendations worthy of consideration as part of the committee’s deliberations on these issues, including a proposal for a Clare’s Law protocol similar to that introduced in the UK recently—something that the LNP has floated previously as a policy proposal and something about which the shadow minister for communities, child safety and disability services, the member for Aspley, will have more to say during the debate.

Finally, I want to thank a number of people. I join the Attorney in thanking those who gave their time and courage in providing evidence to the task force. That was obviously essential if we were to get to a significant understanding of the issues involved. I thank the Attorney-General herself and her staff for a briefing prior to the introduction of the bill and also pass on the opposition’s thanks to the officers from DPC, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and the department of communities who were involved in a briefing last week for the member for Aspley.

 **Ms DONALDSON** (Bundaberg—ALP) (10.23 pm): I rise to speak in this debate as the chair of the Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee. Firstly, I want to thank the members of the committee—the deputy chair and member for Caloundra, the member for Pine Rivers, the member for Redlands, the member for Cairns and the member for Warrego—for their hard work and their genuine interest in these bills and protecting Queensland women from domestic violence. I also want to thank the hardworking secretariat, staff from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services and all stakeholders who participated by providing submissions and appearing in public hearings.

As the committee reached agreement on the two bills being debated here tonight, the Coroners (Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board) Amendment Bill 2015 and the Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill 2015, I will only discuss the issues that there was most discussion about—namely, the expansion of special witness status for victims of domestic violence, meaning they will no longer have to put in an application to be considered as a special witness and they will receive all of the protections afforded to a special witness in court proceedings, and the commencement of a Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board, which will provide information on systemic trends, gaps and issues on domestic violence related deaths in Queensland. The board will provide functions that are not undertaken by the Domestic Violence Death Review Unit currently operating in the Office of the State Coroner which only looks at individual deaths. The board will be an independent body and supported by the unit. I also reiterate the shadow Attorney’s comments about judicial officers being able to differentiate between and recognise a conflict of interest with the issue of the Coroner being the chair.

However, the matter that created the most discussion and dissection by stakeholders and opposition committee members was the amendment for which a past conviction being named a domestic violence offence could potentially raise the prospect of the new higher mandatory sentence being imposed than would have otherwise been given. This is a very important point as there were differing views from stakeholders who made submissions to the committee, and understandably there

should be clarity regarding this issue so that all Queenslanders are aware of this and the potential outcomes for them should they commit any further domestic violence offences or breach domestic violence orders. One of the points that is worthy of discussion is that if a previous conviction is being taken into consideration the previous offence will not be changed; it will be the circumstances of the previous offending that will also be taken into consideration. For example, an assault conviction will still be an assault conviction. However, if the offence occurred in the context of a domestic violence incident, then there will be a notation made on the person's criminal history that the assault occurred during a domestic violence incident. Furthermore, an application to consider a person's previous convictions must include enough information for a court to consider that application. The prosecution must make an application to the court for this to occur and the defence will also be able to make a submission to the court if they have a differing view.

As stated within one of the submissions, the notation on a person's criminal history is not in itself contentious; it is when it is taken into consideration in deciding whether to impose a higher sentence that the contention emerges, and there are safeguards in place to ensure the appropriateness of the application of this. As I mentioned previously, the retrospectivity of this clause is also an issue raised by the opposition. Those opposite have a view that the mandatory nature of the new penalties lends itself to the consideration of convictions only occurring after enactment of the new provisions. If that was to occur, we would be waiting until the end of 2018 for the new provisions to come into effect. If this was to occur, there would be no change to the penalties for offenders who breach domestic violence orders until close to Christmas in three years time. That is a long time. Queensland victims of domestic violence cannot wait three years for government amendments to come into effect. What message would this send to victims or to perpetrators? That we are not serious about tackling domestic violence? I think both sides of the House are and we cannot wait a further three years. We need to act and Queenslanders have stated loud and clear that they want the government to act and act decisively. That is why I commend both of these bills to the House.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (10.28 pm): I rise to speak to these very important bills. I would like to thank the committee staff for their assistance with the inquiry and the professionalism in which they have undertaken this task in a short time frame. I would also like to thank my fellow committee members.

The number of deaths occurring in the context of domestic and family violence is increasing and this issue will be difficult to address in terms of the pressures on families, the behaviours of perpetrators and the attitudes in the community and it will be hard to identify the appropriate intervention and prevention mechanisms. The bills that are before the parliament are as a result of the recommendations of the report of the special task force on domestic violence, *Not now, not ever—putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland*. The special task force on domestic violence was initiated by the LNP government whilst in government. I commend the LNP government for its resolve to take this positive and directional change in this area. This task force has also set a vision for the direction of Queensland for strategies and mechanisms to stop the violence. It is now the responsibility of the current state government to find the best way to implement the recommendations of the report and to address the issues raised in the recommendations.

It is not as easy as it may seem. It is the opposition's role to ask questions of the government about the implementation and also to suggest if there are better ways to find good outcomes. Just because the opposition asks questions or raises an issue does not mean that it opposes the intent of what the legislation seeks to achieve. However, it means that the opposition has considered the legislation in detail and listened carefully to what others have had to say about how the legislation may work in practice and the evidence basis that is driving the legislation. I would also like to thank those individuals and organisations for their efforts in making submissions and those who appeared as witnesses at the hearings conducted by the committee.

The task force report was critical of the lack of a comprehensive death review structure to review the system as a whole and identify the failures or gaps that may contribute to family and domestic violence. The task force suggested a Queensland Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Board, supported by the current Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Unit. Submissions to the committee outlined concerns in relation to the appointment of the State Coroner or the Deputy State Coroner as a chairperson of the board. The relationship between the board and the Office of the State Coroner may from time to time give rise to conflicts of interest. The committee has noted that it would therefore be then appropriate for there to be the establishment of appropriate mechanisms and procedures to deal with any conflicts of interest to ensure the integrity of the board's review activities.

I believe that it is also important to look at what other states have been doing in this area, and they have had a board or similar for a number of years. In 2010, New South Wales established a Domestic Violence Death Review Team. In 2009, Victoria established the Victorian Systemic Review of Family Violence Deaths. In 2008, New Zealand established the Family Violence Death Review Committee. In 2008, the United Kingdom established the domestic homicide review. After looking at other jurisdictions and countries that have been doing this work for some years, it now appears that Queensland is catching up in this space.

The bill defines the term 'domestic and family violence'. Submissions to the committee raised concerns about whether the definition covered a child being killed as an act of domestic violence. The committee sought clarification and has been assured that the bill was sufficiently broad to include the death of a child where there is a history of domestic violence between the child's parents or caregivers. However, there is still a question over whether the definition is sufficient to cover an unborn child. Perhaps the Attorney-General might provide some more advice on this matter during the debate.

During the hearing the Women's Legal Service was able to inform the committee about how important it was for legal representation for women in domestic violence circumstances and how critical that is. Ms Angela Lynch from the Women's Legal Service said—

... the earlier women can get that legal advice the better. It is really quite an important component in relation to safety planning for women. If they can get legal advice early, they can get the safety component which is how to physically get out of the house.

I am disappointed to learn that the state government is closing the only non-Indigenous domestic violence service, the Roma Community Legal Service, after 29 years of service to 320 postcodes and some 700,000 square kilometres of Queensland. I fear that women and families in regional Queensland, who are faced with domestic and violent situations, will not be able to get the early legal advice that is important for their safety. It takes a long time to build service credibility in regional areas and it is even harder to keep confidentiality, especially with domestic and family violence incidents. The Roma Community Legal Service had that credibility and confidentiality. This week in the House there was a reference to a new provider to provide this service. I think the House should be aware that the president of this new provider is, in fact, a former ALP candidate for the seat of Toowoomba South. It is disappointing that we may have another jobs-for-the-boys situation.

In relation to the Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill, concerns were raised about the retrospective nature and the penalty provisions contained in this bill. The Queensland Law Society in its submission and at the public hearing on 30 September and also the Bar Association of Queensland in its submission raised issues with the committee. Officers from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General confirmed that the bill allows for a former conviction to be retrospectively changed to a domestic violence conviction.

During the hearing, Dr Silke Meyer, the Women's Legal Service, BoysTown and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service questioned the effectiveness of increasing existing maximum penalties as a deterrent without evidence that the current maximum penalties are being used and exhausted. At the public hearing, Dr Meyer stated—

... New South Wales has similar maximum penalties for their domestic violence breaches. Last year they released a report on 3,500 cases they reviewed which clearly show that those maximum penalties are never exhausted ... the average custodial sentence handed out for breaches is four months.

The Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence also suggested that research be conducted comparing sentences for breaches of domestic violence orders before and after the proposed amendments. Dr Meyer and ATSILS considered that funding to create and enforce higher penalties may be better invested in rehabilitation and intervention programs and addressing the underlying causes of domestic and family violence, such as excessive alcohol consumption, housing, education and health. These are all valid and constructive suggestions that I would urge the government to give some consideration to, either now or in the future. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Miss BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (10.36 pm): I rise to make a contribution to this cognate debate of the Coroners (Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board) Amendment Bill 2015 and the Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill 2015. These bills will reform the law and justice system response to domestic and family violence, with a focus on improving the experience of victims and making victims safer in addition to increasing perpetrator accountability.

Firstly, the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board is a key element of the government's broader commitment to improve the current system responses. The review process for domestic and family violence related deaths was a specific area of focus of the *Not now, not ever* task force to build a greater understanding of factors that may increase a person's risk of being killed

and reducing the likelihood of future deaths. The task force heard that over the past eight years nearly half of all homicides in Queensland had been linked to domestic and family violence. That is 187 deaths that occurred in the context of domestic and family violence—187 deaths too many. The *Not now, not ever* task force identified a systemic failing and this bill goes to the heart of addressing that—making sure that it is an independent board of government and non-government representatives established to identify common systemic failures, gaps and issues and make recommendations to improve systems, practices and procedures. This board will be made up of a multidisciplinary expert team charged to identify effective strategies to prevent and reduce domestic and family violence deaths now and into the future. It is not just cases into the future that this board will be able to review. Cases such as the recent DV deaths of Tara Brown and Karina Lock will also be reviewed to identify systemic failings and make recommendations to improve responses.

The reforms contained in the Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill enable notations to be made for criminal offences to indicate that they have occurred in a domestic and family violence context, thereby remaining on a perpetrator's criminal history. Importantly, this bill will also ensure that the protections for special witnesses would extend to all victims of domestic violence. Finally, the bill will increase the maximum penalty for breaches of domestic violence orders.

We are a government that will take decisive action on domestic violence. These measures increase the accountability of perpetrators while increasing protections for the community and victims of domestic and family abuse. Currently in Queensland, convictions for criminal offences that have been committed in the context of domestic and family violence are recorded like any other crime, not recognising the specific nature of abuse. As it was explained to the committee, a common assault committed by a husband against a wife will only ever be recorded as a common assault on charge sheets, on an indictment if indicted, and in the offender's criminal history.

The fact that the offending occurred in a domestic violence context is not obvious in the recording of the offence. Should the offender subsequently appear before the court on another criminal offence which occurs in a domestic and family violence context, the prosecutor and court are unlikely to be aware of the context of the offender's previous offending. These measures ensure that the court and police and relevant agencies can identify an ongoing pattern of domestic and family violence.

Further, this bill outlines provisions for special witness status. We know that it is traumatic for victims to repeatedly retell their stories. When criminal charges are laid police report that there is often difficulty in pursuing the prosecution. More often than not it is due to the reluctance of the victim as a result of the fear of continuing with the criminal prosecution. Special witness provisions would entitle victims to give evidence from another room, give evidence via a videotaped recording and the ability for another person to be present in the court to provide emotional support while a witness gives evidence.

This bill increases penalties in an effort to hold perpetrators to account in the instance of repeat contraventions of domestic violence orders. Specifically, the bill will increase maximum penalties from two to three years imprisonment for breach of domestic violence orders. The maximum penalty for subsequent breaches will also increase from three years to five years imprisonment. These measures send a message loud and clear that domestic and family violence is not acceptable and perpetrators will be held to account for the use of such violence. These measures are a start but not the end of the legislative and community reform to be conducted around attitudes and behaviours relating to domestic and family violence. Much of this reform is around our education and our attitudes. There is no denying the insidious nature of domestic and family violence. No-one is immune to its toxic reach. That is why the Palaszczuk government is committed to the implementation of the *Not now, not ever* report in full. That is why we have prioritised tackling this community issue head on. In doing so we need to provide protections like the special witness status to a victim. We need to ensure that when they make the brave decision to come forward they do not have to relive the trauma that goes with the abuse. That is why, when perpetrators are found guilty of offences, they should be recorded as a crime of a domestic violence nature. That is why when perpetrators re-offend harsher penalties should apply and accountability for previous instances should be taken into consideration. And that is why a Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board is required to ensure that we are taking the learnings out of the systemic issues with domestic and family violence and identifying effective strategies to prevent and reduce domestic and family violence deaths now and into the future.

I understand that this is not the full suite of reforms that some in our community have been crying out for, but let me just say that this is the beginning of our reforms and measures, not the end. There is much work to do and I am certainly proud to be part of a government that is taking such strong and decisive action in this arena. I commend the cognate bills to the House.

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (10.42 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the debate here tonight. I want to start by commending former premier Campbell Newman, who actually put in train the task force that led to the report *Not now, not ever*. The premier was somebody who believed passionately that domestic violence was a major issue in this state and it needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency. He drove the issue himself and made certain that the government of the day put Dame Quentin Bryce in charge of a bipartisan task force which came up with a very good report in some four and a half months. It was some seven months post the report being tabled that the bills now before the House actually hit the House and it has taken a further one month to debate them here.

The issue of domestic violence is one that has been canvassed on many occasions by many people in this chamber and we all agree that the issue is of paramount importance to the people not only of this state but, in fact, of the whole nation. Can I make the point, however, that repeatedly people refer to domestic violence as being violence against women. That is absolutely correct, but it is not exclusively against women. Domestic violence does not have a gender basis. The report itself, on page 73, outlines very clearly that there are some 4,000 plus males who have a domestic violence order in their favour. So I say to everybody in the House, do not be consumed by domestic violence being a woman-centric act. It cuts across all genders.

If I can quickly take the chamber to the bills, the first one I will talk to is the Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill 2015 and I refer to recommendation 4. The Attorney-General mentioned section 150 of the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act in relation to protected witnesses. I will outline to the Attorney the concerns that I have in regard to that particular section. Assume it is the first appearance in a Magistrates Court of an aggrieved and a respondent. The aggrieved will stand or sit at the Bar Table, which is about as long as from where the Leader of the House sits to where the education minister sits. At the far end will be the aggrieved. Next to that person will be either a legal practitioner or a police officer. There is then a gap, then the respondent. If we accept that domestic violence is a reason to cause fear, that person being in the courtroom at the first mention date where no evidence is given causes fear. Section 150 only relates to when a person is giving evidence—that is, at the final hearing. On the first occasion that occurs. On that occasion the matter will then be adjourned for the aggrieved to obtain legal advice. They then come back to the court and the same scenario exists. Being in the same room can be intimidating for an aggrieved, male or female. Recommendation 4 deals with how we protect an aggrieved woman or male in that environment. At the final trial what happens is that the aggrieved in a civil trial stays in the courtroom. To give evidence they can leave the courtroom and go into a room to transmit evidence, but throughout the day they stay in the courtroom. That is intimidating. How do we protect an aggrieved in those circumstances? I heard the Attorney make the comment that there are applications made under the act to have evidence given by video. The information I have been given is that that is not correct, that it is occurring in certain circumstances, and the reason is this: these courts act on a volume basis. Even during a trial day a magistrate will have four or five trials listed before them. Two or three of those may be domestic violence matters. The hierarchy is that criminal matters will go first followed by the domestic violence matters. There is simply not the capacity in the courts across this state to cater for the volume of trials going through and the facilities do not exist in the volume as indicated by the Attorney's advisers.

The second point I want to raise is this: there is, in relation to the Coroners (Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board) Amendment Bill 2015, some debate about the independent appointment of the Coroner or Deputy Coroner to be the chair of the advisory board. Under clause 91X of the bill there is a provision for the conflict of interest to be resolved in that if a person has a conflict of interest they cannot sit on a board at any time. The issue about judges coping every day with conflict in these circumstances is quite wrong. The bill itself actually deals with the conflict of interest question. Can I make the point that there is no judge who sits on a trial in any jurisdiction and then sits on a body that reviews his trial, which is what the board and the Coroner are doing. The board reviews a death; the Coroner also reviews a death. The Coroner would never sit on a board that reviews his own determination. Neither does any judicial officer. It is a nonsense. Quite clearly, the bill provides a resolution of that conflict. Many more bills on this matter will pass through the House and we will debate the issue further. This is a good start, but there is a lot of hard work to do yet.

I wish to make two final points. We have to put in place provisions that prevent domestic violence. We have to put in place provisions that assist people to respect one another. We have to put in place provisions to ensure that we do not get to the point of needing a DV act or a magistrates court. Secondly, we need to start understanding and take action for the children who, from a very early age, garner and learn what it means to be a male or a female from viewing their parents either as a victim or a perpetrator. We need to start understanding how we can stop that from occurring. We need to

understand that little minds can be twisted because of what they see their parents do within the four walls within which they live. If we start tackling those issues in addition to the consequences, then we will start to have an answer to the many problems that plague our society. I commend both bills to the House.

 **Mr WILLIAMS** (Pumicestone—ALP) (10.51 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill 2015 and the Coroners (Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board) Amendment Bill 2015. The amendment bills are well overdue and fit firmly with the *Not now, not ever* report adopted by the Palaszczuk government. The matter of domestic violence is very close to my heart. I wish to share my experience.

In 1985, my second oldest sister, June, was murdered by strangulation in a domestic violence incident. My sister met her husband when she was only 16 years old. They subsequently married. She entered a path of personal control and alienation from our family, which resulted in family contact only once a year and sometimes even less. The marriage produced two wonderful children. However, my sister was subject to manipulation and control in many ways. For example, the weekly shopping was done by her husband who insisted on buying cans of baked beans and spaghetti and bread, which is what the family lived on. My sister's husband's father, seeing this continue, would buy steak and bring it to the family. Quite often, the steak was thrown into the yard for the dog to eat, because the husband could not accept it and felt that he was being belittled.

The years rolled by and, although we could see what was happening, we did not want to interfere because we did not want to cause arguments. Sadly, we did nothing. We never challenged the situation. Eventually, June bravely stood up to him, took the kids and left. She wanted a divorce. On the fateful morning, my sister's estranged husband asked her to come and see him as he would sign the divorce papers. She had requested that many times. She disappeared that day. On the day my sister disappeared, the estranged husband shot himself, but not before he shot his father, I assume because of the belittling that he had felt over the family food.

My sister could not be found. In the knowledge that her estranged husband had killed himself and his father, I put ads in the *Courier-Mail* from Tuesday through to Friday, hoping that my sister was hiding out somewhere. That was not to be the case. On Friday night at about 6 pm, I received a phone call from the Beenleigh police. They asked me to come down immediately. On arrival, they informed me that they had found a person they believed to be my sister. The *Courier-Mail* had the story all ready and was running it on Saturday morning, which was why they needed immediate identification. The coroner who attended explained to me that my sister had been hidden in a tuckerbox freezer for a week and was frozen, so could not be removed. They asked me to identify her in the freezer, which I did.

I welcome the bills now before the parliament. I support many domestic violence support groups in my area. I have witnessed domestic violence committed against both men and women. Neither is acceptable. With domestic violence, the forms of abuse are multifaceted. Sometimes we do not see blackened eyes, so we assume that there is no domestic violence happening.

In my electorate of Pumicestone in the past 12 months, two domestic violence deaths have occurred. Violence is never the answer; early intervention is—nipping it in the bud before it gets out of hand. My sister and her husband both had professional government jobs. They were just the people next door. You would never have thought that there was domestic violence there. I learned later that my sister had approached government and non-government agencies and churches, but there was no detailed coroner's report to tell us these things or enable us to lobby government for change. These amendment bills will ensure efficiency within government agencies and non-government entities. The independent DFVDRA board will sit under the State Coroner. The commitment of \$2.067 billion will go a long way to assist in direct early intervention mechanisms and the allocation of resources.

In the early stages, financial counselling and anger management counselling may be all that is required to keep a family unit strong and healthy. This is what the government's amendment bills will do for Queenslanders. I support these amendments.

Debate, on motion of Mr Williams, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.57 pm): I move—
That the House do now adjourn.

Warrego Electorate, Anniversary Celebrations

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (10.57 pm): There have been some important celebrations and anniversaries in my electorate. I have been delighted to join school communities for the celebration of 130-, 100- and 50-year anniversaries and also the Roma Rotary Club for its 75th anniversary.

I was able to visit the Bollon State School at the opening of the time capsule, which was sealed at the previous 100-year anniversary. The capsule's contents had been underwater three times, but on the day emerged unscathed. I would like to congratulate the Bollon P&C members, Principal Vanessa Summer and staff member Tiki North, as well as the locals who travelled back to Bollon for the day to celebrate the school's milestone.

I joined Meandarra State School for its M100 celebrations. Celebrating 100 years of education in Meandarra is a great achievement, given that some years ago a fire burnt the administration block and damaged other buildings. Many valuable records and resources were lost. I thank Linda Brimblecome and the Meandarra State School P&C M100 Centenary Committee for organising the events over the weekend. I say well done to Kathryn McDonald for the compilation of the history of the school.

Seventy-five years ago the Roma Rotary Club was chartered. On 19 September 2015 the club held a celebration dinner. It was an outstanding occasion. Over the years the club has been instrumental in a long list of local and international community projects, activities and events.

The region has been a huge beneficiary of the local help and selfless service of Roma Rotarians like Bob Pack, Paul Anderson, Bryan Payne, Greg Gibson, Andrew Harvey, Greg Shaw, Noel Dillon, Russell Grulke, Bruce Garvie, Ron Pollock, Baden Waldron, Barry McCabe, Des Dore, Bill Sheehan and many other members over the past 75 years. I apologise to them for not having enough time to name them all tonight. I must also include their wives, partners and children who are frequent helpers of the Roma club. I thank the Rotary members and their supporters for their efforts as they truly have been a gift locally and worldwide.

Without a fire or a flood in their history the Dunkeld State School celebrated their 50-year milestone recently. I congratulate Joy Foott and her team for the organisation of the day. Local orator Kent Morris wrote a poem about the Dunkeld jubilee. I would like to share with members the last parts of the poem. It reads—

That a bush bred education
Is the best that there can be
I for one would wish her
A Happy Jubilee

Ipswich Jets Rugby League Club

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (11.00 pm): Tonight I am proud to speak in celebration of the mighty Ipswich Jets Rugby League Club. This is a club that has produced players of the calibre of Allan Langer, Kevin Walters and Kerrod Walters. But up until 2015 its only trophy was a colts grand final win in 1990. That all changed in the last few weeks after titanic battles by Jets teams at Tapout Energy Stadium Coorparoo, Suncorp Stadium and, finally, ANZ Stadium in Sydney on NRL Grand Final day.

They proved they are a champion club. The result was the 2015 Brisbane Rugby League Chairman's Trophy, the BRL Premiership, the Intrust Super Cup Premiership and the NRL State Championship. Four trophies in less than a month as well as the keys to the city from the Ipswich City Council is not a bad effort for a small provincial Rugby League club.

The Jets BRL team that won at Tapout Energy Stadium included: full back, Jordan Tighe; wingers, Ben White and Pat McCallum; centres, Jackson Tynan and Cory Randell; five-eighth, Haydan Lipp; halfback, Chris Ash; front row, Sam Capewell and David Tahavalu; hooker, Peter Whittaker; second row, Mathew Brown and Mitchell Tuite; lock, Mitch Koina; interchange, Isimeeli Hafoka, Fine Faingaa, Tu'u Maori, Barry Blackman and Nathan Gaulton.

The Intrust Super Cup Ipswich Jets team that won at Suncorp Stadium and ANZ Stadium included: full back, Carlin Anderson; wingers, Marmin Barba and Richard Pandia; centres, Liam Capewell and Nemani Valekapa; five-eighth, Josh Cleeland; halfback, Dane Phillips; front rowers, Josh Seage and Rod Griffin; hooker, Matt Parcell; second row, Sam Martin and Kurt Capewell; lock and inspirational captain, Keiron Lander; interchange, Landon Hayes, Kurtis Lingwoodock, Billy McConnachie, Fakahoko Teutau, Haydan Lipp, Chris Walker, Brandon McGrady and Wes Conlon.

When Ben and Shane Walker took over the Jets head coaching positions in 2011 the club had finished last the previous year. The club could not afford to pay top dollar for former NRL stars or current Intrust Super Cup quality players so they made a decision to focus on players from Ipswich, PNG and Western Queensland. Ben and Shane worked out that because the Jets did not have the manpower to compete against the more wealthy clubs, they would have to come up with a strategy to win games. The strategy they developed involved holding on to the ball for longer than the opposition and wearing down their defence. The key was to have a very fit side that moves the ball from side to side and targeting tiring opposition players. Most six tackle sets take around 50 seconds, but with the Jets they can last more than 80 seconds. Short kick-offs were also important to this strategy.

Congratulations to the players for their successes in 2015. They are all fine ambassadors for our city of Ipswich and a great group of men.

Member for Pumicestone

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (11.03 pm): This evening I will start by referring to a number of headlines and media articles over the last couple of months. In a regional weekly newspaper on 5 June there was the headline 'MP denies allegations' and the article stated, 'Serious allegations against another first time Labor MP have again jeopardised the Palaszczuk government's precarious hold on power'. On 10 June in the *Courier-Mail* there was the headline "'I'll sack him if he has lied": Premier stands by her man, for now' and the article stated, 'Rogue MP will be sacked from the Labor Party if he has been dishonest, Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk said.' 'New MP under fire' was the headline in another regional newspaper on 10 June 2015 and the article stated, 'A Labor MP under police investigation has been stood down from the Queensland government's Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.' In the *Courier-Mail* on 29 June there was the headline 'MP faces intense police scrutiny' and the article stated, 'Police are probing an MP's alleged activities before his election to the state parliament this year.' 'MP has to go' was the headline in the *Courier-Mail* on 10 August.

Members would be mistaken for thinking I was referring to the member for Cook. Well, I am not. Amidst all the focus on the member for Cook and his dishonourable behaviour, let us not forget that there is another new member of parliament who is an embarrassment to his electorate. I am of course referring to the member for Pumicestone, Rick Williams. I say again that his electorate view him as an embarrassment. His electorate are furious at Anastacia Palaszczuk and the ALP for foisting him upon them. His electorate want him gone and want him gone now.

The LNP recently had a shadow cabinet meeting in the electorate of Pumicestone—on Bribie Island and at Sandstone Point. One thing all shadow ministers reported was the number of Pumicestone constituents who came up to them expressing their disappointment, their frustration, their loathing, their embarrassment and their anger over their current member. They are not alone.

There are two types of community organisations in the electorate of Pumicestone. There are those who refuse to invite the member for Pumicestone to their events and there are those who invite him and wish they had not. Even his colleagues, especially the members for Morayfield and Murrumba, are sick and tired of covering up for him. Ministers simply will not let him deputise for them.

In any other industry, in any company, like the member for Cook, the member for Pumicestone would be out on his ear looking for another job. There are members in this House on both sides of this chamber who work incredibly hard for their electorate and for the state of Queensland. The member for Pumicestone, like the member for Cook, does not. He is only interested in himself and the people of Pumicestone have had enough.

Thuringowa Electorate, Rugby League

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (11.07 pm): Let us talk about something positive to end the day. I have spoken this week about the great achievement of the North Queensland Cowboys. It is going to take five men to get this tie off me. It would be remiss of me not to give credit and acknowledge the outstanding efforts of some grand finalists, namely a couple of junior Rugby League teams in Thuringowa. We have some great junior Rugby League teams in Thuringowa, both the Kirwan State School under 12s team and the Kirwan State High School Bears team. They won their respective seasons and both played in grand finals in September.

Kirwan State School played Banksia State School in the Queensland under 12s state final on Sunday, 27 September at Suncorp Stadium. Coached by acting principal, John Kratzmann, and assistant coach, Jared Savage, co-captains Matthew Schulz and Harley Taylor led out the proud team.

The team was: Tyler Broyce, Ashtyn Lott, Luke Bolton, Jack Murdoch, Braiden Driscoll, Jaidyn Wilkins, Wesley Turner, Kai Tanna, Aiden Dotta, Callum McConkey, Shane Thompson, EJ Ober, Jahmai Mabo, William Snell and Logan Quirke.

Unfortunately they were not to be the winners on the day. The member for Pumicestone will explain why shortly. My congratulations go to the entire team, coach and, importantly, the parents for their combined and outstanding efforts in winning all of those lead-in games and getting them down to Brisbane for the final. I think there are some future Cowboys in that team.

The Kirwan State High School Kirwan Bears team were the other team that also travelled extensively to play in their grand final match. They played the Patrician Brothers in Sydney on 18 September. Coached by Dave Ackers and three assistant coaches, led by captain Bradley Cross, I would like to acknowledge the following team members: Marshall Hudson, AJ Willis, Enari Tuala, Richard Munchow, George Moananu, Julien Christian, Kaleb Fiumaono, Calum Gahan, Bradyn Dee, Nathen Barrett, Sione Veukiso, Duarne Dempsey, Sam Martin-Savage, Jayden Stephens, Jack Althaus, Brendan Skinner, Josh Williams, Isaiah Conway, Joseph Munro, Jamie Savage, Jermaine Gillin, PJ Zaro and Ryan Carter.

The Bears prevailed and won the day. I have seen the schoolboys trophy—it is huge! I think amongst all of those names we definitely have some future NRL players. Kirwan High has produced champions in the past like Sam Thaiday and Jason Taumalolo for the Cowboys, just to name a few. Congratulations to the Kirwan Bears, coaching staff and again the parents who I know put in a big effort in getting their team on the field. They continue to produce national champions both on and off the field, and I congratulate them.

Burleigh Electorate, M1

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (11.10 pm): I rise tonight to bring to the attention of the House an issue on the southern Gold Coast that needs urgent attention, and that is the M1. From the Mudgeeraba flood plain to the start of the Tugun bypass the M1 is four lanes. It is six lanes up to the Mudgeeraba interchange, but it needs to be six lanes all the way down to the Tugun bypass. Last Friday I joined with the member for Currumbin, and we stood on the side of the road and we talked about the issues down there. We watched the traffic and we talked to the media about the issues of the banking up of traffic. Members from the other side who are not from the Gold Coast—and there are not too many of them from the Gold Coast; in fact, none of them are from the Gold Coast because we are all LNP members on the Gold Coast, and that is the way it should be. Members on the Gold Coast know that there is a real issue down there and we have been trying to do something about it for quite a while.

What I would like to know from the minister—and I am glad to see the minister is in the chamber here tonight—is what has been done about getting six lanes from the Mudgeeraba flood plain down to the border. The government has put in place a quango that is in charge of projects above \$100 million. I know for a fact that the next stage of the M1 is over \$250 million, so I would anticipate that the business case for the continuation of the M1 right down to the Tugun bypass has been referred to that quango, and I hope that the minister can tell us that that is in fact the case.

Mr Bailey: Talk to Malcolm Turnbull and get him to stump up some money.

Mr HART: I am glad you brought that up, Minister, because last Sunday I had the opportunity to talk to the new Prime Minister, along with the member for Mudgeeraba, and that is exactly what we spoke to him about. What he told us was that he has not seen a business case from the Queensland government yet. He has not seen a business case yet for this very important piece of infrastructure on the southern Gold Coast. The Labor government has been in place now for seven or eight months. Why haven't we seen a business case? Has the business case been referred to your Building Queensland, or whatever it is called—the new quango that you have put in place? Has it been referred there? What is the minister doing about it?

(Time expired)

Banksia Beach State School, Rugby League

 **Mr WILLIAMS** (Pumicestone—ALP) (11.13 pm): On Sunday, 27 September 2015, I had the pleasure of attending Suncorp Stadium to watch the NRL Development Cup played between Banksia Beach State School from Bribie Island in Pumicestone and Kirwan State School from Thuringowa. There were distinct similarities between this game played by my team from South-East Queensland and the recent NRL grand final. My team wore maroon jerseys like the Broncos. The Kirwan team from Thuringowa wore jerseys fashioned after the Cowboys. Both games went down to the wire. With two minutes to go one try could have delivered a win either way.

I am happy to say that that is where the similarities end. The Banksia Beach State School Rugby League team were triumphant. The atmosphere was enhanced with sounds from the multi-award winning Banksia Beach State School big band, who had travelled down in the middle of their school holidays to support their Rugby League team. They played after each try was scored.

Some of the Banksia Beach players had not played the game before this season, and the quality of their play was such that the Brisbane Broncos talent scouts have now signed some of those players for the future. It would be remiss of me not to mention that the Banksia Beach State School has won the regional AFL grand final and their big band has won many state awards against high schools, yet this is only a primary school. I will leave that for another time.

This win only came on the back of the dedicated efforts of the principal, Jacqui King, and the coaching staff—Wayne McInerney, Michael Blackmore and Rob Barraud. Mal Hogan of First Avenue Tyre and Mechanical on Bribie selflessly out of his own pocket purchased the jerseys that the boys wore.

I must also mention that later that day my colleagues from Ipswich saw their team the Jets take on the Newcastle team and win. In all the games that were played in those grand finals, Queensland was the winner. The Palaszczuk government supports our youth and our schools. They are our future.

Battle of Britain; Sir Winston Churchill

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (11.16 pm): It has often been said that history turns on critical moments. This year marks two important historical milestones. It is 75 years since the Battle of Britain and 50 years since the passing of one of the 20th century's greatest leaders, Sir Winston Churchill. I make no secret of the fact that Churchill is undoubtedly the public figure I admire most. His contribution to our way of life endures to this day, as there was a period of time in 1940 when the fate of the Western World and all the ideals that we hold so dearly, such as freedom of speech, robust democracies with free elections, freedom of the press, freedom of association and free enterprise, rested upon his shoulders.

One of the pivotal days in modern history occurred on 28 May 1940, when the British War Cabinet had to make a defining decision. Should Britain fight on or make a pact and appeasement deal with Nazi Germany? The geostrategic consideration confronting the British War Cabinet had to be put in context. Britain was alone. The United States at that point had not entered the war and would not do so until that other fateful day at Pearl Harbour. The Russians had signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. Britain was indeed alone and the only bastion of a free Western democracy in Europe—the only light of freedom. The war cabinet had been meeting around the clock for three days. Finally, Churchill played his masterstroke and summoned his full cabinet of 25 ministers and gave one of his most important speeches, and I quote—

And I am convinced that every one of you would rise up and tear me down from my place if I were to contemplate parley or surrender. If this long island story of ours is to end at last, let it end only when each one of us lies choking in his own blood upon the ground.

So Britain stood alone during that summer of 1940 and eventually won the Battle of Britain, again with one of Churchill's famous quotes summing up like no other when he said—

Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.

The advance of Nazi tyranny was halted and ever so slowly, with the introduction of the United States and Russian troops, they stemmed the tide of war.

Sir Winston Churchill, like every human being before him and after him, was far from perfect. However, during the darkest moment of the modern Western World, during a global conflict that tragically claimed approximately 60 million lives, he rallied and led people like no other before or since. I abhor war like every other member of this chamber and like any rational person, but there are times when oppression and tyranny need to be confronted. The European summer of 1940 was one of those pivotal moments in time. When many were seeking appeasement, one man's courage and determination was to define history. Sir Winston Churchill was buried 50 years ago in January this year, but his contribution to humanity will live forever.

Ipswich Jets Rugby League Club

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (11.19 pm): I rise to speak about the Queensland Rugby League state champions, the Ipswich Jets, who last week were presented with the keys to the City of Ipswich, an honour well deserved for this talented and tenacious team of Rugby League players. So impressive

were the team's achievements this season that the *Queensland Times* has dubbed 2015 the 'Year of the Jets'. The Jets not only won the September Intrust Super Cup grand final over the Townsville Blackhawks, which netted them their first state premiership after 33 years of striving, but also went on to defeat the Newcastle Knights at the NRL state championship grand final the following week in Sydney. It was a remarkable feat of dedication and sportsmanship, and they have delighted Ipswich Rugby League fans beyond measure.

We know about the contribution the Ipswich Jets make on field. As the member for Ipswich, I would like to place on record the contribution the Jets extend to the Ipswich community off field—firstly, their work with the ALARA association, which provides support and respite services for people with disabilities in the Ipswich region. I commend the Jets for their inspiring work to help people with a disability get involved in the game through their ALARA Jets touch football team. The ALARA Jets work to improve player self-esteem, fitness, social connections, independence and quality of life as well as allowing them to be part of a team focused on their abilities and just have fun. They are hoping to establish a competition and have put the call out to encourage other football clubs or organisations to start a similar team in their local community.

The Ipswich Jets have assisted local schools, charities and community service organisations including Ipswich Hospice, the Queensland Cancer Council, the Leukaemia Foundation, the Royal Flying Doctor Service and Ipswich Special School. The Jets have led the way when it comes to raising awareness of domestic violence in our community. As part of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, our local DVAC service runs the annual Walk a Mile in her Shoes event. The Jets participate in this event each year and display a prowess that is perhaps not as well known, which is their ability to walk a considerable distance in high heels.

The Jets developed a reconciliation action plan approved by Reconciliation Australia in 2012. I congratulate the Jets, their CEO and former member of this House, Wayne Wendt, Steven Johnson, coaches Ben and Shane Walker, and everyone who has worked so hard to ensure this remarkable victory for our Ipswich Jets and for our city.

Country Racing

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (11.22 pm): I wish to talk about the funding model for country racing and the financial difficulties that face the racing industry. I have been informed that once all revenue streams have been taken into account the actual operating loss of Racing Queensland is some \$11 million, and of that thoroughbred racing accounts for a meagre \$4 million. It is imperative that the \$7 million loss which harness racing is responsible for is recouped from within that sector of the community. It would be grossly unfair to make thoroughbred racing participants foot the bill for the mismanagement of parties outside of their influence.

To fully appreciate what \$4 million represents within Racing Queensland, it is important to note that the prize money for the 2015 Stradbroke Handicap was \$2 million, the Magic Millions race day on the Gold Coast is set to receive \$35 million over the next seven years from Racing Queensland, and renovations to the Eagle Farm racetrack have come at a cost of \$22 million. If Racing Queensland wound back the generosity of some racing entities in South-East Queensland at the expense of country racing, it would go a long way to returning the thoroughbred racing sector of the industry back into the black.

At present, country racing participants have to pay \$173 in starters' fees while competing for only \$4,500 of winning prize money. In comparison, their city counterparts pay only \$225 when their first placed prize money is \$45,000. There is a definite disparity which is highly evident. Country races are a completely different animal from those in metropolitan areas. I think a perfect illustration of that disparity is that in South-East Queensland the Magic Millions race day carries \$10.2 million in prize money which is the amount it costs to fund all of country racing in Queensland for a whole year.

To look for savings in these losses from country racing in Queensland would impact very heavily on a social event that per head of population is much better supported in country areas than it is in city areas. It means a lot more to people in a country area to have those things exist. They are running on a shoestring budget. I have many friends who are trainers, jockeys and owners of horses in western areas, and a lot of them are just doing it for love. If they have to bear the brunt of these losses and are made to carry some of this burden, there is a serious risk of collapse of this industry in the west which is on wobbly wheels as it is at the moment. A lot of these communities will be hit very hard, and we can ill afford to lose such an important part of our social infrastructure at this time.

Friends of Rugby League

 **Miss BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (11.25 pm): It is my pleasure to rise as the final speaker in this adjournment debate to make the final government contribution in an adjournment that has been themed with the great game of NRL. One of my roles in this place which I hold with great pride is the parliamentary co-chair of the Friends of Rugby League. This group serves to connect MPs and their local clubs with the National Rugby League and Queensland Rugby League. Across Queensland there are 399 clubs—juniors and seniors—equating to hundreds of thousands of girls and boys and men and women who engage each season in our wonderful game. There are hundreds and thousands of families from the cape to the bush and the country to the coast.

One of the personal highlights of mine this season was joining the member for Capalaba and the member for Cleveland at Stradbroke Island. On Quandamooka country we watched the Wynnum Manly Seagulls take on the Souths Logan Magpies as part of the reconciliation rounds in the season. At this round I got to see firsthand the great work being done by Deadly Choices through the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health. I would like to recognise Adrian and the Deadly Choices team for their work, particularly in healthy choices and health promotion. I would like to acknowledge the Palaszczuk government, particularly health minister Cameron Dick, on the investment made in this essential program.

It was a pleasure for me to join Adrian in my local success story of the Strathpine clinic mid-season to help launch the Deadly Choices onesie for young bubs. For me this is what Rugby League is all about—community. Right across the state we have seen a tremendous display of footy this season. The mighty Queensland Maroons once again did us proud in returning home the State of Origin shield. True to form and much to the member for Mirani's dismay, the Maroons ensured that Queenslanders have a dominating record. The showdown at Lang Park on 8 July was my personal highlight, with a cracking 52-6 score line.

The Intrust Super Cup's Ipswich Jets saw real talent and footy strategy at its greatest. If you thought the Blackhawks and Jets game was a cracker, the following week against Newcastle the Jets showed the country what they were really made of. Tonight the ever-proud member for Ipswich West and member for Ipswich have shed some light on the Jets' strategy for success. I congratulate the Jets on a sterling season. They lifted the game week after week and set the bar high. Four trophies in less than a month and the keys to the City of Ipswich—what an accomplishment.

The season was not all highlights; there was also sadness. Sunshine Coast Falcons prop James Ackerman passed away aged 25 after an on-field incident while playing the North Devils in June this year. The tributes and testimonials that followed highlighted to the world the character of the father of two. Respect, courage and the best of attitudes were repeated comments from the Sunshine Coast and football community as they mourned the loss of James. There have been many players whom we have seen end their careers this season, and we thank them. We also thank the NRL for its support this season.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.28 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Bailey, Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Crawford, Cripps, D'Ath, Davis, de Brenni, Dick, Dickson, Donaldson, Elmes, Emerson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gilbert, Gordon, Grace, Harper, Hart, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Katter, Kelly, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Lauga, Leahy, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, McVeigh, Miles, Millar, Miller, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Power, Pyne, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Seene, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Trad, Walker, Watts, Weir, Wellington, Whiting, Williams