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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT

Thursday, 29 October 2015

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THURSDAY, 29 OCTOBER 2015



The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Minister



Mr SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (9.31 am): I submit that deliberately misquoting the record of the House is the most blatant way to deliberately mislead the House and that is what the member for South Brisbane did yesterday. The day before, in the debate I said—and *Hansard* quite correctly records—

I said, 'No. We are not going to put out a wish list like every Labor government before us has done. We will put out an infrastructure plan that is funded, that has a funding source,' and that is what we did.

The member for South Brisbane sought to deliberately misquote the record of the House yesterday. I believe that is a blatant attempt to mislead the House and the member for South Brisbane should be referred to the Ethics Committee.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Callide, would you like to write to me about your matter of privilege.

PRIVILEGE

Referral to Ethics Committee



Mr SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (9.31 am): I rise on a further matter of privilege. Mr Speaker, on Tuesday afternoon you made a statement to the House where you said—

... I refer to the matter of privilege upon which the member for Callide rose this morning ...

Later in the statement you said—

Firstly, I require no further information from the member for Callide to refer this apparent breach of the privileges of two committees ...

Yesterday, Mr Speaker, you referred me to the Ethics Committee on the basis that—

I have still not received any supporting information or evidence for those allegations from the member for Callide.

Mr Speaker, I submit that your rulings at best appear contradictory and at worst bizarre and are deserving of an explanation to me as a member and to the House in general.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Callide. I do not intend to debate the matter in the House at the moment. If you want to have a discussion with me in my chamber, I am happy to talk to you about it.

Those two statements are factually correct. If you want to have a discussion, I am happy to have a discussion. If you want to move a motion in relation to my rulings, you are invited to do so. Do you have any further points of order?

Mr SEENEY: I rise on a further matter of privilege. Mr Speaker, I have no intention, either today or at any other time, of conducting the business of this House privately in your office. The business of this House needs to be conducted on the floor of the House, so that the people we represent can judge the—

Mr SPEAKER: Order, member for Callide! Member for Callide, this is not an opportunity for a debate on this matter. You know the standing orders. I leave it in your hands. If you want to move a motion, you are invited to do so. If you want to have a discussion with me, you are invited to do so. I will not pursue a debate over this matter in this forum. I invite you to write to me about the other matters that you have referred to.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Electricity Prices

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.34 am): All of us in this House should be aware that cost-of-living pressures are a constant challenge for Queensland families and businesses. Central to those challenges is the monthly or quarterly electricity bill. As I travelled the state during the last term of parliament, there were very few meetings or conversations that I had with Queenslanders where skyrocketing electricity bills were not mentioned. When you have price increases of 43 per cent, such as we had under the former LNP government, that is to be expected. However, what made it worse was the threat that our energy providers would be sold off to the private sector, taking the control of those businesses away from the government and placing it into the hands of those whose No. 1 goal was to protect profits and not consumers.

Today my government will demonstrate to Queenslanders why they got it right when they elected the Palaszczuk Labor government at the last election and saved their energy assets from sale. In the last hour, the Australian Energy Regulator released its final five-year revenue determination for Energex and Ergon. These determinations are a good result for Queensland. These determinations mean that network prices are now forecast to decline over the next five-year period. While this determination does not include generation or retail costs, it will have a significant stabilising impact on electricity bills.

As we know, Energex and Ergon have a right to appeal this determination in line with their revised submissions to the draft determination brought down in April. However, this morning I can announce that my government, as the owner of those businesses on behalf of the people of Queensland, will direct Energex and Ergon to lock in those better outcomes and not appeal the AER decision. No more appeals; no more lawyers. We will direct our energy companies to abide by the umpire's decision and Queenslanders will benefit.

No-one in this process wants to see the safety and welfare of employees and the robustness and reliability of our electricity system put at risk. We believe this decision safeguards our network and sets a stable path for power prices. This will have a big impact on easing price pressures on power bills. No longer should families face bill shocks every year and businesses will have greater certainty when it comes to their running costs. Already this financial year we have seen electricity prices for the average residential customer decline on average by half a per cent.

We took to the election a very clear plan: we would not do what those opposite wanted to do, which was to sell off our electricity assets. Keeping our electricity assets in public hands means the public receives the dividends and we can subsidise the bills of regional Queenslanders without those funds going into the coffers of private shareholders. It also means that we are able to intervene on the side of Queensland consumers when it is appropriate and that is what we will do.

Today this government will lock in those better outcomes for Queensland consumers. We have listened to Queenslanders. Today, we have backed Queenslanders on electricity. We stand on the side of Queensland families and we always will.

Medicinal Cannabis

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.37 am): It is critical that as a government we do everything we can to investigate the benefits or otherwise of any medication that will help Queenslanders suffering chronic disease. In that regard, it is imperative we have the discussion around whether Queenslanders suffering disease could benefit from medicinal cannabis and cannabis products. This was an important issue raised and discussed by first ministers at COAG earlier this year and today my health minister will announce that Queensland is following through.

Firstly, I can announce that Queensland will begin a medicinal cannabis trial in 2016 at Lady Cilento Children's Hospital for children with severe treatment-resistant epilepsy. We will commit \$3 million to this trial which will help determine the suitability of medicinal cannabis as a treatment.

We are listening to Queenslanders, particularly the families of children with severe forms of epilepsy who have exhausted all other forms of treatment. We are committed to the trial because we do not want Queensland families to miss the opportunities this trial may offer for children who are currently suffering.

Domestic and Family Violence

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.39 am): Last Thursday week the Brisbane community came together in a moving and timely stand against domestic and family violence. I, along with many other members of this House, attended this rally to show the community that my government is serious about tackling this issue.

It was encouraging to witness this show of strength and to see the Brisbane community and both sides of the House come together to say that enough is enough. On behalf of the organisers I have been asked to read a statement into the record of the parliament. It reads—

The organisers of the Red Rose Rally held on 15th October 2015 wish to acknowledge the Premier, Opposition Leader Lawrence Springborg, Speaker Peter Wellington and all Members of Parliament who attended and otherwise supported this event.

Queensland parliament's leadership in standing up and making a public statement will go a long way in turning the tide against domestic and family violence. Betty Taylor, on behalf of the organising committee.

The tragic events of recent months have appalled everyone. It is clear that we must continue to demonstrate our commitment to support victims and hold perpetrators to account. At the last sitting of this parliament, with bipartisan support, we passed both the Criminal Law (Domestic and Family Violence) Amendment Bill 2015 and the Coroners (Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board) Amendment Bill 2015.

I would like to express my thanks to the Leader of the Opposition for his continued support for Queensland's reform program on domestic and family violence. The new criminal laws include delivering harsher penalties for perpetrators, providing for domestic and family violence convictions to be recorded on a perpetrator's criminal history and providing special witness protection in court for victims.

We also know that changing attitudes is key to tackling DV. We must teach children about respectful relationships and build awareness about these issues in the wider community. That is why Quentin Bryce and I will co-host a White Ribbon Day breakfast on Wednesday, 25 November at the Sofitel. It will include a panel discussion on taking action to prevent violence, including Darren Lockyer, psychologist Edward Mosby and Southport domestic violence magistrate Colin Strofield. Much like the recent rally, we are hoping for a large attendance—a reflection of the growing community mood for change. I urge as many members of this House as possible to attend this event so that together we can continue to raise awareness.

Clare, Solar Farm

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade) (9.42 am): We made a commitment to grow the renewable energy sector in Queensland, and I am pleased to announce that we are doing just that with my approval of one of the country's largest solar farms at Clare in the Burdekin shire. My decision to approve this \$400 million infrastructure project has been made after seeking advice from the Burdekin Shire Council, energy providers and other key state agencies. Around 200 construction jobs will be created at the solar farm, to be located south-west of Ayr, as well as up to five permanent ongoing jobs.

This project has the potential to create enough renewable energy to power around 65,000 homes. This puts us on track to reach our 50 per cent renewable energy target by 2030, and follows on from last week's release of the draft wind farm code for public consultation. It will also help meet the service demand projections contained in the State Infrastructure Plan, which predicts energy demand in regional Queensland will grow from 74.71 gigawatts per week today to 95.93 gigawatts per week in 2036.

Burdekin mayor, Bill Lewis, whom I spoke with yesterday, agrees with the Palaszczuk government's decision, saying—

These are exciting times for our region and our Council team is working hard to ensure this, and other proposals, are handled in an efficient manner, our Council is all for growing the Burdekin and diversification is one way to ensure a sustainable economy.

This government understands the need to move away from high carbon-emitting energy generation and transition to a brighter future through providing safe, reliable and affordable renewable energy. We also made a commitment to listen to Queenslanders and give all interested parties the chance to have their say—and that is what I have done since first issuing the proposed call-in notice and reassessing the application.

The solar farm, to be developed by global company FRV, Fotowatio Renewable Ventures, will see 238 hectares of photovoltaic panels on 340 hectares of privately held land. To protect the agricultural value of the land, the approval is limited to a 30-year period. The conditions also require that upon decommissioning of the solar farm the site will have to be rehabilitated as far as practical to its predevelopment condition. I have notified all stakeholders, including the applicant, the Burdekin Shire Council and submitters, of my decision to approve the development.

This is a landmark decision of the Palaszczuk Labor government. It is one that will provide jobs for Queenslanders and deliver on our commitment to grow the renewable energy sector in Queensland. This is a decision that will continue to grow Queensland's reputation as Australia's solar energy leader.

Industrial Relations, Award Modernisation

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (9.45 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to restoring fairness for workers that was stripped away by the LNP. Under Campbell Newman's award modernisation process, employees in councils were prevented from bargaining for some of the most important workplace conditions, such as job security and the right to be consulted.

Since forming government, we have worked very hard to restore fair conditions to local government workers with our industrial relations legislative changes. We know that these local government workers are hard workers, are often the backbone of communities—particularly in rural and regional areas—and some of the lowest paid workers. It is important we have conditions in place for those workers.

Unlike the LNP, that was determined to take away hard-won workplace conditions, we have been focused on ensuring that local government workers have a fair and decent safety net that rewards them for the valuable work they do. In June we made urgent and necessary amendments to the Industrial Relations Act which reversed the shameful changes made under the LNP government.

Our changes ensured fundamental rights and entitlements can be included in awards and bargained for in agreements. For those awards that had been modernised under the former government's restrictive regime, which included the Queensland Local Government Industry Award, the changes to the act require the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission to review and vary those awards.

In July I issued a new ministerial request to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission making it clear that the award modernisation process was not to reduce or remove employee entitlements and conditions from what was available in premodernised awards. I will repeat that: the award modernisation process was not to reduce or remove employee entitlements and conditions from what was available in premodernised awards. I gave specific directions about this for the allowances and conditions for local government employees and that the QIRC must consider the submissions of the parties—that is, the local governments, the Queensland Local Government Association and the local government unions.

This government has done everything within its power and taken all available avenues to ensure that no local government worker is worse off under an award because they have had conditions removed or reduced. Of course, we on this side of the House, unlike the former LNP government, also value the independence of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. The tribunal is an important independent umpire which enhances a Westminster government.

The review of the award is a matter for the local government sector, including the LGAQ and unions, and the QIRC. However, I assure all local government workers that the award to be handed down by the QIRC will be closely scrutinised to ensure that workers are not worse off. As I have indicated to the unions—and I say this to all local workers in Queensland—if the requirements of my ministerial request have not been satisfied, the government will immediately take steps to address this, including appealing the award through the appropriate channels.

Electricity Prices

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (9.48 am): Today the Australian Energy Regulator released its final five-year revenue determinations for Energex and Ergon which will determine electricity prices in Queensland. This final determination confirms price stabilisation for Queensland electricity consumers.

As a result, network prices, the key driver of the painful 43 per cent Newman government electricity price surges, will actually decline until 2020 in real terms. This will result in stable electricity prices in Queensland over the next few years.

The Newman years of painful electricity price surges are over—enough is enough. We have already seen 2015-16 electricity prices decline this financial year on average by half a per cent for a typical Queensland customer, as confirmed by St Vincent de Paul recently. When these determinations were handed down to networks around the country, we have all seen the privatised networks in Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales appeal the decisions. Queenslanders made it clear on 31 January that they wanted their power assets kept in public hands. The government wants to see Queenslanders benefit from those publicly owned assets.

As outlined by the Premier earlier, to ensure Queensland electricity customers are able to obtain the benefit of stable electricity prices over the next five years, the government has taken the decision to direct the network businesses not to appeal specific elements relating to the weighted average cost of capital and gamma of the AER's final revenue determinations.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BAILEY: The opposition clearly do not support our decision to direct the businesses, and that is a very sad outcome.

This morning I spoke with the chairs of both boards to inform them of the government's decision. They both understood and accepted the government's decision to direct them to not appeal. The government considers that the regulator's decision in relation to the weighted average cost of capital is balanced in that it provides the network businesses with a reasonable rate of return on their assets as well as providing stable electricity prices over the next five years for customers.

While the government acknowledges that the network businesses will need to make adjustments to reflect the lower weighted average cost of capital, it is confident that the network businesses will work with customers to deliver innovative solutions and continue to deliver efficient energy services. The regulator's decision to reduce Energex and Ergon's revenues will require them to continue to make further efficiency improvements. The Queensland government remains resolutely committed to no forced redundancies, and we will consult and work with the representatives of our workforce—the unions. Therefore, any adjustments in staff numbers will be achieved through voluntary redundancies and natural attrition. This decision to lock in better electricity price outcomes for Queenslanders shows the Palaszczuk government understands the pain many Queenslanders experience at bill time and we are locking in the gains by the umpire over coming years.

Medicinal Cannabis

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.52 am): The extent to which medicinal cannabis and cannabis products can be beneficial to treat a range of debilitating conditions suffered by thousands of Queenslanders is a discussion we need to have as a community. Today I can confirm that the Queensland government is doing its part to make sure Queensland can be part of that discussion.

The Palaszczuk government through Queensland Health will commit \$3 million towards a medicinal cannabis trial to be undertaken in conjunction with the New South Wales government. This trial will be run out of the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital and will assess the value of these products in treating children with severe drug-resistant epilepsy. We will partner with the New South Wales government to access cannabis products provided by GW Pharmaceuticals. Queensland's Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, is a member of the committee developing and overseeing the clinical trial. I can confirm that the trial will begin next year. As a tertiary paediatric facility treating the sickest children from all over Queensland, the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital is the best placed facility in Queensland to coordinate the trial.

Furthermore, I can announce today that the Queensland government will act to support the delivery of a vital cannabis related treatment that will benefit people with multiple sclerosis. Multiple sclerosis is a chronic disease of the central nervous system that affects more than 3,700 Queenslanders. Three years ago the Commonwealth approved a cannabis related product to treat this disease but its use also required changes to state legislation. Today I am proud to announce that our government will be making those changes. We will be legalising the use of Sativex, a pharmaceutical medicinal cannabis product for the treatment of multiple sclerosis symptoms offering sufferers a new treatment option for their condition.

This oral spray can be used by people with multiple sclerosis to help alleviate moderate to severe spasticity. While this does not represent a cure for MS, it may help relieve some symptoms in adults resistant to other treatments and in doing so improve their quality of life. This drug will remain highly regulated in Queensland. It will only be available to adults and it will need to be prescribed by a neurologist. Through our participation in the clinical trial and through the legalisation of Sativex, we are taking the next step in our commitment to give Queenslanders with multiple sclerosis and children with epilepsy fresh hope for a better life.

Chinchilla, Weather Event

 **Hon. JR MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (9.54 am): For the second day in a row, Queenslanders are mopping up after an extremely destructive storm. While the people of Fernvale were rallying together to coordinate the clean-up of their community, further west at Chinchilla there was another frightening display of Mother Nature's awesome power. Late yesterday afternoon another supercell system brought very heavy rain, destructive winds and large hail to Chinchilla and surrounding communities. The storm caused severe structural damage to many homes, businesses and government buildings with ceiling collapses, broken windows and water damage.

I have been advised that there have been more than 200 calls for SES assistance, and crews from across the local area are out this morning working through the outstanding jobs. Emergency services assisted Queensland Health to evacuate the local hospital after it suffered window damage and loss of power. The nursing home was also evacuated. I have also been advised that Chinchilla Christian School was damaged and the school will be closed today. The storm also caused some localised flooding.

The images out of Chinchilla yesterday looked more like a snow storm than a hail storm. Some residents have said they have never seen so much hail. This morning many homes remain without power, but energy crews are out working very hard to restore power to the community. Rapid damage assessment teams are also moving in this morning.

To the people of Chinchilla, I would have dearly loved to have visited their town today to personally offer my support and to ensure any and all assistance required is being delivered. But, due to today's parliamentary sitting, unfortunately I have to remain here at parliament. Rest assured that we are working with affected residents to ensure that they have all the necessary help and the support that they need.

I would also like to give an update in relation to the Fernvale storm. As of nine o'clock this morning, 61 homes have minor damage, 13 homes have been assessed to have moderate damage and seven homes have severe damage. In total, 175 homes have been assessed within the impact area. That is in excess of 90 per cent of the homes being assessed. Energex has advised that as of six o'clock this morning no homes are without power, which is good news for the people of Fernvale.

I want to thank each and every one of our emergency services staff and volunteers who have been out on the ground helping in Chinchilla and of course in Fernvale. As I said yesterday, events like these can be extremely traumatic. The Palaszczuk government stands with the people of Chinchilla, just as we do with the people of Fernvale, and together we will work to get those communities back on their feet as soon as possible.

Domestic and Family Violence

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (9.58 am): The Palaszczuk Labor government is investing in infrastructure right across Queensland including in social infrastructure in my own portfolio. One of the first announcements I made as minister was that our government would establish two new 72-hour crisis shelters—one in Brisbane and one in Townsville. These are the first government built and operated facilities to add to the shelter system in Queensland in over 20 years. But we know this system is under pressure.

I cannot imagine what it must be like to see a woman who has experienced violence who may be hurt, who is definitely terrified and needs sanctuary, and then to have to turn her away. Last week I stood in a room full of people who have to make that decision all too regularly. The Combined Women's Refuge Group presented me with a position paper and we discussed the pressure that they are facing

with an increased demand for services. The group's paper, *More than just a bed. The contribution of women's refuges in Queensland*, sets out key principles and makes 18 recommendations regarding issues facing the refuge sector.

The sector has been historically under-resourced, and it will take time to repair. That is why I am pleased to advise that these two new shelters will be up and running by the end of the year. The new shelters will provide immediate safety and support for women and assist them to make decisions about their future. This will be on top of the \$21.3 million invested each year for accommodation for 56 shelters across Queensland, and of course KPMG is doing a broad-ranging audit of services for domestic and family violence. We will receive this next month and it will help determine future spending.

In the meantime we are investing in the infrastructure needed to ensure that the domestic and family violence support system can meet the recent surge in demand. We have recently seen a surge of sickening domestic violence in Queensland and, not surprisingly, this has led to a dramatic rise in calls to immediate crisis support services. Calls to DVConnect have nearly doubled, and that is a good thing, but we need to make sure they have the support they need to help women and children escaping violence. That is why we have further invested in the support infrastructure provided by DVConnect and Women's Legal Service. We must make sure that when people reach out for help we have the services they need.

I will continue working closely with the public housing minister, Leeanne Enoch, to ensure that DV support, shelters and public housing systems are working in an integrated system to help women move from crisis accommodation to affordable housing. I will continue to engage with organisations and the Combined Women's Refuge Group in tackling the scourge of domestic and family violence, and respond to their very informative and useful working paper. We are working through the road map provided by the *Not now, not ever* report, and we are determined to help victims of domestic and family violence.

North Queensland, Investment

 **Hon. CJ O'ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland) (10.01 am): Last week in Mount Isa I hosted the fourth in a series of business round tables to discuss economic opportunities and development across North Queensland. As I travel throughout North Queensland, I consistently hear that people want to have a say about what is important to them in their own backyard. We know that local people have local knowledge about the issues impacting their communities, and they also have great ideas for opportunities moving forward.

These forums aim to get together some of the region's best and brightest business minds so we can identify and maximise regional development opportunities. That is why these round tables are so important. We heard some great ideas and robust discussion at the Mount Isa forum including improving and promoting tourism in the region, promoting research opportunities that look at specific issues that the region is facing, and looking at water and gas supply issues of the region. I thank the member for Mount Isa for joining me at the forum and for his input. He knows that they are all important issues for his electorate and for the region.

We will use the outcomes from the forums to identify up to five key projects that I will champion across the North Queensland region. I look forward to hosting the next round tables which I am pleased to advise the House will be held in November in Brisbane for investors with an interest in the north and in Rockhampton. The ideas generated at the economic round tables will also feed into the Northern Queensland Economic Summit to be held in Cairns next week where the entire region will be showcased to international and domestic investors.

The summit will look at the unique investment opportunities in North Queensland, particularly in the sectors of resources and energy, agriculture, tourism, infrastructure, education and innovation. We will look at projects for immediate investment, and provide an overview of medium- and long-term investment in the region. Our region is well connected to global and domestic markets, and offers endless opportunities for investors. Importantly, through these economic round tables and the summit, we are sending the clear message that North Queensland is open for business.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

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

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I do not need your interjections either, Deputy Premier.

Waste Industry, Jobs

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (10.03 am): Queensland's waste industry provides an absolutely essential service for business, industry and the whole community. The waste industry is more than an essential service. It is at the front line of a transition to a more environmentally friendly economy. I am excited by the steps being taken in the waste industry to modernise Queensland's economy, improve efficiency and grow new jobs—all while addressing our environmental challenges.

I am now moving to invite this industry to work with me to examine opportunities to capture more value from the waste stream, to increase economic returns and to improve environmental outcomes. An early assessment by my department has suggested that in some parts of Queensland it may be economically feasible to avoid sending sorted wastes, such as concrete, municipal green waste and tyres, direct to landfill. My department has now published that report in order to stimulate further discussion and consultation on this issue.

Queensland's waste and recycling industry manages close to 15 million tonnes of solid waste for households, business and industry as well as construction and demolition activities. This ranges from materials as diverse as household and general business to construction and regulated waste from heavy industry such as power stations, smelters, tanneries and abattoirs. More than half—some 55 per cent of that waste—currently finds its way to landfill. Only 45 per cent is being recovered and recycled. International experience provides strong evidence that we can do better, and that is also the feedback I have received from professional leaders in the waste management industry.

On Tuesday I met with executives from the waste industry who told me of their experiences in California where cities such as San Francisco have raised recovery rates to 80 per cent of all waste. Before the end of this year, I will invite local government, the business sector and community representatives to commence working with me to determine whether or not Queensland should start work to create these new markets for waste that currently go to landfill in selected parts of the state. I will be particularly interested to understand what kind of lead times the sector might require in order to make preparations for any changes. I want local government and industry to have clear, predictable lead times before any changes might come into effect so as to encourage capacity building and business readiness.

The employment opportunities associated with diverting waste from landfill have been well documented in various studies. A Deloitte Access Economics study, which identified multipliers to determine employment in the waste management and recycling sector, stated that for every 10,000 tonnes of waste recycled 9.2 jobs are created compared with 2.8 jobs if the same 10,000 tonnes were sent to landfill. A more recent 2012 study indicates that high-value reuse and remanufacture creates between eight and 20 jobs per 1,000 tonnes of product processed while traditional recycling, where moderate value is retained, creates between five and 10 jobs per 1,000 tonnes of product processed. Additionally, a 2011 study found that for every job created in the recycling industry another 1.4 jobs are created through associated economic activity. I am optimistic about the opportunity to support the waste sector, which has become increasingly professional and is showing real interest in delivering investment, jobs growth and better environmental outcomes for Queenslanders.

Government Wireless Network

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Science and Innovation) (10.07 am): As Queenslanders have seen this week, the Palaszczuk government intends to be an infrastructure government. In the 21st century this also means putting the necessary digital infrastructure in place that will support the diversification of our economy as we prepare for the digital disruption of our traditional industries. It also means having the necessary digital infrastructure in place to support government service delivery with a fully integrated and secure digital radio communications network.

The Palaszczuk government is doing this through the expansion of the GWN, the government wireless network, which successfully went live earlier this week in the network expansion areas of Logan and the Gold Coast. I am happy to report to the House that the rollout of the GWN expansion was incident free. The day-to-day benefits of the GWN include automatic resource location, duress functionality and secure communication coverage in areas previously difficult or impossible to receive or transmit radio communications. The GWN is also providing a secure network using defence-grade encryption to protect against threats to information security and interception of radio transmissions.

We also know that digital government will play a critical role in the Palaszczuk government's delivery of our Advance Queensland vision. We will be using digital channels to provide information and services as well as access to data and information used in research and to provide business opportunities within the growing knowledge economy. The Palaszczuk government knows that Queenslanders want to access services online so we are determined to deliver digital government whenever and wherever possible. One example of this is the One-Stop Shop. This is a major step towards improving Queenslanders' experience of services, particularly online, to offer a single view of government rather than having to use a number of agency websites. This program is delivering real change in how customers experience government services, with customers now able to do the following: access over 300 new online services, with 36 per cent of customers using these new services within three months; access 100 per cent of information about all Queensland government services online at qld.gov.au; and sign up for a customer account, single login and digital proof of identification. We are also collaborating with CSIRO to develop future digital marketplace scenarios for government services out to the year 2025.

Unlike the former LNP government, which did not even have an infrastructure plan, let alone a digital infrastructure plan, the Palaszczuk government knows we are living in the 21st century. We are focused on preparing our economy and our government services to embrace potential digital disruption and make sure Queensland rides the next wave of economic development and that we have jobs now and jobs for the future.

MOTION

Amendment to Standing Orders



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

That the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly be amended by omitting Schedule 2 and inserting the new Schedule 2 circulated in my name, such amendments being effective from 1 January 2016.

SCHEDULE 2—REGISTERS OF INTERESTS—

Omit, insert—

'SCHEDULE 2—REGISTERS OF INTERESTS

Establishment

Chapter 4, Part 2A of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* establishes a statutory requirement for a Register of Members' Interest and a Register of Related Persons' Interest. This schedule to Standing Orders provides for the administrative arrangements for the registers and the particulars of interests that must be disclosed.¹

Purpose

The purpose of the Register of Members' Interests is to place on the public record any pecuniary or other relevant interests of a member which may give rise to a conflict of interest or a perception of a conflict of interest between a member's private interests and the public interest. The register seeks to provide information which might be thought by others to affect a member's public duties, or to influence their speeches or votes in the Legislative Assembly.

Preamble

1. It is vital that in a representative democracy the public have confidence in the integrity of their elected representatives.
2. It is also vital that elected representatives be continually reminded that they exercise a public trust which should not be subordinate to any private interest.
3. It is also in the interests of elected representatives that they be able to demonstrate that at all times they have made scrupulous disclosure of their private interests.
4. The Legislative Assembly requires its members to demonstrate a commitment to maintain the highest possible standard of propriety and to avoid, or where required to disclose, register or declare, any potential conflict of interest.
5. The Register of Members' Interests and Register of Related Persons' Interests are mechanisms to encourage and foster transparency, accountability and openness.
6. The Register of Members' Interests is a continually evolving primary record of members' registrable interests as submitted by members under the Standing Orders.
7. The tabled Register of Members' Interests gives public notification of members' registrable interests as at the date of publication.
8. The following provisions are the minimum registration required by members and are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all possible financial arrangements which are required, in the spirit of the Standing Orders, to be registered.

¹ Section 69B(3) of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* provides that a statement of interests and any change in the particulars of the interests must be given in accordance with the Standing Rules and Orders.

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PART 1—PRELIMINARY

Definitions

1. In this schedule, unless the contrary intention appears—
 - “**asset**” means an item of property or an investment or interest owned by a person, trust or company, regarded as having value but does not include:
 - (a) household and personal effects;
 - (b) motor vehicles unless those motor vehicles have been purchased primarily for an investment purpose;
 - (c) industry, public offer and employer superannuation entitlements;
 - (d) stock, plant or equipment related to an occupation or business activity otherwise disclosed under this Schedule; and
 - (e) a loan to a family member.
 - “**calendar month**” means a period commencing at the beginning of a day of one of the 12 months of the year and ending immediately before the beginning of the corresponding day of the next month or, if there is no such corresponding day, ending at the end of the next month;
 - “**child**”, in relation to a member, is defined by s.69A of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*;²
 - “**Clerk**” means the Clerk of the Parliament;
 - “**company**” means a company, whether a private company or a public company;
 - “**debenture**” includes debenture stock, bonds, notes and any other document evidencing or acknowledging indebtedness of a company in respect of money that is deposited with or lent to the company;
 - “**de facto partner**”, in relation to a member, has the same meaning as s.32DA of the *Acts Interpretation Act 1954*;
 - “**donation**”, includes a donation in cash or property and a donation sourced from an allowance provided to a member;

² Section 69A of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* provides that **child**, in relation to a member, includes an adopted child, ex-nuptial child or stepchild of the member.

“**gift**” means—

- (a) the transfer of money, property or other benefit—
 - (i) without recompense; or
 - (ii) for a consideration substantially less than full consideration; or
- (b) a loan of money or property made on a permanent, or an indefinite, basis;

but does not include:

- (a) a tangible gift received in an official capacity and which has been dealt with in accordance with the Ministerial Handbook, Opposition Handbook or Speaker’s Guidelines;
- (b) hospitality or sporting or cultural entertainment received when a member who is an office holder, or a member who is representing an office holder, attends an event in an official capacity;
- (c) upgraded travel provided by an airline, or upgraded accommodation;
- (d) a gift received from a family member or family friend where the gift made by the family member or family friend is received in a purely personal capacity, and there is no connection or possible conflict of interest between the member’s duties and the interest of the person providing the gift.

“**joint venture**” means an undertaking carried on by two or more persons in common otherwise than as partners;

“**liability**” means—

An obligation that legally binds a member, or related person to settle a debt and includes a loan of money or guarantee and any instrument pursuant to that loan (such as a mortgage) but does not include:

- (a) department store and credit card accounts;
- (b) a liability arising from the supply of goods or services supplied in the ordinary course of any occupation of the member or business of the trust or private company or partnership in which the member or related person has an interest which is not related to the member’s duties as a member of the Legislative Assembly; or
- (c) a loan owing to or a guarantee from or for a family member where the liability relates to a purely personal matter, and there is no connection or possible conflict of interest between the member’s duties and the interest of the person providing the loan or guarantee.

“**member**” means a member of the Legislative Assembly;

“**month**” means a calendar month;

“**nominee company**” means a company whose principal business is the business of holding marketable securities as a trustee or nominee;

“**officer**”, in relation to a company, means—

- (a) director or secretary of the company; or
- (b) any other person who is concerned, or takes part, in the management of the company.

“**partnership**” includes a joint venture;

“**private company**” means a proprietary company, whether incorporated in Queensland or elsewhere;

“**private superannuation fund**” means a superannuation fund which meets the definition of a self-managed superannuation fund (SMSF) under the *Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Act 1993* (Cth);

“**public company**” means a company, other than a private company, whether incorporated in Queensland or elsewhere;

“**published indexed threshold**” means—

- (a) An amount periodically published by the Registrar (at least every two years) which sets the dollar amounts over which a matter is required to be declared in 7(5).
- (b) The Registrar is to determine the amount by identifying the dollar amount for declaration of the matter at the introduction of the registers in 1990 (the cost base) and increasing the dollar amount by an indexation factor.
- (c) The indexation factor is to be calculated by using the consumer price index (CPI) and the formula:

Indexation factor = $\frac{\text{CPI for beginning quarter ending}}{\text{CPI for last quarter}}$

CPI for last quarter

- (d) The Registrar is to ensure that the published indexed threshold is published to members, tabled in the House and appears on all Forms issued to members.

“**Register**” means the register defined by s.69A of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*;³

“**Registrar**” means the Registrar of Members’ Interests;

“**related person**”, in relation to a member, is defined by s.69A of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*;⁴

³ Section 69A of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* provides that **register** means—(a) the register of members’ interests; or (b) the register of related persons’ interests.

⁴ Section 69A of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* provides that **related person**, in relation to a member, means—

- (a) the member’s spouse; or
- (b) a person who is totally or substantially dependent on the member and—
 - (i) the person is the member’s child; or (ii) the person’s affairs are so closely connected with the member’s affairs that a benefit derived by the person, or a substantial part of it, could pass to the member.

“**reporting period**” means a period commencing immediately after the annual report of the register is tabled in accordance with 11(2) and ending when the next annual report is tabled;

“**share**” means—

- (a) a share in the share capital of a company;
- (b) stock;
- (c) a convertible note; or
- (d) an option.

“**sitting day**”, in relation to the Parliament, means a day on which the Parliament meets;

“**sponsored travel or accommodation**” means any travel undertaken, including accommodation incidental to the travel, or any accommodation benefit received, by the member or a related person in respect of which a contribution (whether in cash or kind) to the cost of the travel (including incidental accommodation) or the accommodation is made by a person other than the member or a related person but does not include:

- (a) travel or accommodation received in an official capacity;
- (b) upgraded travel provided by an airline, or upgraded accommodation;
- (c) meals or sporting or cultural entertainment;
- (d) a benefit received from a family member or family friend where the contribution made by the sponsor is received in a purely personal capacity, and there is no connection or possible conflict of interest between the member's duties and the interest of the sponsor.

“**spouse**”, in relation to a member, includes a de facto partner of a member;

“**statement of interests**” is defined by s.69A of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*;⁵

“**statement of interests (member)**” see s.69B(1)(a) of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*;⁶

“**statement of interests (related persons)**” see section s.69B(1)(b) of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*;⁷

“**trade or professional organisation**” means a body (whether incorporated or unincorporated) of—

- (a) employers or employees; or
- (b) persons engaged in a profession, trade or other occupation;

being a body the object, or an object, of which is the furtherance of its own professional, industrial or economic interests or those of any of its members.

“**year**” means a period of 12 months commencing on 1 January.

Interpretation—terms relating to companies

- 2.(1)** A person is taken to have a controlling interest in shares in a company if the person is able—
- (a) to dispose of, or to exercise control over the disposal of, the shares; or
 - (b) where the shares are voting shares—to exercise, or to control the exercise of, any voting powers attached to the shares.
- (2)** The question whether a company is a subsidiary of another company is to be determined in the same manner as the question whether a corporation is a subsidiary of another corporation is determined for the purposes of the Corporations Law of Queensland.
- (3)** A reference in this schedule to the holding company of another company is a reference to a company of which that other company is a subsidiary.

Interpretation—forms

- 3.(1)** In this schedule, a reference to a form by number is a reference to the form so numbered in Part 6.
- (2)** Strict compliance with a form in Part 6 is not necessary and substantial compliance, or such compliance as the circumstances of a particular case allow, is sufficient.

Registrar

- 4.** In accordance with s.69C of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, the Clerk is to be the Registrar of Members' Interests and keep the register of members' interests and the register of related persons' interests up to date.⁸

⁵ Section 69A of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* provides that **statement of interests** means—

(a) a statement of interests (member); or (b) a statement of interests (related persons).

⁶ Section 69B(1)(a) of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* provides that a member must, within 1 month after taking the member's seat, give to the Registrar a statement of the interest, as at the date of the election, of the member (a **statement of interests (member)**).

⁷ Section 69B(1)(b) of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* provides that a member must, within 1 month after taking the member's seat, give to the Registrar a statement of the interest, as at the date of the election, of which the member is aware of each person who is a related person of the member (a **statement of interests (related persons)**).

⁸ Section 69C of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* provides:

(1) There is to be a Registrar of Members' Interests (**Registrar**).

(2) The Clerk is to be the Registrar.

(3) The Registrar must keep—

(a) a register of members' interests; and (b) a register of related persons' interests.

(4) The Registrar must, in accordance with the Standing Rules and Orders, enter the following particulars in the relevant register and keep the registers up to date—

(a) the particulars of the interests given by a member in a statement of interests (member) and any changes to the particulars notified by the member; (b) the particulars of the interests given by a member in a statement of interests (related persons) and any changes to the particulars notified by the member.

PART 2—STATEMENTS OF INTERESTS

Giving of statements

- 5.(1) Members are required in accordance with s.69B(1) of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* to give to the Registrar statements of interests of the member and related persons within 1 month of taking their seat.⁹
- (2) Members are required in accordance with s.69B(2) of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* to notify the Registrar within 1 month of any changes to their interest or the interests of related persons.¹⁰
- (3) In addition to the requirements in s.69B of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, each member shall within 1 month of the 30th day of June in each subsequent year during the life of that Parliament, provide to the Registrar a confirmation of correct particulars.

Form of statements and notice of change of details¹¹

- 6.(1) A statement of interests (member)—
 - (a) must be in accordance with clause 7 (Form 1); and
 - (b) is to relate only to interests held by the member—
 - (i) alone; and
 - (ii) jointly or in common with a related person.
- (2) A statement of interests (related persons)—
 - (a) must be in accordance with clause 7 (Form 2); and
 - (b) is to relate only to interests held by related persons otherwise than jointly or in common with the member.
- (3) A notice of change of details contained in a statement of interests must be in accordance with clause 5 (Form 3).
- (4) A confirmation of correct particulars must be in accordance with clause 5 (Form 4).
- (5) The Committee of the Legislative Assembly may, by resolution, alter any forms for use under this schedule, and such forms are to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly by the Chairperson of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly within five sitting days.

Registration of interests

- 7.(1) A member shall not in any declaration specify:
 - (a) the number or monetary value of shares;
 - (b) the monetary value of investments or beneficial interests;
 - (c) the full street address of property;
 - (d) the financial amount of liabilities, donations or other income;
 - (e) the account number of, or financial amounts held in, savings or investment accounts; or
 - (f) the monetary value of assets, sponsored travel or accommodation, or gifts.
- (2) The Registrar is authorised to return to a member any declaration contrary to 7(1) or any other requirement of this Schedule and request that the member resubmit the declaration in a manner that complies with this Schedule.
- (3) The disclosures required to be given by a member under 7(5) operate concurrently, but a member need only declare the same interest once.
- (4) Transitory disclosures required to be given by a member under 7(5) such as gifts (7(5)(i)), sponsored travel or accommodation (7(5)(j)) income (7(5)(k)) and donations (7(5)(m)) need only be disclosed in the reporting period in which they occurred and may be removed from the register published on the Parliament's internet website (12(2)) once they have been included in a tabled annual report (11(1)).
- (5) A statement of interests required to be given by a member must contain the following details—
 - (a) in respect of any company in which the member or a related person is a shareholder or officer or has a controlling interest in shares—
 - (i) the name of the company (if the company is a listed company, the Company Code is sufficient);
 - (ii) the nature of any office held;
 - (iii) where the shareholding or interest is held in a private company, the investments or beneficial interests of the company; and
 - (iv) where the shareholding or interest is held in a private company—
 - (A) the nature of the activities of the company;
 - (B) the assets or beneficial interests of the company;
 - (C) the name of any subsidiary companies; and
 - (D) the assets or beneficial interests of those subsidiary companies;

⁹ Section 69B(1) of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* provides that a member must, within 1 month after taking the member's seat, give to the Registrar the following statements—

(a) a statement of the interest, as at the date of the election, of the member (a **statement of interests (member)**); (b) a statement of the interest, as at the date of the election, of which the member is aware of each person who is a related person of the member (a **statement of interests (related persons)**).

¹⁰ Section 69B(2) of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* provides that a member must, within 1 month after becoming aware of a change in the particulars contained in the last statement of interests given by the member, notify the Registrar in writing of the change.

¹¹ Section 69B(3) of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* provides that a statement of interests and any change in the particulars of the interests must be given in accordance with the Standing Rules and Orders.

- (b) in respect of any family or business trust or nominee company in which the member or a related person is a trustee, office holder or holds a beneficial interest—
 - (i) the name or a description of the trust, or the name of the nominee company, as the case requires;
 - (ii) the nature of the activities of the trust or company;
 - (iii) the nature of the interest of the member; and
 - (iv) the investments or beneficial interests of the trust or company (of which the member is aware);
 - (c) in respect of any private superannuation fund in which the member or a related person is a trustee or director—
 - (i) the name or a description of the fund;
 - (ii) the nature of the activities of the fund;
 - (iii) the investments or beneficial interests of the fund (of which the member is aware);
 - (d) in respect of any partnership in which the member or a related person has an interest—
 - (i) the name or a description of the partnership;
 - (ii) the nature of the activities of the partnership; and
 - (iii) the nature of the interest;
 - (iv) the assets or beneficial interests of the partnership (of which the member is aware);
 - (e) in respect of any real estate in which the member or a related person has an interest—
 - (i) the location of the relevant property, by reference to suburb or locality;
 - (ii) the approximate size of the property;
 - (iii) the purpose for which the property is, and is intended to be, used; and
 - (iv) the nature of the interest;
 - (f) in respect of any liability exceeding the published indexed threshold of the member or a related person or a trust of which a member or a related person is a beneficiary or a private company of which a member or a related person is a shareholder or partnership of which a member or related person is a partner—
 - (i) the nature of the liability; and
 - (ii) the name of the creditor concerned;
 - (g) any debenture, managed fund, or similar investments held by the member or a related person;
 - (h) in respect of any savings or investment account of the member or a related person held with a bank, building society, credit union or other institution—
 - (i) the nature of the account; and
 - (ii) the name of the institution concerned;
 - (i) the source and nature of any gifts valued at more than the published indexed threshold from one source, or where two or more gifts are made from one source during a reporting period exceed, in aggregate, the published indexed threshold;
 - (j) in respect of any sponsored travel or accommodation received by the member or a related person—
 - (i) the source of the contribution concerned; and
 - (ii) the nature and purpose of the travel;
 - (k) the source of any other income over the published indexed threshold received during a reporting period by—
 - (i) the member or a related person;
 - (ii) a private company, or a trust, in which the member or a related person holds an interest;
 or of any other income under the published indexed threshold, where the source of that income raises, appears to raise, or could foreseeably raise, a conflict between the member's private interest and their duty as a member;
 - (l) the nature of any other asset of the member or a related person the value of which exceeds more than the published indexed threshold;
 - (m) the name of any political party, trade or professional organisation of which the member or related person is a member, or the name of any other organisation of which the member is an officeholder or any organisation or person to whom the member makes a donation exceeding the published indexed threshold during the reporting period;
 - (n) any other interest (whether or not of a pecuniary nature) of the member or a related person—
 - (i) of which the member is aware; and
 - (ii) that raises, appears to raise, or could foreseeably raise, a conflict between the member's private interest and their duty as a member.
- (6) A Minister or other Office Holder (recognised by s.112 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*) is not required to include in a statement of interests details of interests that are imposed upon them in their capacity as Minister or Office Holder.

Example—

Shares held by a Minister in a statutory or company government owned corporation on behalf of the State under the *Government Owned Corporations Act 1993* are not required to be registered.

Questions concerning statements, and explanatory notes

- 8.(1)** If a question relating to whether a matter should or should not be included in a statement of interests is raised by a member with the Registrar, the Registrar must—
- (a) subject to the terms of any Standing Order or resolution of the Legislative Assembly affecting the matter—attempt to resolve the matter without referring it to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly; and
 - (b) if the matter is not so resolved—refer the matter to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly.
- (2)** A reference of a matter to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly.—
- (a) must be made in general terms; and
 - (b) except with the consent of the member, must not disclose the name of the member.
- (3)** The Committee of the Legislative Assembly must—
- (a) consider any matter referred to it; and
 - (b) if the name of the member has been disclosed to it—give the member the opportunity to be heard; after which it must decide whether the matter should or should not be included by the member in the statement of interests concerned.
- (4)** The Registrar must immediately notify the member of the decision of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly.
- (5)** If the member informs the Committee of the Legislative Assembly in writing that they do not agree with the decision of the Committee, the Committee must—
- (a) make a report to the Legislative Assembly; and
 - (b) with the report, recommend the action that should be taken in relation to the matter.
- (6)** A report under subclause (5)—
- (a) must be made in general terms; and
 - (b) must not disclose the name of the Member.
- (7)** The Committee of the Legislative Assembly, both on its own initiative or upon the request of the Registrar, may produce and publish explanatory notes to further explain the requirements of this schedule and the information to be included in the Registers.

PART 3—REGISTERS**Keeping of registers**

- 9.(1)** The Registrar must keep, in such forms as the Registrar considers appropriate—
- (a) a Register of Members' Interests; and
 - (b) a Register of Related Persons' Interests.
- (2)** As soon as practicable after receiving a statement of interests from a member, the Registrar must—
- (a) in the case of a statement of interests (member)—enter in the Register of Members' Interests the relevant details contained in the statement; and
 - (b) in the case of a statement of interests (related persons)—enter in the Register of Related Persons' Interests the relevant details contained in the statement.
- (3)** As soon as practicable after receiving a notice of change of details under subclause 5(2), the Registrar must make such alteration to the details entered in the relevant Register as is necessary to reflect the change.
- (4)** As soon as practicable after a member resigns, dies or is removed from office during the course of a parliament, the Registrar must—
- (a) in the case of the member—remove from the Register of Members' Interests details of the member's interests; and
 - (b) in the case of the member's related persons—remove from the Register of Related Persons' Interests details of the related persons' interests.
- (5)** As soon as practicable after the dissolution of a parliament, the Registrar must—
- (a) in the case of members of that parliament—remove from the Register of Members' Interests details of all members' interests; and
 - (b) in the case of the members' related persons—remove from the Register of Related Persons' Interests details of all related persons' interests.

Custody of registers

- 10.** The Registrar is to have the custody of—
- (a) each Register;
 - (b) each statement of interests received by the Registrar under subclause 5(1);
 - (c) any notice of change of details received by the Registrar under subclause 5(2); and
 - (d) each confirmation of correct particulars received by the Registrar under subclause 5(3).

Tabling of Register of Members' Interests

11.(1) As soon as practicable after—

- (a) the first sitting day of each Parliament; and
- (b) the 30th day of June in each subsequent year during the life of that Parliament;

the Registrar must provide the Speaker with a copy of the Register of Members' Interests ("The Annual Report of the Register of Members' Interests") and the Speaker must table the report in the Legislative Assembly.

(2) The Annual Report of the Register of Members' Interests is a copy of the Register of Member's Interest as at a particular date specified in the report.

Publishing of Register of Members' Interests

12.(1) The Registrar is to ensure that a copy of the Annual Report of the Register of Members' Interests is published on the Parliament's internet website.

(2) The Registrar is to ensure that the Register of Members' Interest, as updated from time to time, is published on the Parliament's internet website as soon as practical after each update occurs and no later than one week after the latest update.

(3) The Registrar is to determine the form the publication on the Parliament's internet website will be in, taking into account factors such as accessibility, transparency and administrative efficiency.

(4) The publication of the Register of Members' Interest on the Parliament's internet website and the Annual Report of the Register of Members' Interests tabled in accordance with clause 11 above are deemed parliamentary records that the Legislative Assembly has authorised for publication.

Inspection of registers

13.(1) The Registrar must, at the request of a person, permit the person to inspect the Register of Members' Interests during normal business hours of the office of the Clerk.

(2) The Registrar must, on request, make the Register of Related Persons' Interests available to—

- (a) the Speaker;
- (b) the Premier;
- (c) any other Leader in the Legislative Assembly of a political party;
- (d) the Chairperson and members of the Ethics Committee;
- (e) the Crime and Corruption Commission;
- (f) the Auditor-General; and
- (g) the Integrity Commissioner.

(3) The Registrar must, on request, make details removed from the registers in accordance with 9.(4) or 9.(5) available to—

- (a) the Speaker;
- (b) the Premier;
- (c) any other Leader in the Legislative Assembly of a political party;
- (d) the Chairperson and members of the Ethics Committee;
- (e) the Crime and Corruption Commission;
- (f) the Auditor-General; and
- (g) the Integrity Commissioner.

(4) The Registrar must advise the relevant member or former member, in writing, that details removed from the registers have been inspected in accordance with 13.(3)(a)-(d), (f) or (g).

PART 4—COMPLAINTS**Allegations by members**

14.(1) A member may make an allegation against another member that the other member has failed to comply with the requirements relating to the registration of a matter.

(2) The allegation must be made, in writing, to the Registrar.

(3) The Registrar must—

- (a) refer the allegation to the Ethics Committee; and
- (b) give the details of the allegation to the member against whom the allegation is made.

Consideration of allegations

15.(1) The Ethics Committee must consider each allegation referred to it and, for that purpose, may—

- (a) give each member concerned the opportunity to be heard; and
- (b) obtain information from such other persons, and make such inquiries, as it thinks fit; after which it may—
- (c) make a report to the Legislative Assembly; and
- (d) with the report, recommend the action that should be taken in relation to the matter.

- (2) The Ethics Committee must not make a report unless—
- (a) it has given the member against whom the allegation has been made the opportunity—
 - (i) to be heard; and
 - (ii) to make written submissions; and
 - (b) it has given the persons that the member nominates the opportunity to be heard.

Complaints by public

- 16.(1) A person may make a complaint alleging that a member has failed to comply with the requirements relating to the registration of a matter.
- (2) The complaint must be made, in writing, to the Registrar.
- (3) The Registrar must, before taking any further action in relation to the complaint, inform the complainant in writing that parliamentary privilege does not extend to any communication between the complainant and the Registrar.
- (4) The Registrar may require the complainant to give to the Registrar—
- (a) details of the complainant's name and address;
 - (b) details, or further details, of the complaint; and
 - (c) copies of any documents or other material available to the complainant supporting the complaint.
- (5) The Registrar may refuse to take any further action in relation to the complaint if the complainant refuses or fails to comply with a requirement under subclause (4).
- (6) If the Registrar believes on reasonable grounds that there is evidence to support an allegation the subject of the complaint, the Registrar must—
- (a) refer the matter to the Ethics Committee; and
 - (b) give the details of the complaint to the member concerned.

Consideration of complaints

- 17.(1) Where a complaint is referred to it, the Ethics Committee—
- (a) may request the member concerned to provide an explanation of the allegation the subject of the complaint; and
 - (b) must, if the member disputes the allegation—
 - (i) give the member the opportunity to be heard;
 - (ii) give the persons that the member nominates the opportunity to be heard; and
 - (iii) obtain information from such other persons, and make such inquiries, as it thinks fit.
- (2) The Ethics Committee must make a report to the Legislative Assembly in respect of the complaint—
- (a) if the member concerned disputes the allegation the subject of the complaint—on completion of its consideration of the complaint;
 - (b) if the member confirms the allegation—on receiving notice to the effect; and
 - (c) if the member does not, within a reasonable period, respond to a request given to them under subclause (1)(a)—on the expiration of the period.
- (3) The Ethics Committee must, with the report, recommend the action that should be taken in relation to the matter.
- (4) The Ethics Committee must not, in the report, make a finding that is adverse to the member concerned unless it has given the member—
- (a) full particulars of the complaint; and
 - (b) the opportunity to be heard in relation to the complaint.

PART 5—ENFORCEMENT

Effect of failure to comply with requirements

18. A member who—
- (a) knowingly fails to give a statement of interests to the Registrar as required;
 - (b) knowingly fails to notify the Registrar of a change of details contained in a statement of interests; or
 - (c) breaches s.69B(4) of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*¹²
- is guilty of a contempt of the Parliament and may be dealt with accordingly.

¹² Section 69B(4) of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* provides that a member must not give to the Registrar a statement of interests or information relating to a statement of interests the member knows is false or misleading in a material particular.

Note—

A contravention of subsection (4) constitutes contempt of the Assembly—see section 37.

PART 6—FORMS

The following prescribed forms for the purpose of this schedule have been approved by the Committee of the Legislative Assembly—

- Form 1 Statement of interests of a member
- Form 2 Statement of interests of a member's related person/s
- Form 3 Change of details of member / member's related person/s
- Form 4 Confirmation of correct particulars.'
- Question put—That the motion be agreed to.
- Motion agreed to.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability Legislation, Suspension of Consideration**

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

That:

- (a) in accordance with standing order 136(2), the Finance and Administration Committee be the committee responsible for the North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability (Renewal of Mining Leases) Amendment Bill 2015; and
- (b) the committee suspend its consideration of the bill and not report until the House further resolves.

I have moved this motion so that we can deal with this bill in the same manner in which other private members' bills have been dealt with in this House on the recommendation of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, and I cite the mental health private member's bill and the planning legislation private member's bills. This ensures that the committee's consideration is done concurrently with government legislation that is expected and pending, and it allows for all of the stakeholders in the community to be able to make one set of submissions for the good order and good governance of the business of those committees and the House.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (10.12 am): I fully believe that the North Stradbroke Island bill, which I tabled on 27 October, brings forth a compromise to resolve ongoing time frames on the phasing out of sandmining on North Stradbroke Island. I also acknowledge that the CLA and the parliament, including me, have agreed to accept private members' bills and government bills to commence through the committee system and to be debated as cognate bills at the same time so as to eliminate double up, as the Leader of the House has indicated. So at this present moment, I support this motion.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ETHICS COMMITTEE**Report**

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (10.13 am): I lay upon the table of the House Ethics Committee report No. 157 titled *Matter of privilege referred by the Speaker on 16 December 2014 relating to an alleged use of the broadcast of the proceedings of the Queensland parliament in contravention of the terms and conditions*. I commend the report and the committee's recommendations to the House.

Tabled paper: Ethics Committee: Report No. 157—Matter of privilege referred by the Speaker on 16 December 2014 relating to an alleged use of the broadcast of the proceedings of the Queensland parliament in contravention of the terms and conditions [\[1513\]](#).

UTILITIES, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE**Report**

 **Mr KING** (Kallangur—ALP) (10.13 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 7 of the Utilities, Science and Innovation Committee titled *Energy and Water Ombudsman Amendment Bill 2015*. This report presents a summary of the committee's examination of the Energy and Water Ombudsman Amendment Bill 2015, including considering the policy outcomes to be achieved by the

legislation as well as the application of fundamental legislative principles. The committee has unanimously agreed that the bill be passed and that one amendment be made to the bill. On behalf of the committee, I thank those individuals and organisations who lodged written submissions. I would particularly also like to thank the committee's secretariat and the Department of Energy and Water Supply for their assistance. I commend the report to the House.

Tabled paper: Utilities, Science and Innovation Committee: Report No. 7, 55th Parliament—Energy and Water Ombudsman Amendment Bill 2015 [[1514](#)].

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Report

 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (10.14 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 14 of the Finance and Administration Committee. This report covers the portfolio subordinate legislation tabled between 5 May 2015 and 14 July 2015 considered by the committee. The committee did not identify any issues regarding consistency with fundamental legislative principles or the lawfulness of the subordinate legislation. I commend the report to the House.

Tabled paper: Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 14, 55th Parliament—Portfolio subordinate legislation tabled between 5 May 2015 and 14 July 2015 [[1515](#)].

NOTICE OF MOTION

Member for Cook, Order for Production of Documents

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.14 am): I give notice that I will move—

That, in accordance with standing order 27, this House orders the Premier to produce to this House by 12 November 2015 all inward and outward email correspondence between the Premier's staff or ministers or ministerial staff and the member for Cook or his office, since 30 March, that provides assistance with speeches, media, event attendance or advance notice of government announcements.

Mr SPEAKER: We will now proceed to private members' statements, and I call the—

A government member interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Deputy Premier. I may have to warn you.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Or whoever is interjecting. I call the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Business Confidence

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.15 am): Is it any wonder that Queensland consumers and business operators have no confidence in the ability of this government to make decisions? Six months after we said that the energy companies should not be appealing the Australian Energy Regulator decision—and I think we moved a motion in this House to that effect, when the energy minister said he was unable to do so because they had to go about the process—we have seen today the Premier and the energy minister coming in, hand on heart, trying to say, 'We're really helping consumers because that's what we've done today. Today we've made a direction that says they are not going to appeal those decisions.' We asked them to do that months ago and they were not able to do it.

It does not matter whether you are a consumer, a small business operation or a large business operator, you would have seen today's press release from the Treasurer about a second report this week—this time it was the Sensis Business Index—showing that Queensland business confidence is continuing to be amongst the lowest in the nation. Under the LNP government, it was the highest in the nation, but of course after 31 January business confidence went over a cliff. This was the second report, because this week we also had the CommSec report which also showed that we are a third-tier economy. We do not want to talk the economy down, but it is the Treasurer who puts out releases—

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: Well, that is what the CommSec report says. The Treasurer put out a press release today that only a Labor Treasurer could. His press release hailed a report that shows that 12 per cent of businesses are supportive of this government's policies—I repeat: 12 per cent of businesses are supportive of this government's policies—while more than a third of businesses think the government's policies are working against them.

The Treasurer mentioned that the confidence index for small to medium businesses in Queensland was positive 25 points. That is below the national average. Since the election of the Palaszczuk government, we have seen that attitudes to state government policies have gone from a rating of plus six to a rating of negative 22. Queensland was seen as the most supportive state in Australia for small and medium businesses under the LNP; now we are ranked second lowest. When it came to estimates, we had our shadow minister asking the Minister for Small Business about whether there was going to be any more red-tape reductions, and we had the business minister having a brawl with CCIQ about whether the red-tape removal that we were advocating was something that the minister said was being done in-house by public servants who were getting rid of the odd word here or there. Small business clearly says that they would like to see the removal of red tape and more incentives.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: This Treasurer said that the giving of payroll tax incentives for apprentices is a sign of what they are giving as incentives. That leaves thousands of businesses who are never going to receive that incentive because there are thousands of businesses that do not pay payroll tax.

This is a government that is making it up as it goes along. Queensland deserves a lot better. We are out there making sure that we are listening and providing policies that will give Queensland what they want and need.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the Minister for Main Roads, I urge the Minister for Education, the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer to be very considerate in your interjections. If it is the case that you make frivolous or irrelevant interjections you will be warned as other members have. I call the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy and Water Supply.

Electricity Prices

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (10.20 am): Four years ago the opposition promised to lower the cost of living in Queensland, yet what we saw over three years was a 43 per cent increase in electricity prices in Queensland. They had three years to do something about it and they did absolutely nothing. In fact, they did even worse; they spent over a billion dollars on their tower of power, they left electricity consumers—

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr BAILEY: They do not like to hear it. They left electricity consumers to the wolves. That is the truth. They funded their tower of power with a billion dollars worth of funding. That is in stark contrast to the decision of the Palaszczuk government today to back consumers by accepting the umpire's decision in terms of revenue determinations.

An opposition member: You said you wouldn't do it.

Mr BAILEY: That is what we said we would do. The opposition shows that they know nothing about energy policy, and that is why they are on that side. Families across Queensland, pensioners across Queensland, seniors across Queensland will welcome our decision today to back them, to lock in those better outcomes for Queensland consumers. We have followed an appropriate policy. We have allowed the submissions to happen this year. That is an appropriate process when the draft determination is out. Ergon Energy, for instance, picked up a \$600 million calculation error, which the regulator accepted and advised Ergon to address it in their submissions. The submissions were less than a billion dollars under our government compared to the previous government. Now that the umpire has made their decision, the Palaszczuk government is backing Queensland consumers in stark contrast to the failure of the other side. They had three years to do something about it, and what did they do? Absolutely nothing!

Ms Trad: A 43 per cent increase.

Mr BAILEY: There was a 43 per cent increase under the opposition. They spent \$100 million preparing for privatisation by spending \$100 million on Strong Choices when they should have been helping electricity consumers across Queensland. They had the wrong priorities. They left electricity consumers to the wolves and that is why they are in opposition. That is one of the key reasons they are in opposition.

It was worse. The then treasurer abused people who took up solar to deal with the rising electricity prices and called them latte sippers and champagne drinkers. He abused them for going to renewables to deal with the surge in prices. The contrast is stark. We will back consumers; we will back our public assets in public hands for public benefit. We will not be selling them off to benefit private shareholders; we will benefit the public.

Lady Cilento Children's Hospital

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (10.23 am): Earlier this week I rose in the House to talk of the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital. I want to come back to that topic today. I made the comment that earlier this year the Auditor-General lashed the former Labor government with regard to that hospital, the Gold Coast Hospital and also the Sunshine Coast public hospital for lack of planning and lack of understanding of what was required to meet the needs of the population across the state. In fact, one of the big issues in that report was bed numbers at Lady Cilento—what were the required bed numbers to cater for the growth in need of children right across the state as the population grows. Moving forward to this week and we have an announcement of 31 extra beds at the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital at a cost of \$20 million each year for four years. That statement implies that the 31 beds are not already in existence in the hospital and have not been occupied by sick children and, in fact, could be wheeled through the hospital and opened by the minister in cutting the ribbon.

Since that announcement was made I have received advices that these beds are already there, are already in Lady Cilento Hospital, that from earlier this year beds were occupied by sick children, that the beds were in use in Lady Cilento Hospital. What was lacking was the funding to make certain these beds became permanent. One can take this from it: that the beds are already there, they are already occupied and the advices I have received are there are no new beds going in over and above what is already in Lady Cilento Children's Hospital. That comes from clinicians at the hospital; that comes from doctors at the hospital who know what is going on. The problem is this means that in 12 months time if a person has a sick child and they drive to Lady Cilento Children's Hospital there will be no additional beds, on the advices I received, to what there are today. It has been referred to by doctors as the sick joke. Is this a hoax on the people of this state? Is this a hoax on the sick children of this state?

Lady Cilento Children's Hospital

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.26 am): There has been significant debate in this place about the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital. The opposition has sought to airbrush themselves out of their time in government. They accept no responsibility for their actions and their decisions. People in public life need to be accountable.

The rhetoric of the member for Moggill on Monday night, now permanently on the Hansard record, was nothing short of shameful. The member for Moggill should show more compassion when addressing issues as tragic as the death of young people. His comments bring shame on himself and his party. But, as is often the case with the LNP, the reality is quite different to the rhetoric. The member for Moggill and the member for Southern Downs have some explaining to do.

On 1 November 2013, a full year before the hospital was commissioned and opened, the member for Moggill, who was then the president of the AMA Queensland, wrote to the then premier, Campbell Newman, and said—

We advise that we have taken up the opportunity to meet with the Health Minister, the Hon. Lawrence Springborg MP, with that meeting set down for 19 November 2013. Furthermore, we will arrange to meet with Dr Peter Steer to reiterate the critical importance of well planned, appropriately funded and broadly communicated transition arrangements for both doctors and the public.

I table a copy of that letter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 1 November 2013, from the President of the Australian Medical Association Queensland, Dr Christian Rowan, to the Premier of Queensland, Hon. Campbell Newman MP, relating to meeting with the Minister for Health, Hon. Lawrence Springborg, regarding transition arrangements for the Queensland Children's Hospital [\[1516\]](#).

I also table an extract from the published November 2013 diary of the member for Southern Downs.

Tabled paper: Extract from ministerial diary—Minister for Health, 1 November 2013-30 November 2013 [\[1517\]](#).

That diary extract includes an entry on 19 November 2013 of a meeting on the 'Queensland Children's Hospital transition' with 'Dr Christian Rowan, Australian Medical Association of Queensland' and 'various past presidents of the AMA Queensland'. What is abundantly clear from these documents

is that the Leader of the Opposition was put on notice a full year before the commissioning and opening that transition arrangements were at risk, a full year before the rushed movement of patients and staff would expose Queensland children to higher than necessary risk. The member for Southern Downs and the member for Moggill cannot rewrite history. It is there in black and white. I say to the opposition leader and the member for Moggill: take some responsibility; be accountable for your actions.

This parliament is a wonderful institution. It grants the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Moggill a chance right now to stand up in this place before their parliamentary colleagues and before the Queensland community to explain exactly what it is they did together to ensure that well-planned, appropriately funded and broadly communicated transition arrangements for both doctors and the public were put in place. Now is the time for the Leader of the Opposition. He will be on his feet in a second explaining to Queensland what happened.

Member for Cook

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.29 am): The prodigal son is back in the fold, and it is certainly not the member for Woodridge. He might love to think he is, but he certainly is not. What we saw in this place last night was a great degree of bonhomie again. We saw the puppetmaster from Cook getting Labor members and ministers to perform tricks right throughout this place. We saw Labor ministers and members slapping him on the back and high-fiving him and we saw the cuddles again. We saw the drinks again in this place and we saw the hypocrisy dripping from members of the Labor Party again, as we see every time this parliament sits. Indeed, Mr Speaker, I do not know how the Labor Party keep up the pretence. They say in this place that they are so abhorred by his actions, yet they are prepared to embrace him in such a way. I am not sure what they say when they go back to their electorates, but let us just look at what the member for Cook did in this place yesterday. He displayed more and more absolute hypocrisy. We saw the member for Cook come into this place and say that he is going to ask for another electorate office—

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Logan, your interjections are not being taken. You are frivolous. I warn you under standing order 253A. Members, I do not need your assistance. It is early in the day. Member for Ferny Grove, I would urge you to be careful with your interjections.

Mr SPRINGBORG: He has said in this place and again in the media today that he would love another electorate office. He has two and one has not been open. The one on Thursday Island has been closed since he has been a member of parliament. If you ring it, you will still get David Kempton's message service. It has never been open! On a couple of occasions I have been into the little shopping area in front of his electorate office at Mareeba, and the people say that they have never seen him. He is now making another claim for more electorate resources; indeed, he cannot even service the electorate with the resources he currently has.

Whilst members in this place try to utilise their electorate allowances to serve their electorates, let us look at what the honourable member for Cook did this year. With regard to the acquittal for his information and communication allowance, he handed back \$7,000. When we look at his electorate allowance reconciliation, he handed back almost \$10,000. Is it any wonder that he was more than happy to support the Labor Party last night as they set about sanctimoniously denying the opportunity to those who want to make sure they are able to service their electorate, because he is never in his electorate. He is not interested in servicing his electorate. The only thing that the member for Cook is interested in is servicing the Labor Party. The only thing that the member for Cook is interested in is keeping the Premier in power, because the Premier put him there and she keeps him there.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Question time will conclude at 11.33 am.

Public Service, Appointments

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.32 am): My question without notice is to the Premier and I ask: I refer to Robert Hoge, who has described himself on Facebook as an 'ex-political hack'. I table this document.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, screenshot of Mr Robert Hoge's Twitter profile [\[1518\]](#).

I ask: will the Premier explain how this Labor political hack was able to be offered a departmental \$160,000 job and a start date before he even submitted a CV?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Speaker, I made it very clear that appointments in the public service must be merit based and they must be advertised, so that is my intention. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition can talk about how former LNP operative Ross Musgrave ended up being the Deputy Director-General of the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Public Service Commission. Perhaps they can explain why Mr Brodie ended up being the chairman of the ports authority. Perhaps they can explain why Michael Caltabiano—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, I would urge you not to use the question as an opportunity to debate. I would urge you to make your answer relevant.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Today we made a major announcement for Queensland families. What have we heard from those opposite? Absolutely nothing. Do they support the government's direction on the determination—

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: What is your point of order, member for Mermaid Beach?

Mr STEVENS: Under standing order 118 there has to be relevance in the answer. This has no relevance whatsoever.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, would you like the Leader of the Opposition to repeat the question?

Ms PALASZCZUK: No.

Mr SPEAKER: I call the Leader of the Opposition for your second question.

Public Service, Appointments

Mr SPRINGBORG: My second question without notice is also—

Mr Furner interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Ferny Grove, you are warned under standing order 253A for those frivolous interjections. If you persist you will be ordered to leave the chamber. That is your first warning under standing order 253A. Please desist. I now call the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr SPRINGBORG: My question without notice is to the Premier and I ask: again with regard to self-confessed Labor political hack Robert Hoge, is it consistent with public sector guidelines that senior departmental officers use their private email addresses to offer departmental jobs to former friends and colleagues?

Ms PALASZCZUK: If the Leader of the Opposition has any evidence in relation to that matter I am happy to look into it, because that is a very serious allegation. If you have that information I am more than happy to look into it. You are asking a question without giving me any evidence. You are making accusations. I am happy to look into it. What I will say is that there is a merit based selection process very firmly in place. What we had in place for the appointment of our directors-general is a principle of integrity and accountability which this government stands up to. The former LNP government had no merit based process for the appointment of the most senior public servants. My point is very clear when you see the former deputy leader's chief of staff over there being appointed to one of the most senior positions in government—that of Deputy Director-General of the Department of Premier and Cabinet—because he used to work for you, and that principle applies to the Public Service as well.

Queensland Economy

Mr PYNE: My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier inform the House what moves the government is taking to grow the Queensland economy both domestically and internationally?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Cairns very much for the question. I am quite sure that the member for Cairns would also be very grateful to learn that today our government has made a commitment to ensure that there is no appeal on the AER determination to ensure that local families in his electorate get fair electricity prices into the future, because this government is about standing up for families.

In relation to the question that the member asked in relation to making sure that Cairns is a pivot point for economic investment and development, I can formally advise the House that next week we will be holding the first ever North Queensland Economic Summit to be held in Cairns. We recognise the growing importance of northern Australia and we recognise that there are a lot of opportunities. I

can also advise the House today that there will be over 250 delegates made up of local and international investors, major domestic and international banks and financiers, national and international corporations and project proponents. More than 75 are from international organisations representing countries such as China, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, Abu Dhabi, France, Canada, Germany, India, Italy and Malaysia. This is the first time that I can recall a summit of this kind has ever been held in the state of Queensland. This is a prime opportunity for us to say to the rest of the world, 'Come and invest in Queensland.' The time is now right. We are a government that is firmly focused on growing and diversifying the economy, and we want to show investors some of the developments that are ready for them to invest in. There will be opportunities for them to go to the different regions. I have been speaking extensively to the mayors. They can actually showcase the projects that Queenslanders need the investment in. What does this mean at the end of the day? It means more jobs.

My government is determined to make this work. My entire cabinet will be there on the first night to welcome the delegates from across the world. This is a great signal to Cairns and the rest of the region that we can hold an economic summit of this kind. Can I be frank: if 50 people had come along to our very first summit I would have been overwhelmed. Today as Premier, I am so pleased to say that we now have over 250 people attending. It will be absolutely outstanding. I hope it becomes a regular event that we can put into our calendar to showcase the rest of Queensland to other developers into the future.

Good on Cairns for lobbying me to have the summit there. We are looking forward to coming up to the Cairns region. Next week we will make sure the weather holds out and everyone has an excellent time so we can showcase Cairns and Northern Australia to the world.

Public Service, Appointments

Mr LANGBROEK: My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to her written undertakings to the member for Nicklin when she sought his support to form government which state—
... all public service appointments will be made on merit.

I ask: is offering a \$160,000-a-year job from the private email address of a departmental officer with a state date, without a CV being supplied and without a vacancy existing, consistent with the undertaking given to the member for Nicklin in forming government?

Ms PALASZCZUK: The health minister has just advised me that he has not been permanently appointed—there is a process in place—and he will not be permanently appointed unless he is successful in the merit based selection process. I cannot be any clearer. I contrast this with the way those opposite appointed directors-general. Michael Caltabiano, a known personal friend of the former premier, was actually appointed as director-general of the department of transport. We know how that all ended up.

Ms Trad: Terribly.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Absolutely terrible and a disgrace. This is the way the LNP ran government and this is the way they are continuing—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. I think the Premier has answered the question.

Ms PALASZCZUK: In conclusion, I stand by my principles of merit based appointments for directors-general and public servants.

World Surfing Reserve

Mr de BRENNI: My question is of the Premier. Will the Premier inform the House of any developments with Queensland's bid to win a world surfing reserve for Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Springwood for that question. I am always pleased to talk about positive announcements for the Gold Coast. We on this side of the House are happy to stand up for the Gold Coast. We are delivering the Commonwealth Games. We are showing that there are so many tourism opportunities on the Gold Coast. We are also there delivering a permanent movie industry on the Gold Coast—Marvel and *Kong*, to name just two. Now we will have a world surfing reserve on the Gold Coast. This is great news.

I know that the member for Springwood is a keen surfer. I am quite sure he could teach the opposition a thing or two. We have had a few wipe-outs this week. I think there have been about five in total. Five of them have been wiped out.

Mr Powell: You have obviously been practising but it is not showing.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Let me assure you, this is all impromptu! Gold Coast joins Manly as the only world surfing reserve in Australia.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Glass House, you are about to join in my decision relating to the member for Ferny Grove and receive a warning for frivolous and irrelevant interjection. I would urge you to desist or you will be next on the list.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Gold Coast joins Manly as the only world surfing reserve in Australia. The Gold Coast won over stiff competition from Noosa and Brazil. We will have to go for Noosa next time around. Is it any wonder the Gold Coast was chosen? From Burleigh to Snapper Rocks, it is a fantastic area that is home to many—

Mr Stevens: All LNP.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Just you wait, member for Mermaid Beach!

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Happy to do so. We come in here every day and take you on. What do you give up? Nothing.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, I would urge you not to provoke the opposition. We do not need it on a Thursday. Premier, do you have anything further to add?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, I do, Mr Speaker.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I do not need your assistance, member for Coomera.

Mr CRANDON: Mr Speaker, not a word has been spoken by me for the last five minutes.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Coomera. It was certainly coming from that corner.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The commitment is clear in a letter to me this week. The director of the program Save the Waves stated—

This nomination would not have been possible without yours and your Government's support from the start of this campaign to secure WSR—

world surfing reserve—

status. It has come to our attention that from the time the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve committee headed by Andrew McKinnon began their nomination you were the first to show support.

...

The 100 page application articulated the iconic nature of Gold Coast point breaks, Gold Coast's 23 world champions, and the City of Gold Coast's soon to be released Surf Management Plan.

The dedication ceremony—

(Time expired)

Public Service, Appointments

Mr MINNIKIN: My question is to the Premier. I refer to the engagement of former Labor staffer Paul Inches, who has been contracted into Queensland Treasury as the official 'union whisperer', to try to secure the support of union bosses for Labor's proposed electricity mergers, and I ask: will the Premier reveal the value of that contract and the terms and conditions of that contract?

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Chatsworth, would you please repeat the question.

Mr MINNIKIN: Certainly, Mr Speaker. My question is to the Premier. I refer to the engagement of former Labor staffer Paul Inches, who has been contracted into Queensland Treasury as the official 'union whisperer' to try to secure the support of union bosses for Labor's proposed electricity mergers, and I ask: will the Premier reveal the value of that contract and the terms and conditions of that contract?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Some of the phraseology used by the member for Chatsworth in his question is clearly an imputation. I suggest that you might counsel him about rewording his question.

Mr SPEAKER: I will allow the question.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am not familiar with that particular issue, but the Treasurer advises me that it is a temporary appointment that is handled through the director-general. I have said very clearly that there is a merit based process and that no-one will be appointed permanently unless they have gone through a merit based process. That is my commitment to Queenslanders.

Let me be very clear about the merit based process under the former government. In relation to Jon Grayson, was there a merit based process?

Government members: No.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Michael Caltabiano?

Government members: No.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Barry Broe?

Government members: No.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Ian Maynard?

Government members: No.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mark Gray?

Government members: No.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Andrew Chesterman?

Government members: No.

Ms PALASZCZUK: John Sosso?

Government members: No.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Craig Evans?

Government members: No.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Neil Castles?

Government members: No.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Richard Eden?

Government members: No.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Brett Heyward?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Government members! I would urge the Premier not to provoke your members, please. Do you have anything further to add?

Ms PALASZCZUK: No.

Building Queensland

Ms HOWARD: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier inform the House how Building Queensland will improve decision-making surrounding infrastructure in Queensland and whether there are any alternative policies?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Ipswich for her question. I know that she is very passionate about delivering infrastructure to her region, to the beautiful city of Ipswich. Of course, this week we delivered a key election commitment and that was to establish in a statutory sense Building Queensland. Building Queensland will deliver robust and transparent decision-making to infrastructure in government. It includes unprecedented transparency. It will be governed by an independent board. It will provide to the public the cost-benefit analysis summaries, including benefit-cost ratios. It will publish all ministerial directions and it will also publish Building Queensland's pipeline of infrastructure projects. This is a higher level of transparency than Infrastructure Australia. It is a higher level of transparency than Infrastructure New South Wales. It is a higher level of transparency than Infrastructure Victoria.

The other day I was looking at social media and I noticed that of late the Leader of the Opposition has been very busy. He was bemoaning the fact that the government did not accept the opposition's amendments to include the full cost-benefit analysis in the publication process. During the debate we canvassed that matter extensively and I will not go over it, but suffice to say that it was very interesting reading the Leader of the Opposition's post because, when he put it up on Facebook, he had a very large picture of No. 1 William Street attached to it as the only example of the only infrastructure project

that they conceived, funded and started to construct. Of course, we know that this project is going to cost Queenslanders \$2.6 billion over the course of its life. It was founded on selling off government buildings for more than \$230 million less than what they were valued.

But what is also ironic and quite hypocritical about using No. 1 William Street to make the point about transparency in infrastructure decision-making? Let me be clear: the Auditor-General found that No. 1 William Street never had a business case. Not one cost-benefit analysis of No. 1 William Street was published—not one. No information regarding No. 1 William Street was published for Queenslanders to make a decision about whether this was value for money. Nothing was published that indicated that this project represented value for money for Queensland taxpayers. I say that, when the Leader of the Opposition wants to preach, he should look at his own backyard and be careful what he preaches because he might just fall off the perch.

Mr Hart interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Glass House, member for Burleigh, you are next on the list in relation to formal warnings under standing order 253A in relation to your frivolous interjections. Please desist.

Australian Energy Regulator

Mr POWELL: My question without notice is to the Minister for Energy. Earlier this month the minister publicly said that he was powerless to direct power companies in their dealings with the Australian Energy Regulator. Given the government's announcement today, can the minister advise what changed overnight to facilitate this policy backflip?

Mr BAILEY: What a classic verballing from the member for Glass House. I never at any stage said that I was powerless to do anything—not at any stage. The member is misleading this House with that question—another tricky little LNP tactic in here. The member for Glass House, who had a 19 per cent swing against him at the last election, did nothing for three years. He did nothing on electricity for three years. The 43 per cent increases in three years are an albatross around your neck and you know it.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, I would urge you not to use the word 'you.' Refer to the member by his correct title.

Mr BAILEY: My sincere apologies, Mr Speaker. The member for Glass House knows that, for three years, the government of which he was a minister did absolutely nothing on electricity. Every day the members opposite were in government, they let down electricity consumers. They promised to bring down the cost of living and they did not do it.

This government is about keeping its election promises. We said that we would keep the power companies in public hands. That is what we are doing. We said that we would look after consumers. That is what we are doing. We are giving them certainty. We are backing them up.

Since we were elected, there has been a clear process under the national energy market, where the draft determination allows all kinds of groups—councils, community groups, energy companies—to submit on the draft determination. That is a fair and appropriate process. I was not going to interfere in that process. As I have outlined already, Ergon Energy identified a \$600 million calculation error. Let me repeat that: a \$600 million calculation error by the regulator. The regulator accepted that that decision was made and said that it would deal with that error through the submission process.

So we have allowed the submissions about the complex rules around the national energy market to play themselves out. That is appropriate as part of the draft process but, once the umpire has brought down its decision, what we have done, on behalf of consumers, on behalf of better outcomes for consumers in Queensland, is back up the umpire. We could only do that because we kept our power assets and companies in public hands. The LNP was going to sell them off. We all know what privatised power assets mean. They mean higher prices for the consumer. That is still the policy of the members opposite. We know that. The member for Southern Downs and the member for Clayfield have let the cat out of the bag. They have said that on ABC Radio. We know that they have walked away from asset sales, but they are still committed to privatisation. Shame on them! They should be backing the Queensland consumer, not committing themselves to that policy.

Small and Medium Businesses

Mr BROWN: My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer provide the House with an update regarding the Palaszczuk government's support for small and medium businesses in Queensland?

Mr PITT: I thank the member for Capalaba for his question. He is a strong champion for small and medium sized enterprises in his electorate. Contrary to the comments made earlier by the shadow Treasurer, I can advise the House that, in Queensland, small to medium business confidence is on the rise. The Sensis Business Index report for August 2015 shows an improving outlook for the state's small to medium business sector.

In the August quarter for 2015, the confidence index for small to medium sized businesses in Queensland was plus 25 points. That is seven points up from the June quarter, the second highest increase of any state or territory in the country. Confidence is at its highest level in the year. What was that level under the LNP? In November last year, under the former government, it was plus 13. Sales have improved—plus two points—compared to minus 19 points in August last year under the LNP. Profitability has improved to minus five points, compared to minus 28 points in August last year under the LNP.

The expectations on both indicators are also upbeat. The Sensis Business Index is the latest in a series of surveys that is showing that people in Queensland, including operators of our small to medium sized enterprises, have confidence in our government going forward. The Sensis Business Index also reveals that businesses are looking for more incentives. That is what the state government is delivering. The \$40 million Business Development Fund is one example of incentives to small businesses which, of course, is about ensuring that we can foster innovation. We have the home based businesses that are going to be benefiting by up to \$5,000 on the table to help stay-at-home parents develop their small businesses and, in fact, start new businesses as they go forward.

The Palaszczuk government has introduced an incentive for payroll tax—a 25 per cent payroll tax rebate on the payroll tax liability of another employee when that business hires a new apprentice or trainee, something that we on this side of the House are very passionate about. Under the previous government, apprentices and trainees were abandoned.

Today, as we have heard from the Premier and the energy minister, we have acted to lock in lower electricity prices for business and industry. In directing Energex and Ergon not to appeal the decision of the independent umpire—the AER—the cost of electricity for small businesses will stabilise and, in some cases, decrease over the next five years. The LNP presided over a massive spike for small business. In contrast, we are committed to lowering costs, providing incentives for businesses to grow. Under the LNP, between 2011-12 the average electricity bill for a typical small business customer increased by about 23.5 per cent. That included in one single year an increase of 17.31 per cent.

Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Mr PITT: I take that interjection from the Leader of the House. That was absolutely extraordinary. We also know that confidence in Queensland is the equal highest in the nation in terms of the NAB Business Survey—something that is consistently proving that Queensland on the rise in terms of business confidence and business conditions. Since the election, in this state we have created 34,500 jobs. Those opposite, as evidenced by last night's debate, are still only interested in more jobs for politicians.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the member for Mount Ommaney I am pleased to inform members that there are school leaders from the Mudgeeraba State School in the electorate of Mudgeeraba in our gallery observing our proceedings. I am also pleased to inform members that there are school captains from Palm Beach State School in the electorate of Burleigh also observing our proceedings in the public gallery.

Stolen Wages Taskforce, Documents

Mrs SMITH: My question is to the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. Will the minister confirm if these application forms for the Stolen Wages Taskforce are legitimate government documents? I table them.

Tabled paper: Documents, undated, relating to nomination for appointment to Stolen Wages Reparations Taskforce [1519].

Mr PITT: If I might just be allowed a moment to have a look at the documents. I was not furnished with them prior to speaking. On face value they appear to be correct. If there is any inference in the member's question she may well wish to clarify that, but on face value they certainly look like they are correct.

Institute for Urban Indigenous Health

Mr RYAN: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Will the minister update the House on the status of the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health?

Mr DICK: I am delighted to respond to that question from the member for Morayfield because he has taken a strong stance in the previous parliament that he served in and in this parliament to support improved Indigenous health outcomes. I know he is a strong supporter of the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health. I was very pleased to be in Morayfield with him a short while ago to support the work of the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health and to open the new clinic in his electorate with an investment of \$979,000 that was provided in May to expand that clinic to provide better health care and a new exercise space for Indigenous people in the community to come to, part of the Work It Out program. There has been fantastic advocacy by the member for Morayfield.

We have also increased the base funding for the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health. We have lifted core funding to \$1.2 million. That was reduced by \$400,000 under the stewardship—if you can even call it that—of the Leader of the Opposition when he was the health minister. This is an organisation that is delivering terrific results for Indigenous people in the urban parts of our state, where we know the largest number of Indigenous people live. The Institute for Urban Indigenous Health has 17 clinics across Queensland. The overall rate of employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff across all of their activities is 65 per cent. So, 65 per cent of their staff are Indigenous and are doing terrific work. One would not cut funding to an Indigenous organisation that provides better Indigenous health outcomes. That is what the LNP did when it was in government. All of this trawling around, besmirching people's careers; people who write books, have been journalists, senior public servants, they are all subject to political attack; going through a selection process. It does not matter what happens to them, people are happy to put them in the grindstone and grind them up for their own political purpose. They are willing to do anything.

What have we heard about the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital? Cue the crickets! We have heard nothing from the Leader of the Opposition. There he is meeting with the member for Moggill talking about transition. Who were the former presidents of the AMA who came in? What did they tell the Leader of the Opposition? He had three minutes to explain himself and we heard nothing, but he wants to personally attack people. That is the character of the man who wants to be the premier of Queensland, the man who is the alternative premier. It is not good enough. He has to explain himself, having responsibility as minister for health, for cutting funding for Indigenous organisations, community organisations and not properly preparing a children's hospital and exposing children to unnecessary risk when the hospital opened. What was the transition plan? You need to cough it up, member for Southern Downs.

Northern Australia, Infrastructure Fund

Mr CRIPPS: My question without notice is to the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. Will the minister outline what new projects in North Queensland, relevant to his portfolio, that the Palaszczuk government has prepared submissions or business cases for to submit for consideration under the federal government's Northern Australia infrastructure fund?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for his question. I would direct the member to page 11 of the infrastructure document. It outlines it quite clearly. Some of the projects I could outline that are in the infrastructure fund are supported by the federal government's white paper. The federal government's white paper simply sets out an order of priorities. There are a lot of water infrastructure projects, such as Eden Bann and Rookwood. The raising of the Burdekin Dam is on that list. Also mentioned in the federal government's white paper is Nathan Dam, a very important infrastructure project—more in Central Queensland than in North Queensland.

We acknowledge the federal government's white paper. We are looking forward to working with the federal government progressing some of those projects to work in with our infrastructure plan.

Mr CRIPPS: I rise to a point of order. Relevant to my question, can the minister confirm that the government has prepared submissions or business cases for the projects that he is referring to in the infrastructure plan tabled by the Deputy Premier earlier in the week?

Mr SPEAKER: Is that a second question?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order. The standing and sessional orders do not provide for supplementary questions.

Mr CRIPPS: I rise to a point of order. My initial question contained those words, to ask the minister to clarify whether or not submissions or business cases have been prepared.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: They did not contain the words in reference to the state infrastructure plan.

Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. Member for Hinchinbrook, Leader of Government Business, I do not want a debate. You can take your discussions outside. No point of order. I call the minister.

Dr LYNHAM: We are happy to progress business cases for these plans with the federal government. We are going to take advantage of the federal government's process for Northern Australia. As I said before, we are quite proud of our infrastructure plan, quite proud of the guidance that this infrastructure plan does give to the people of Queensland and also to businesses in Queensland so they can prepare for these projects. I can outline some of them: road infrastructure projects on key freight routes such as the Flinders, Barkly, Landsborough, Capricorn and Peak Downs highways and the Kennedy Developmental Road—we want that, but where are they?—the Lower Fitzroy weirs, as mentioned; the very important Nathan Dam; Nullinga Dam. The members for Far North Queensland, the members for Barron River and Cairns, are all interested in the Nullinga Dam; the Port of Townsville expansion—what could be not more important than the Port of Townsville expansion?; the Cairns shipping development project, and we are looking forward to going to Cairns next week; the north-east gas interconnector—I have been to the Northern Territory driving this project and I have a meeting with the federal government regarding this very shortly; and the Townsville integrated sports and entertainment centre, another very important project for North Queensland. We are working with the federal government to promote infrastructure in Northern Queensland. We are the government for Northern Queensland, unlike those opposite.

Public Assets

Miss BOYD: My question is to the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy and Water Supply. The Palaszczuk government is committed to keeping our public assets in public hands. Can the minister inform the House of any alternative policies, specifically in relation to Queensland government owned electricity-generating companies?

Mr BAILEY: I thank the honourable member for Pine Rivers for her question and for her strident support for keeping our power assets in public hands. That might be something to do with the 21.3 per cent swing she achieved at the election, one of the more remarkable results at a general election in this state.

Our policy has been very clear: we went to the election and said that we would keep our power assets in public hands, and that is what we have done. We have been able to use that policy for better outcomes for Queensland consumers. I can confirm that. I can also confirm that the opposition has deserted its asset sale agenda nominally, but when interviewed on radio they seem to contradict that position. The member for Clayfield, the architect of Strong Choices, was interviewed on ABC Radio on 22 October. He quoted the inherent contradiction between the government being the owner of business and also government as the regulator. Here we have evidence that a senior opposition frontbencher is contradicting their stated position against asset sales on ABC Radio. However, there is more. A few weeks ago, also on ABC Radio, the member for Southern Downs and Leader of the Opposition said that once Queenslanders saw asset sales occur in New South Wales, they might take another look at it in terms of support. Under the surface, under the veneer of the opposition, we see an asset sale privatisation agenda.

Perhaps that is why, in the last parliamentary session, we saw the member for Everton and the member for Callide spending a lot of time in the chamber, having little chitchats with members of the LNP party room. They spent a lot of time in this chamber. I wonder why that might be. Could it be because of a lack of confidence in the member for Southern Downs as the Leader of the Opposition? Could it be that?

I also note reports that a shark has been sighted in the Broadwater on the Gold Coast. Its name is Mr David Crisafulli and it is circling the Broadwater looking for a seat on the Gold Coast. If I were the member for Broadwater or the member for Southport, I would be very concerned at having such a big fish—

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, I do not know that this is relevant to answering the question. I ask you to come back to the question.

Mr BAILEY: I can confirm that our policy is to keep our power assets in public hands. We said we would do that and we will continue to do that. On the other side, from the contradictions and the flip-flopping, we see leadership ructions going on with the member for Everton and the member for Callide and outside the parliament we see the shark circling the Gold Coast.

Ice, Rehabilitation Facilities

Mr KNUTH: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. People living in rural and remote locations throughout Queensland, including in communities such as Dalrymple and Mount Isa, are being impacted by the ice epidemic. I ask: will the minister outline what plans the government has to establish rehabilitation facilities in rural communities impacted by the drug ice?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Dalrymple for his question, which is on a very important and significant issue for the people of Queensland. I am not talking about contracts in departments, but about something that affects the daily lives of Queenslanders. The member for Dalrymple will know that, as a government, we have already immediately found and invested \$6 million in a response strategy for ice that is focused on early intervention and prevention. Ken Lay, a former chief commissioner of the Victorian police and a member of the National Ice Taskforce, has said that we cannot arrest our way out of this problem.

I believe in a strong law enforcement response. I think drugs do harm to families, individuals and communities, and I support a law enforcement response and I know my government colleagues do as well. However, we need to get people away from the drug. We need to intervene and prevent. As part of the \$6 million package, we have expanded what is called our drug and alcohol brief intervention teams, which work in emergency departments. When someone presents in an emergency department, the underlying issue may not be apparent. Often there is an injury, for example, following a physical altercation or assault, but the underlying issue will be some form of substance abuse. We have had experience of that in the past and we are rolling that out in other parts of Queensland. We are rolling out clinical nurse teams in a number of areas of Queensland, including Cooktown in the cape. We are rolling those out. In the south-west we are working on a new integrated program that looks at a whole-of-community response, not just responding to drugs but also looking at education, employment, training and what government does there.

In respect to rehabilitation, this is an important question. As I have said publicly, further investment by the government will be informed by the outcomes of the National Ice Taskforce, which will report to first ministers, premiers, the chief ministers and the Prime Minister at a meeting of COAG later this year. We cannot fund this all on our own. We want to see what the task force will recommend to the first ministers and that will then inform further investment by the Queensland government across a number of portfolios.

I am not ruling it out. I am not ruling out expanding those services, but I do not think it would be prudent for us to do further investment. Let us look at early intervention and prevention to begin with, which as the health minister I personally think is very critical. However, we will look at other programs that can be funded when we see what the national response is. Professor Richard Murray, the dean of medicine at James Cook University, is a strong supporter of the delivery of health care by rural and regional communities for rural and regional communities. He is on the National Ice Taskforce. That will inform our further investment. I think there will be a national conversation about rehabilitation that will come out of that.

Home-Based Business Grants Program

Mr SAUNDERS: My question is to the Minister Tourism, Major Events and Small Business. Will the minister update the House on the Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow Home-Based Business Grants Program that will help Queensland small business grow?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for Maryborough for his question. I know how passionate he is, as a former small business owner, to ensure that as a government we are working with small businesses to ensure that they are growing and that they have the ability to employ people and create jobs. We know that small business is the backbone of the Queensland economy and we need to work with them to grow. That is why we have a home based business bonanza happening here in Queensland. As members would know, in the budget we announced funding for the Home-Based Business Grants Program, which was an election commitment of ours. I acknowledge the work of the Treasurer, who is very passionate about this program and creating opportunities for all workers in our community, including people who choose to stay at home to balance their work-life responsibilities. Recently we opened the program and I am pleased to advise the House that we have had almost 1,300 applications already.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Ms JONES: I know; it is very exciting. Indeed, I have had to divert some staff from within the department to this project, because we are processing so many applications. This is a testament to our investment and to the fact that businesses in Queensland would like the support of their government to grow, and that is exactly what we are doing.

We will be assessing all of the eligible applications—almost 1,300 of them—to ensure that we are supporting home businesses. What do they get? In the first round, they get a grant of around \$2,500 that will help them get the professional services and advice that they need to make sure that their business starts off right. When you talk to CCIQ or other organisations in the small business community—and I met with the Australian Small Business Commissioner this week—you will be told that one of the key things that government can do to support small business is to help them gain the skills that they need to plan and grow their business. Once the first round is complete, businesses can apply for a second round, which is another \$2,500 grant, to implement the advice that they receive through the program.

We are putting our money where our mouth is when it comes to supporting small business in Queensland. We know that by working in partnership with small business, we can grow jobs in Queensland. That is what we were elected to do and that is what we get up to do every single day. What we do not want to do is come in here and see the time wasting from those opposite, who are not interested in talking about the big issues. They are not interested in talking about the issues that Queenslanders talk to us about on the street. We know that what was left by them was a broken promise for small business. They said that they would reduce the cost of electricity prices and they broke that promise. I have never had so much fun as when I doorknocked small businesses at the last election because, time after time, they told me how—

An honourable member interjected.

Ms JONES: Yes, in the sense that members went to the election and promised one thing, but they did another thing. That is exactly why they have no credibility when they come in here and attack us and what we are doing today.

Stolen Wages Taskforce, Documents

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is to the Treasurer. With reference to the papers tabled by the member for Mount Ommaney just before and the Treasurer's answer to that question that those documents were a government document, I note on those documents—

Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the House, I urge you not to interject or I will warn you. Member for Kawana, please repeat the question.

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is to the Treasurer. With reference to the papers tabled by the member for Mount Ommaney just before and the Treasurer's answer that these papers appear to be government documentation, I note, for the Treasurer's benefit, that page 2 of the documentation calls for nominations to be sent to the Queensland Council of Unions. I ask: can the Treasurer confirm whether the Queensland Council of Unions is preparing and distributing documents with a Queensland government official crest on it?

Mr PITT: I thank the honourable member for the question. I have had time to peruse the documents. As I said, on face value they appear to be—and I am actually looking into this to make sure that I know whether they are the exact document—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr PITT: Do not point, member for Kawana, it is unbecoming. Sometimes there are draft documents prepared and sometimes not.

Mr Bleijie: Your crest.

Mr PITT: They ask the questions, but they do not want the answers. In answering the member's question, following on from the member for Mount Ommaney's earlier tabling of documents, it appears to be a government document. I am ascertaining whether it is a draft document or a final document. For the benefit of all members of the House, what the documents are seeking is for people to put expressions of interest in to a member of the task force dealing with the issue of stolen wages.

Mr Bleijie: To the union.

Mr PITT: They ask the questions, but they obviously do not want the answers today.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, if you persist interjecting I will have to warn you.

Mr PITT: As I alerted the House to yesterday, this task force is a very important task force dealing with a very dark period in our state's history. It is no secret whatsoever the Labor government's partnership with the Queensland Council of Unions on this issue. They have been long-held advocates to ensure that this issue was raised not only under the former LNP government but under the previous Labor government. I have made statements to this House before and to estimates to ensure people understand very clearly that we deliberately changed the position held by a previous Labor government to reopen this very important issue.

I will ascertain whether this is a final document or otherwise. There is no suggestion that this would have been prepared by the union. It has an official government crest on it. I will ascertain whether this is where the applications were sent. The reason I say that is that this is a partnership. It has been a partnership since day one. There has been a partnership about this important issue. If you ask anyone—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr PITT: Thanks, member for Nanango, I do not need your assistance either. There is a very well-regarded position that the Queensland Council of Unions holds with many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across this state. They have consistently, regardless of the colour of the government, argued for the stolen wages reparation fund to continue and to be reopened. They argued that under a previous Labor government and they argued that under the former LNP government. Our election commitment was to reopen that fund with \$21 million.

It is no secret whatsoever that there is a direct partnership with the Queensland Council of Unions on this issue. I make no secret of it. I am not ashamed of that fact. Those opposite will try to use this as an opportunity to denigrate the union movement, denigrate members of unions and muddy the waters when it comes to issues like this. Very clearly, this is a very important issue. I would have hoped that those opposite would have tried to elevate themselves above this sort of thing.

Mount Morgan, Mine Site

Mr PEARCE: My question is to the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. Will the minister inform the House about the latest development in the environmental management of the Mount Morgan mine site?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Mirani for the question. We all know that Queensland has a rich and vast mining history. In some cases, it has left us with a rather difficult legacy. One of these cases is the former copper-gold mine at Mount Morgan in the electorate of my colleague the member for Mirani. I know how important this issue is for him. I know how important mine rehabilitation is for my colleague the Minister for Environment, me and, indeed, all government members.

This morning I have good news about Mount Morgan for the people of Mirani and the people of Queensland, particularly those along the Dee River. I am pleased to inform the House that on 26 October the Department of Natural Resources and Mines entered into a contract for a new water management agreement with mine remediation experts Carbine Resources Ltd.

The new contract will deliver a great package of benefits for the people of Central Queensland, including improved management of the mine's environmental issues. A new water treatment deal will offer better environmental outcomes, flood protection and save taxpayers more than \$150,000 per year.

The Queensland government took over management of the historic mine site in 1991, including the former open-cut pit and its 12,000 megalitres of contaminated water. The government has been operating a lime dosing water treatment plant on site since 2008, removing metal contaminants and neutralising acid levels before treated water is allowed to enter the Dee River. On-site dams have been used to store fresh water to treat and operate the plant. With Carbine's specialist technology, fresh water will not be needed.

Carbine will treat up to 500 megalitres of mine pit water over 12 months. This is at least three times what the existing treatment plant achieved in 2014-15. Better treatment and management of water will drop the water in the mine pit and reduce the risk of contaminated pit water overflowing into the Dee River, as it unfortunately did in 2015. This is fantastic news for the people on the Dee River. Most importantly, Carbine is also looking into using cutting-edge technology to extract gold, copper and pyrite resources from the tailings stockpiles, and copper from the pit water, giving a piece of proud Queensland mining history a new opportunity to be a mineral producer once again.

Kindergartens, Funding

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My question without notice is to the Minister for Education. Would the minister explain why the education department has withdrawn funding to keep the Kilcoy and Crows Nest kindergartens open?

Ms JONES: I am happy to have a look into that. Our government's commitment to providing kindergarten for all children in Queensland remains resolute in the face of a federal government that refuses to fund the national partnership agreement to the standard that is required. In actual fact, we have a federal government that has been dragged kicking and screaming to honour the national partnership agreement.

I assure the honourable member for Nanango—and I have been dealing with a number of members across regional Queensland from all sides of politics in this House—that we are working to make sure that we keep kindergartens open, despite getting less and less assistance from the federal government under the national partnership agreement. I can assure the member for Nanango that I will always fight for every child to get access to education.

I have been actively working with the member for Gregory. There have been issues with regard to getting a long-term kindergarten provider on board there. We have been actively meeting and talking about how I can get another provider to step in.

I will always work in a bipartisan way to ensure that every child gets access to kindergarten. I firmly believe, as a mother of young children, that we see a difference. I am happy to talk with the member about it. I am happy to work with the member on it. What I would really like in return, member for Nanango, is for her to lobby her federal colleagues to start funding the national partnership agreement in the way it was designed so that Queensland gets its fair share and no longer gets ripped off.

Department of Health, Recruitment

Ms FARMER: My question is to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Can the minister advise the House of the process for selecting and appointing contractors and senior executives in the Department of Health?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Bulimba for her question. It is a very important question following questions by the opposition and a planned attack on a public servant today. I inform the House that, in accordance with the provisions of the recruitment and selection direction No. 15/13, issued by the Public Service Commission, a role is not required to be advertised where it is filled for a period of up to 12 months. They were the same rules under them when they were in government and the same rules under us.

I inform the House that for the period from March 2012 to March 2015, the period when the Leader of the Opposition was the minister for health, approximately 46 executive appointments were made for the Department of Health. I am advised that, of those 46 appointments, 16 appointments were selected without a formal advertising or merit based recruitment process—direct appointment. Of the 16 approved direct appointments, six were roles established within the office of director-general—Ian Maynard, the hand-picked director-general of the Leader of the Opposition and Campbell Newman. They put him in without a selection process. Then they appointed six people without a merit selection process. Two of them were appointed for periods greater than 12 months. The total value of those contracts was \$531,000.

What about contractors? We know that between 2013-14 and 2014-15 the number of contractors in the department exploded by 25.9 per cent, costing the taxpayer \$100 million. In the office of the director-general—again, a man handpicked by the Leader of the Opposition and Newman, Ian Maynard, and put in without a selection process—what did we get? Contractors went up from costing \$700,000 a year in 2013-14 to \$6.6 million in 2014-15—a 900 per cent increase. This is hypocrisy built on double standards.

It is absolutely grubby and low rent for the Leader of the Opposition to attack Robert Hoge. This is man who worked for 1½ years in Main Roads from 2004 and for 2½ years for the department of transport from 2009. He carried the torch at the 2000 Olympics. He wrote a book. He has overcome significant disabilities in his life and he wrote a book called *Ugly*—a book that has won awards. But what we have seen in this House today is nothing but ugly.

You will do anything, Leader of the Opposition. You will do anything to promote yourself and your career. It is shameful. You ought properly to apologise. None of your members should support you on this smear campaign. I will support people like Robert Hoge. He was not appointed by me. I have had

nothing to do with it. It was done through the department and is now subject to a merit selection process. You need to explain again how six people got appointed in a DG's office without a merit selection process.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, I know you are on a roll, but you should not be using the word 'you'. Question time is scheduled to conclude in three minutes at 11.33 am. I now call the member—

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I do not need your assistance. I call the member for Burdekin.

North Queensland

Mr LAST: My question is to the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland. Can the minister outline what North Queensland projects Labor has put submissions or a business case together for consideration under the federal government's Northern Australia Infrastructure Fund?

Mrs O'ROURKE: I thank the member for the question. We have been working very closely with key stakeholders and business leaders across the north, engaging with them through the business economic round tables that I have been holding. These particular round tables have identified specific priorities for the north. Some of those priorities have included increasing international aviation capacity, facilitating James Cook University's access to Advance Queensland, progressing the Townsville Eastern Access Rail Corridor, championing for the \$75 million cooperative research centre for Northern Australia to be located in North Queensland, North Queensland roads—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mrs O'ROURKE: These projects that have been specifically identified—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Kawana, I do not know who you are having an argument with, but I urge you to take it outside.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: No. I do not need your assistance, Treasurer.

Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the House, I do not need your assistance. I call the minister.

Mrs O'ROURKE: The one thing this government has always stated is that we are a government of consultation. We are a government that will plan for the appropriate infrastructure for long-term economic growth and job creation. That is exactly what this government is doing. We will work with key stakeholders and business leaders from across the north to identify priorities for their region, and we will feed that information into the Northern Australia white paper applications. We will continue to engage with business leaders across the north to find out exactly what is important for their region, and I will personally champion those projects for the regions of North Queensland.

Mr SPEAKER: Question time has expired.

INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note



Mr PEARCE (Mirani—ALP) (11.34 am): I move—

That the House take note of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee report No. 9, *Inquiry into fly-in, fly-out and other long distance commuting work practices in regional Queensland*, tabled on 9 October.

As chair of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee, I can tell the House that the committee received 235 submissions in regard to this inquiry. There were 14 public hearings held throughout 12 regional areas, with the committee hearing from over 100 witnesses during the public hearings. We as a committee could not have completed this huge task had it not been for the commendable work ethic of committee members: Brittany Lauga, the member for Keppel; Glenn Butcher, the member for Gladstone; Lachlan Millar, the member for Gregory; Shane Knuth, the member for Dalrymple; and Michael Hart, the vice chair and member for Burleigh. Throughout the inquiry the committee members had a positive attitude and stayed focused on coming up with an outcome that was about changing the present concept of employers having up to a 100 per cent FIFO workforce—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Order! Members. There is just a little bit too much audible conversation. Please, if members are leaving the chamber, can they do so in silence? Sorry, member for Mirani. You have the call.

Mr PEARCE: As I was saying, we were focused on coming up with an outcome that was about changing the present concept of employers having up to a 100 per cent FIFO workforce and to ensure that all applicants for a mining job had a choice as to where they live for work.

The committee certainly acknowledges and appreciates the outstanding efforts of the secretariat who have spent hundreds of hours conducting research and document preparation—in particular, Erin Pasley, Research Director; Margaret Telford, Principal Research Officer; Mary Westcott, Principal Research Officer; and Dianne Christian, Executive Assistant. Thank you so much for a great team effort.

In total there are 19 recommendations put forward by the committee. Every one of them is important to improving job opportunities for every person wanting a job at mines where there have been restrictions on applicants, such as being required to live within 100 kilometres of Brisbane Airport or Cairns. The Caval Ridge and Daunia mines operated by BMA in Central Queensland were given approval by the Coordinator-General to operate under an employment policy of up to 100 per cent FIFO. There was no doubt in the minds of the committee members that this behaviour had to end.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is still too much audible conversation in the House. If people are having conversations, would they mind taking them outside?

Mr PEARCE: It is a very important issue too, Madam Deputy Speaker. Thank you for your protection.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is a very important issue. Thank you, member for Mirani. Please, members, if you are having conversations, can you take them outside?

Mr PEARCE: As I said, every potential employee should have a right to apply for a job and, if successful, these same people deserve the right to choose where they live for work. The toughest question for the committee deals with an employment condition that discriminates against an applicant through a postcode preference. After much discussion, the committee recommends that the government consider making changes to the Queensland anti-discrimination legislation to stop local workers being discriminated against on the basis of where they live.

An example of this discrimination is a situation that the committee was made aware of regarding workers who are living in Central Queensland and working at the Caval Ridge and Daunia mines. In order to gain employment and keep their jobs at these mines, those workers fly from Central Queensland to Brisbane, then wait and board a flight back to Moranbah, where they work their rostered shifts as part of their fly-in fly-out conditions of employment, and at the end of the week they return to Brisbane and hop on a plane and fly back to Central Queensland to be with their families.

The way the committee has dealt with the discrimination issue will have no retrospective impacts on current fly-in fly-out workers at Caval Ridge or Daunia mines. Nor will it impact on any existing commute practices including fly-in fly-out, drive-in drive-out and bus-in bus-out. If this recommendation is accepted, people who apply for vacancies that occur at the mines from that point on will be able to apply for a job and not be discriminated against because of where they live.

I am sure that other committee members will cover some of the other important recommendations identified, such as the recommendation to strengthen the monitoring of compliance with the Office of the Coordinator-General. Other important matters dealt with by the committee include social licence to operate, more powers for local government and independent mental health support services. I commend the committee's recommendations to address the issues raised in relation to long distance commute work practices.

(Time expired)

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (11.39 am): I also rise to speak briefly to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee's inquiry into fly-in fly-out mining work practices. This report should be mandatory reading for all members of this House. This is a very important issue to the people of North Queensland, as the chair has already outlined. The committee during its deliberations travelled extensively through North Queensland. We visited towns like Moranbah, Dysart, Blackwater, Roma and many others, and we heard from numerous people about the issues that non-residential workers were causing in their particular towns. We saw their issues with local businesses, such as bakers and butchers, and schools and infrastructure funding. That is all affected by non-residential workers not being counted in census material and things like that.

I do not intend to go into too much detail of the report because I think everyone should read it, but there are a couple of things that I would highlight to members about fly-in fly-out in particular. The chair has already mentioned Daunia and Caval Ridge mines which are presently operating at 100 per cent fly-in fly-out. It is worth pointing out to members how that process came about, because there is a misconception in some instances. If members get hold of this report and refer to page 18, there is a very good case study on Daunia and Caval Ridge mines.

In 2008 these projects were put forward and it was suggested that the Coordinator-General have a look to see how these mines might be run. The initial response from the Coordinator-General was that fly-in fly-out should be limited to 70 per cent in both of these mines. At the time there was quite a shortfall of employment availability in these towns and it was thought that fly-in fly-out could solve that problem. I think all of the members of the committee have realised over the time that we have looked at this issue that fly-in fly-out is an important part of mining. We can never stop it completely but we can maybe tone it down a little bit. At the time, as I said, Daunia and Caval Ridge had a 70 per cent limit on them. There was, however, a shortage of manpower and a request was made to the Coordinator-General to go to 100 per cent. In the process, the limit that was put on fly-in fly-out was removed. Members should be aware that every mine in this state now operates under the same conditions. There is nothing to stop any mine from deciding to go to 100 per cent fly-in fly-out.

Why are mining companies looking to move towards fly-in fly-out? During the committee's investigations mining companies were telling us that fly-in fly-out mining is 26 per cent more productive, unfortunately, than residential mining. There is obviously a problem here that we need to put out in the open. It is a problem of unionisation. We saw that yesterday when the CFMEU was outside making a lot of noise. If we refer to today's *Courier-Mail*, it states they were out there yelling—

“We are the union—

and I apologise for the next sentence—

the arse-kicking union” ...

That is the attitude, unfortunately, that the CFMEU are taking around our state. They are pushing the mining companies that far that they are having to push back. What needs to happen is the CFMEU and the mining companies need to sit down and sort this out. They really do need to sort this out, because mining companies are telling us that they are 26 per cent more productive with a fly-in fly-out workforce. That cannot last. We do not want these mines to close down, otherwise there will be no jobs for anybody. We really need to sort this out.

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (11.44 am): I am proud to stand here today and speak to the parliamentary committee report on the fly-in fly-out and other long-distance commuting work practices in regional Queensland. As a new member to this place, I must say that it was an extremely memorable experience visiting and talking to the communities that were on our inquiry list. During our inquiry we visited towns like Gladstone, Rockhampton, Moura, Middlemount, Emerald, Blackwater, Toowoomba, Roma, Dysart, Moranbah and Mackay, and we also had hearings here in Brisbane.

While we visited these communities on our travels, we heard submissions from workers in those communities, unions, local governments, service workers, husbands, wives, business owners and mining companies. During some of those visits in some of those regional towns, the emotion and heartfelt stories from the wonderful people of these mining communities really let me know that many of them feel let down by the companies that own those mines. Not only do they feel let down; they feel saddened that many good local people have had to leave their communities simply because they could not get a job in the mine just down the road.

These locals who were forced to leave are coaches of sporting teams, schoolteachers, shop owners and other important leaders in these wonderful communities. I would like to make it clear that the committee does not condone the use of fly-in fly-out, drive-in drive-out and bus-in bus-out, but it was strongly of the belief that if people choose to work in this fashion they have every right to do so. People in these mining towns did, however, make it quite clear to me that they simply wanted choice—choice of where they live for work and not to be forced to live in Brisbane, Cairns or wherever the job ad tells them to live. Even today there are still ads recruiting workers to work in mines, but they must reside within 100 kilometres of Brisbane Airport.

The parliamentary chair and very good friend of mine, the member for Mirani, Jim Pearce, is a passionate advocate for mining communities and has said—and I am fully supportive—that one of the biggest issues in these communities is mines which refuse to employ locals. The best way to raise

families in our communities is to have good, secure full-time work and a pathway for our children to gain future employment. Everybody in Queensland should be considered for a position regardless of where they live.

The recommendation from the committee to address this is to amend the Anti-Discrimination Act. This may seem like a simple recommendation, but it will mean so much to those people and those mining towns to give them choice of where they live to work. The committee worked hard to ensure that our recommendations would make a difference to the lives of people living in regional Queensland mining towns. One of the main recommendations in our report after choice included higher scrutiny at mines and expanding the state development department's audit office program of inspectors to check that mines are complying with conditions of approval as set out by the Coordinator-General at the start of that project.

The report also recommends independent mental health services for mineworkers. We heard from people who have or who know people with mental health issues who are absolutely scared to bring it to the attention of the people who employ them for fear of losing their jobs. This has to stop. All the recommendations from the committee have bipartisan support from the government, opposition and crossbench members of the committee.

As stated earlier in my speech, this inquiry was a fantastic opportunity to get an understanding of the issues affecting our mining communities. As a committee, we covered many kilometres on regional Queensland roads on a small bus. This was a great opportunity for me to listen to the local members and hear how proud they are to represent their local electorates.

The committee's report is very detailed, and I would like to make special mention of the team who helped put it all together, particularly the secretariat and Hansard who took time away from their families to help us document the findings. To Erin, Mary, Margaret, Megan and Bonnie, I thank you personally for your assistance. I commend the report to address issues raised in relation to fly-in fly-out and other long-distance commuting work practices in regional Queensland.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (11.49 am): I also would like to put on record my thanks to the secretariat for the hard work they provided as we toured around Queensland. The investigation into fly-in fly-out workforces in Queensland is a very important one. I thank the chairman, Jim Pearce, the member for Mirani, and the deputy chairman, Michael Hart, the member for Burleigh. I also acknowledge my fellow committee members—the members for Gladstone, Dalrymple and Keppel—and I thank everyone who testified to the committee. Your experiences and your knowledge has been most valuable.

This report has been keenly awaited by my constituents, because Gregory is home to several resource towns in the Bowen Basin. I did find it a little bit disappointing that the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines received a report into the economic impacts of fly-in fly-out from his appointed panel on 31 July but the parliamentary committee did not have a chance to see that until 2 October. I believe this held up the committee's deliberations a little bit.

The committee's report recommended that the Office of the Coordinator-General undertake meaningful monitoring of the outcomes of the EIS conditioning. We have also stressed the need for the collection of clear data by the Coordinator-General, the Queensland statistician and the ABS. None of the recommendations are intended to be onerous for proponents, but from a government's point of view it is futile to pass laws or set requirements if compliance is not monitored. With proper monitoring and reporting, we might actually learn something new.

In the public chatter about fly-in fly-out workforces, some have brushed away community fears about 100 per cent fly-in fly-out, stating that no mine operates on such a basis. I think that misses the point. The minister's panel said that over half the mines in the Bowen Basin—23 out of 41—are operating with non-resident workforces of 70 per cent or more. I believe that many people will find that startling; it is much greater than is commonly believed. It shows the wisdom of some testimony that we heard at the Emerald public hearing, where it was pointed out that if only 10 per cent of the current fly-in fly-out workers transiting through the Emerald airport became residents it would stabilise the property market and the local economy. I believe it would also strengthen our councils' rate bases and also underwrite our front-line public services in health, police, education and roads.

As a Central Queensland, I have seen the positive development brought by the resource industry and I consider myself a friend of the mining industry. Equally, I am not against fly-in fly-out. Applied intelligently, it can be used to defend our local economies against global price cycles. I believe the intelligent management of the resource industry can build a legacy of settlement and social

development for our future. When regional Queensland thrives, all of Queensland thrives because it unlocks our wealth. When the proportion of fly-in fly-out is too large, it means that we are abandoning regional Queensland.

Finally, I earnestly hope that the state government, the mining companies, the unions, the local governments and the local communities will take up the challenge to work together to actively promote the good points about a resident lifestyle in the wonderful part of the world which I come from, which is Gregory, a part of the Bowen Basin. Making converts to great resident workforces is the most beneficial change we can make for everyone.

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (11.52 am): It was a great privilege and an honour to be involved in the parliamentary inquiry into fly-in fly-out and other long distance work practices as a member of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee. The committee examined the impact of FIFO workforces on resource communities, including the health and social impacts, and the provision of infrastructure, housing and services. The committee travelled to and held hearings in Emerald, Rockhampton, Moranbah, Moura, Middlemount, Dysart, Mackay, Dalby, Toowoomba, Roma, Gladstone and Blackwater. We heard from over 100 local people, current and former mining workers, FIFO workers, mining companies, chambers of commerce and industry, business owners, real estate agents, local government, local police, volunteers from sporting clubs and many more. The overwhelming message was that a person should have a choice as to where they live for work and equal access to job opportunities. The committee has made recommendations based on the evidence presented to it that are fair reasonable and achievable.

From the committee's hearings we know the following: that workers have been told they are not eligible to apply for positions in the mining sector, despite being suitably qualified and experienced for these positions—even during the committee's inquiry, there were active jobs in Moranbah advertised which specifically required that applicants must live within 100 kilometres of the Brisbane airport; that rural and regional communities are suffering—locals told us that local businesses are closing down, local football clubs are struggling to form teams, and volunteers and coaches are in short supply; that many mining companies do not provide support to FIFO workers who wish to relocate to the local mining community in which they work; that locals are also not convinced that resource companies are complying with conditions of approval; that locals told us of their frustration with the lack of local procurement practices employed by resource companies—for example, local bakeries are overlooked to supply bread in favour of trucking bread and other supplies direct from Brisbane or elsewhere; that resource companies are prioritising casual workforces and the use of labour hire—there is a massive decline in the number of permanent jobs, which in turn hurts local families and communities, and some workers are on month-to-month and even week-to-week contracts, with no annual leave, no sick pay and no certainty or job security; that work rosters were central to many issues raised by stakeholders; and that there is also a clear recognition that there are a range of general workplace stress factors and specific aspects of the FIFO role that may put workers, their families and communities at risk of mental health problems.

The committee's report makes 19 recommendations in total. Perhaps the most prominent of these recommendations is that which recommends the government consider making changes to the anti-discrimination legislation to stop local workers being discriminated against on the basis of where they live for work. It is clear to me that this inquiry has demonstrated the need for all resource companies to proactively demonstrate their social licence to operate which should start with the ending of postcode discrimination. We have also made recommendations to strengthen the monitoring of compliance with the Coordinator-General's conditions on resource projects. The message to the committee from the constituents we heard from during the inquiry was loud and clear: all people should have a genuine choice of where they live for work. Choice is what this is all about.

The committee's inquiry has been welcomed by local people in Central and Western Queensland. Sarah Atkins from Moranbah is one of those people. She said that after eight years of living in the town she has been forced to move to find work because BMA's nearby Caval Ridge and Daunia mines will not employ locals. Sarah said that BMA will only look at your application if a Brisbane address is used in the application form, regardless of how suitably qualified and experienced you are. Sarah herself has been desperate enough to put a Brisbane address, fly to Brisbane on her last day of work and then fly herself back to Moranbah, just so she can keep her family together in Moranbah.

To all of the local people who appeared at the committee's hearings and those who made submissions during the inquiry, I sincerely thank you. I thank you for sharing your stories, some of which were deeply intimate, personal and heartbreaking. I also thank the secretariat of the committee and the

Hansard staff for their ongoing dedication and support. I thank my fellow members of the committee—the chair, the member for Mirani; the deputy chair, the member for Burleigh; and the members for Gregory, Gladstone and Dalrymple.

I would like to pay particular tribute to the work of the member for Mirani. The member for Mirani has been and always will be a champion for the people of Central Queensland. It has been an honour serving on this inquiry with you, Jim. You are a great mentor to me and I look forward to continuing the fight for the workers of Central Queensland side by side with you. I commend this inquiry report to the House and I, like the people of Central and Western Queensland, look forward to the government's response.

Mr SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (11.57 am): I was not going to make a contribution to the consideration of this report, until I heard the contribution made by the member for Mirani. This issue of transient workforces—because that is what it is: it is transient workforces, not fly-in fly-out—always generates a lot of emotion, a lot of misinformation and a lot of misleading comments from people who have a huge self-interest. Nobody has a greater self-interest in this than the member for Mirani. The member for Mirani is owned lock, stock and barrel by the CFMEU. The CFMEU found him lost and alone in the Coal 'n' Cattle Hotel one day in Moura and said, 'We want someone to run for Mirani,' and he has been a puppet of the CFMEU ever since.

Mr PEARCE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The allegation made by the member with reference to a hotel has come from the member for Whitsunday. It is wrong and I ask for that to be withdrawn because I do not spend my time in hotels.

Mr SPEAKER: It is not a point of order.

Mr PEARCE: I am offended by it.

Mr SPEAKER: It is not a point of order. I call the member for Callide.

Mr SEENEY: He was in Moura and someone needed to buy him a feed and the CFMEU found him lost and alone. That is how he has ended up here with the CFMEU agenda because this agenda against transient workforces is all about the CFMEU power. It is all about concentrating people in a situation where they can be manipulated by the CFMEU as they used to be in the good old days when the mining towns like—

Mr PEARCE: I rise to a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Callide—

Mr SEENEY:—Maranoa, Biloela and Blackwater—

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Callide, one moment.

Mr SEENEY:—were hotspots for the CFMEU.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Callide, you are not going to shout over the top of me. When I ask you to stop, please stop. Member for Mirani, what is your point of order?

Mr PEARCE: Mr Speaker, for the first time in 20-odd years I am insulted and deeply offended by the words of the member for Callide, by his reference to me and his reference to the CFMEU.

Mr SPEAKER: Unfortunately, I did not hear the comments the member for Callide made. Are you rising on a point of order that you found comments that the member for Callide made about you personally offensive and you have asked for them to be withdrawn?

Mr PEARCE: Thank you.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Callide—

Mr SEENEY: I will move on, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Did you make comment—no, no?

An honourable member: Can't he withdraw it? Can't he withdraw?

Mr SEENEY: If the member found something offensive, I will withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr SEENEY: Let us move on to the substance of the report. I had the opportunity to meet with the panel that was appointed by the Premier, led by Leo Zussino. It is very notable that they have not reported, that their report has not been provided to this House, because that panel understood the economic importance of transient workforces. Transient workforces are not just about boosting CFMEU power; this issue is not just about propping up the investment decisions that were made by speculators in Sydney and Melbourne who paid huge amounts of money for houses in Blackwater and Emerald on

the basis that they could get \$2½ thousand or \$3,000 a week in rent. This is about a whole generation of people who work in the resources industry from every community across Queensland—from my community, from your community, from your community and wherever I point, from your community. Those people who choose to live somewhere else and travel to work in Central Queensland do it because they choose to do it. In my electorate they live primarily on a whole range of subeconomic agricultural enterprises that could not survive without that off-farm income. In the time that I have been representing my electorate it has gone from almost entirely agricultural income to now 80 to 90 per cent of people on those small agricultural blocks depending on some form of off-farm income and the majority of that is in the resources industry. They drive to Moura, Blackwater and a range of other mining sites in Queensland. They are not going to go and live in a place where the member for Mirani and his CFMEU colleagues or comrades can control every aspect of their life like they used to do. They are not going to be subject to that sort of a lifestyle.

The issue that the CFMEU and the member for Mirani can never get past is that people in Queensland and Australia have a choice. This is a free country; they have a choice as to where they live and where they work. The issue that they bring up all the time about the two that have 100 per cent fly-in fly-out was put in place by the Labor government. It was put in place by the Labor government when I was the opposition spokesman. It was put in place because they had not invested in the infrastructure in those Central Queensland towns. There was no way that extra people could be accommodated in Moranbah at the time. The Labor government at the time—and Andrew Fraser was the driving force—put in place this provision to allow these two mines to proceed on the basis that work opportunities were provided for people who lived in Cairns. There was a requirement for 300 people, I think it was, to fly from Cairns—

Mr Cripps: Unemployment was high.

Mr SEENEY:—because unemployment was high in Cairns. The only way those jobs could be made available to the people in Cairns was if the particular shifts in those mines were structured around the transport options. They advertised for 300 jobs in Cairns and they got 2½ thousand applications so those people in Cairns could take advantage of the opportunities in the Central Highlands. They could not go and live in the Central Highlands in those days because the Labor government had not invested in the communities, in the infrastructure. We turned all that around. We changed that. The point is that this provision that they hate was put in place by a Labor government, their colleagues.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (12.04 pm): I want to thank the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee for the work they initiated with regard to the FIFO inquiry. It was a lot of work and involved a lot of hearings in a lot of towns and a lot of frustrations. It is great to see that the 19 recommendations they put forward have been well received, particularly in the mining communities. We do acknowledge that one of the things that came out, most importantly, is about choice. There is nothing worse than having a position that has been put forward that no-one can work in a particular mine unless they live in a certain place. The member for Mirani brought up at the rally yesterday the fact that people are living in towns like Moranbah and Dysart and they get on a plane and fly to Brisbane and then they fly back. They get on a bus and travel to work. They stay in the accommodation, the village at the site. They work their shift, fly to Brisbane and then fly back to Moranbah to be with their family. That is just absolutely ridiculous.

The recommendation to give choice is a good move and it is a great initiative. That was the feeling from most of the community members, particularly businesses. For example, the Moranbah bakery has been trying to get the mining companies to buy their bread. They could then employ people and provide fresh bread, but instead it is brought in from Rockhampton. This is particularly important when businesses are going broke. There are also the motels. The companies have told the contractors that they cannot get a job in the mine unless they stay in the camps and we see the motels going broke. We see the businesses going broke and we see the mining companies not supporting those communities like they did in the past.

When you look at providing that incentive and giving them the opportunity to have their choice, it gives families the choice to live there. If they do not want to live there, that is their choice. If they want to live in Brisbane or Cairns, that is up to them. But they should at least be given the choice as to where they live so that when their young ones finish school they do not have to go to Brisbane so they can work in Moranbah. It is common sense.

I say congratulations to the committee and congratulations to the member for Mirani on the hard work he put in. This was really difficult stuff. This inquiry was a lot of hard work. It involved a lot of sleepless nights, a lot of travel and a lot of time was put into this. I commend these recommendations to the House.

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (12.07 pm): I rise to speak to the report tabled by this committee in relation to fly-in fly-out arrangements in the resources sector in Queensland. From the outset I will recognise that both the chair of this committee, the member for Mirani, and the deputy chair of this committee, the member for Burleigh, have reflected that the recommendations contained in this committee's report come to the House with a degree of bipartisanship and consensus about what ought to occur in the future in respect of fly-in fly-out or drive-in drive-out arrangements or, as the member for Callide referred to them, the arrangements for transient workforces in the resources sector in the future.

I suspect that the reason there is a level of bipartisanship and consensus between government MPs, members of the opposition and members of the crossbench is that the recommendations are not particularly controversial and the recommendations are relatively moderate. Quite frankly, the recommendations that have come from this committee's inquiry are vanilla. Despite the fact they have taken a great degree of evidence from many different stakeholders across this industry or concerned with this industry, they have not been able to find any smoking gun that would create a reason or a rationale for this committee to put forward any more forceful recommendations in relation to these workforce arrangements for the resources sector in Queensland.

They are unremarkable recommendations, and as the members for Keppel and Gladstone both said during their contributions to the debate on this committee report, the most significant recommendation to come forward in this committee's report is that there be an amendment to the Anti-Discrimination Act so that no Queenslanders should be discriminated against on the basis of where they live in Queensland. The opposition is not going to oppose such an amendment to the Anti-Discrimination Act because it is common sense. No Queenslanders ought to be discriminated against on the basis of where they live in this state.

Mr Speaker, this is very upsetting to the CFMEU, because they had great expectations about what this report was going to deliver in terms of their preferred arrangements for workforces in the resources sector in Queensland in the future. Their anger at the relatively unremarkable and vanilla recommendations that came out of this committee's report culminated in their demonstration outside of this parliament yesterday. They are not pleased. They are not impressed that the efforts of the member for Mirani and his colleagues on this committee have not resulted in more tangible outcomes for the vested interests of their union. The member for Burleigh is correct in saying that the opposition comes to this report with a level of support for its recommendations in bipartisanship, as pointed out by the chair, the member for Mirani, because these recommendations are vanilla and unremarkable.

I say again to all members of this House that, despite the fact that time and time again Labor members in particular have made charges about the dreadful impacts of transient workforces, be they fly-in fly-out or drive-in drive-out, call them what you will, this committee was unable to find any smoking gun. The economic impact assessment done by the task force appointed by the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines emphasised the importance of the economic contribution of those people who are able to be engaged in workforces in this manner. I believe that it contributed significantly to the ultimate outcome of the report, and the inconvenient truth that every Labor member sitting on that side of the House needs to face up to every time is that in relation to the two case studies they regularly point to, Caval Ridge and Daunia, those approvals were put in place in 2008 while the Bligh Labor government was in power in this state. They are responsible for overseeing the approvals of those projects with those workforce arrangements. They have never been able to get over that, and it is to their ongoing embarrassment.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Comments by the Member for Callide

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I refer to the matter of privilege raised by the member for Callide this morning. The member for Callide complained that my rulings on Tuesday and yesterday were contradictory. I am more than happy to provide an explanation for the member and the House.

There are two separate issues: the first issue that I was emphasising was that serious allegations should not be made against another member without supporting information or evidence for those allegations and, according to previous speakers' rulings, that information or evidence should be provided at the time the charges or the allegations are made. On Tuesday morning the member stated—

Mr Speaker, I will be writing to you today to seek your agreement to refer the member for Sunnybank to the Ethics Committee.'

The fact is that the member had not written, and to date has still not written, to provide any information or evidence supporting the serious and specific allegation. The point being made was that if you have a serious allegation, ensure you are able to provide evidence at the time the charges are made.

The second issue is that the member for Callide was seeking the referral of a member for the unauthorised release of information from the committee. Whilst I had not received any material from the member for Callide, I had received information from another member that evidenced that an unauthorised release of information had occurred from the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee which had been the focus of matters in the House. I merely noted that I required no further information from the member for Callide to refer the apparent unauthorised release of the committee's proceedings. The point is that I already had enough information, including from sources other than the member for Callide, to satisfy me that a prima facie unauthorised release had occurred from someone—not necessarily the member nominated by the member for Callide—against whom no evidence had been tendered.

In relation to other matters, my door is always open for discussions with any member. Members can, in addition, or alternatively, raise matters in the House or write to me. Their rights are unaffected by my invitation to come and speak with me, and I find offensive any suggestion that my invitation to discuss matters is not appropriate.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE PROTECTION AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL 2015

Introduction

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (12.14 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012 and the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015 [[1520](#)].

Tabled paper: Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes [[1521](#)].

I present a bill for an act to amend the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012 to implement three specific legislative changes recommended by the special task force on domestic and family violence in Queensland and to amend the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 to remove any doubt about the lawfulness of the use of body-worn cameras.

Domestic and family violence is one of the most complex issues facing our society, and combating this horrific issue is a priority for the Palaszczuk government. We are determined to reduce the devastating effects of domestic and family violence and improve outcomes for people affected by it. The Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012 provides for the safety of people who fear, or have experienced, domestic and family violence.

The special task force on domestic and family violence recommended significant reforms to reduce the incidence of, and improve the response to, domestic and family violence in Queensland. This included a number of recommendations for specific legislative change. The Palaszczuk government has shown its commitment to the *Not now, not ever* report by accepting all 140 recommendations made by the task force. Work has begun on more than half the recommendations, and as soon as we are able to we are bringing each set of legislative reforms before the parliament. We do not want to wait; we want to act as swiftly as we can on this important issue. Two bills have already been passed by parliament as the first stage of an ongoing reform process to tackle the blight of domestic violence in our homes and in our communities. This included progressing amendments to increase the maximum penalties for breaching a domestic violence order to respond to recommendation 121 of the task force report. I will now turn my attention to the content of the bill before the House today.

The Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015 implements three specific changes to the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012 which were recommended by the task force. The first change requires a court to hear proceedings on cross-applications together. A cross-application occurs when two people seek protection orders against each other. An application for a protection order can also be made where there is already an order in

place. The Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012 currently enables a court to hear cross-applications at the same time, but it does not require this to happen. There are two primary issues with cross-applications: firstly, where orders are made against both parties, the primary perpetrator of the violence is not identified. This results in cross-orders being made when they may not be necessary or desirable, causing difficulties enforcing the orders. Secondly, cross-applications can be used as a tool to frustrate and delay the process.

Recommendation 99 of the task force was that the act be amended to require the court to consider concurrent cross-applications at the same time and to consider a later application between the same parties in the context of the order that already exists between them.

Our government response accepted this recommendation and committed to strengthening the act to require courts to consider dealing with cross-applications at the same time. The bill implements this response by making three key changes to the act's treatment of cross-applications. The bill requires that where a court is aware that there are cross-applications it must hear the applications together and determine the person most in need of protection. The only exception to hearing proceedings on cross-applications together is if the court considers it necessary to deal with the applications separately in the interests of the safety, protection and wellbeing of an aggrieved. Where a court decides to hear cross-applications separately, it will be required to give reasons for the decision. The bill also provides that when the hearing of a cross-application is adjourned a court will be required to consider whether a temporary protection order should be made to protect any person named in an application.

The bill includes provisions to require a court to take into consideration existing protection orders and associated court records when dealing with subsequent applications involving the same parties. In accordance with the existing principle under the act, these changes will ensure that the court is required to consider the principle that, where there are conflicting allegations of domestic violence, the person most in need of protection should be identified and protected.

The second task force recommendation which this bill addresses is recommendation 117. This recommendation is about requiring a court to consider including a condition as part of a protection order to exclude a perpetrator of domestic violence from the family home, also known as an ouster condition. Under the current act, a court may consider imposing an ouster condition to exclude the perpetrator from the family home, either on its own initiative or where an application is made by one of the parties to the proceedings. However, a recurring theme in the submissions to the task force was that, because the court is not obligated to consider imposing this condition, such conditions are not applied for or made often enough. Court data indicates that between 1 July 2012 and 30 June 2015 ouster conditions have been included in only approximately 28 per cent of cases. When conducting its consultations, the message the task force heard repeatedly was that ouster conditions are not made often enough. Magistrate Annette Hennessy stated at the Brisbane summit—

My own personal view is that they're not applied for enough ... if an aggrieved particularly says to the police, 'I want him gone', then they'll include it in the application. Some police officers will include it of their own volition after discussing it with the aggrieved, but a lot of times it's just not in the application.

So that makes it a lot more difficult for a court to make an order and we're fairly roundly criticised for not making enough ouster orders, but the reality is they're not applied for very often.

The task force considered that a court be required to consider whether a condition excluding the perpetrator from the home should be made, having regard to the wishes of the victim. The Palaszczuk government accepted this recommendation, and the bill amends the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012 to implement the task force recommendation. A court will be required to consider imposing an ouster condition in each domestic violence order made, whether temporary or final.

As recommended by the task force, a court will be required to take into consideration views or wishes expressed by the aggrieved person about whether an ouster condition should be included as part of a protection order. However, whether or not an ouster condition is made will remain at the discretion of the court, and the safety, protection and wellbeing of the victim and any children will continue to be the most important consideration for the court. I want to be absolutely clear that it will not be mandatory for the aggrieved to express their views and wishes about the making of an ouster condition, and if they choose not to then no adverse inference can be drawn.

The implementation of other task force recommendations will support this legislative change. Recommendation 86 includes requiring flexibility for service providers to offer crisis accommodation for all parties including perpetrators. Recommendation 86 also includes that police operational procedures support women and children staying in the home when it is safe to do so and the expansion of safety upgrades which enable the physical security of the home to be improved.

The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services has allocated \$1,380,646 in this financial year for 11 services across Queensland to undertake safety upgrades to improve the security of the home of victims of domestic and family violence. As part of the funding that has been allocated, a proportion of brokerage funds can be used by services to provide crisis accommodation for respondents who are subject to an ouster condition. This means that there is currently capacity for services to pay for short-term accommodation for respondents who are required to leave their home due to their violent behaviour.

The third key amendment in this bill relates to task force recommendation 129. In this recommendation the task force proposed that victim impact statements be introduced into the act for mandatory consideration in civil applications for protection orders. The task force heard that victims often feel their voices are not heard. In fact, the Bar Association's submission stated—

Currently, Magistrates who hear Protection Order applications will obviously weigh the evidence before them. Thus, the impact on the aggrieved will often be the subject of remarks in their reasons.

But these remarks are often the product of inference, and not informed by the actual experience of the aggrieved. Consequently, it is common for litigants to feel that the legal process is impersonal, with the aggrieved parties regularly feeling that they have not been heard by the court.

The obvious advantage of including victim impact statements in Protection Order proceedings is that the aggrieved has a direct voice to the Magistrate and can be felt heard in the court process.

The recommendation aims to ensure that courts hear directly from victims about the impact of the violence. In our response the government committed to ensuring victims' voices are heard in all domestic violence related legal proceedings. The bill implements this response by adding a principle to the act to provide that, to the extent it is appropriate and practicable, the views and wishes of people who fear or experience domestic violence should be sought before a decision affecting them is made under the act. Consideration will be given to further amendments to operationalise this for the court.

In addition, the bill also amends part 6 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 to insert a new section regarding the use of body worn cameras by police. This section supports the use of body worn cameras by police officers by providing that the use of body worn cameras in the performance of their duties is lawful. This amendment will ensure that the use of a body worn camera by police is lawful even if it is inadvertent, unexpected or incidental to the performance of the police officer's duty.

This section does not affect any laws in relation to the admissibility of any evidence gathered through the use of these body worn cameras. The admissibility of any recordings will remain a matter to be considered by the relevant court. The amendment does not affect the existing powers or responsibilities a police officer has about the covert recording of information under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 or any other act. For example, police officers will still have to make an application to the relevant authority to obtain a surveillance device warrant. The amendment does not affect the common law position that applies to the use of these and other recording devices. The amendment will provide certainty to police officers that the use of body worn cameras in the performance of their duties will be lawful.

The bill addresses three specific amendments recommended by the task force. My department has also commenced a broader review of the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012, in line with recommendation 140. The review will provide an opportunity to ensure the act provides a coherent legislative framework to support broader systemic reforms being implemented as part of the government's response to the task force report. The review will consider what other amendments may be required to the act to support or enable the implementation of the task force recommendations as well as any other particular issues associated with the operation of the act.

Community feedback, including feedback from stakeholders and people who fear and experience domestic violence, will be critical to informing the review of the act. I will soon be seeking feedback from stakeholders and the community about issues identified for consideration as part of the review. I would encourage all interested parties to participate in this process and share their views and experiences to inform this vital work.

This bill lays a strong foundation for further reforms to help keep victims of domestic and family violence safe and hold perpetrators to account. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. SM FENTIMAN (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (12.29 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

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

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

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (12.29 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, under the provisions of standing order 136, the Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee report to the House on the Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015 by 26 November 2015.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

JOBS QUEENSLAND BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 28 October (see p. 2497), on motion of Mrs D'ath—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (12.30 pm), in reply: I rise to thank all honourable members for their contribution to this debate on the Jobs Queensland Bill 2015 and for the consideration given to the bill by the Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee. This bill is part of the Palaszczuk government's broader plan to make Queensland's vocational education and training sector the strongest and most productive in Australia. As noted in the report of the Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee, all submitters supported the establishment of Jobs Queensland and they were generally supportive of its functions. Some submissions also commented on the expected benefits for the Queensland economy and business.

Jobs Queensland will identify the skills and training needs across all industries to inform this government's significant investment in the vocational education and training sector. The independent advice and reports from Jobs Queensland will help inform priorities for state investment in skills, training and workforce planning and inform the development of strategies and programs to respond to these priorities. In this way, it will enhance the fit between skills and future jobs and help support economic growth to ensure that skills are developed in areas most needed by industry in our local communities.

I will now address some of the matters that were raised by honourable members during the course of the debate. A number of the members of the opposition suggested that this body has unnecessarily replaced the Ministerial Industry Commission. Key differences between Jobs Queensland and the former Ministerial Industry Commission include that Jobs Queensland is being established under legislation so that it has a firm basis for its independence, which protects its ability to give objective advice on the skills needs of industry. Secondly, it is more responsive, because it will report to me regularly throughout the year as matters arise that are important to the skills needs of our economy. Further, the Ministerial Industry Commission was not an independent body, as the chair of that body was the then acting minister. Finally, Jobs Queensland has a defined role and is resourced to enable industry leadership of workforce planning. This ensures that industry has the capacity to identify where workforce planning should be undertaken.

The opposition has also focused on how long it has taken the government to establish Jobs Queensland. That is because we believe in true independence. Jobs Queensland's self-determination has been ensured through legislation so that it operates completely independently of government. This is because we have gone through a consultative committee process, where we had 11 submissions from a broad range of stakeholders, all of which supported the establishment of Jobs Queensland. The Palaszczuk government has taken its time with this bill to ensure that we get it right. We have developed a model that is independent, responsive, flexible and, as noted by stakeholders who submitted feedback during the committee inquiry process, meets the needs of a broad cross-section of our economy and our trading partners.

The opposition members have also asked about the funding for Jobs Queensland. The shadow minister made reference to the fact that, in his view, it was unacceptable not to detail the breakdown of that funding, including board fees. The government has allocated up to \$10 million per year over the next four years for Jobs Queensland. This amount includes board fees, which will be determined in accordance with the Queensland government's remuneration of part-time chairs and members of Queensland government bodies and Governor-in-Council. This will be only a small component of this allocation to go towards the Jobs Queensland membership. Other aspects of the funding will go towards the program funding, which is likely to be the biggest component of the funding allocation. This includes contracting research services, industry engagement and workforce planning, direct staffing costs for the Jobs Queensland secretariat and the provision of operating support for Jobs Queensland provided by the Department of Education and Training.

I can allay the fears of those opposite that there will be substantial fees afforded to the members of the boards of Jobs Queensland. Can I say that it will be in stark contrast to the board fees that were allocated to QTAMA aboard members, which was a \$75,000 annual fee to the chair and \$40,000 per annum to each board member. So if they want to question fees, I think they need to look at their own backyard and the sorts of money that they allocated. I remind the members of this House that the total cost of the QTAMA board, the audit finance and risk committee that they set up, and the CEO of QTAMA was \$677,779 just in the 2014-15 financial year. So I can assure the members opposite that our fees will be considerably less when it comes to Jobs Queensland.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Order! Member for Nanango, that is unparliamentary. I ask that you withdraw.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mrs D'ATH: Members opposite have questioned the independence of the entity. The bill ensures the independence of Jobs Queensland by providing limited ministerial powers. At clauses 22 and 23, the bill provides that I will be able to influence the work undertaken by Jobs Queensland, including by making a request or providing a written direction with which Jobs Queensland must comply. For example, I could ask Jobs Queensland for advice on a particular topic to help inform government policy. I know that the Minister for Tourism is very keen to see Jobs Queensland doing work in that particular area to ensure that we have the workforce that is necessary for the growth in tourism in the future.

I will also be able to issue Jobs Queensland with a written statement, called a statement of expectations, about my expectations for the performance of Jobs Queensland of its functions. However, importantly, clause 23(3) of the bill expressly provides that I may not give a direction about the content of any advice given to me by Jobs Queensland. Also, for transparency the bill at clause 21 requires Jobs Queensland to complete an annual report outlining how it has discharged its functions during the financial year and the activities that it has undertaken. I must table a copy of this report in parliament within 14 days of receiving it.

Although I will not be required to comply with the advice of the new entity, its advice and reports will be one key input to help me inform priorities for state investment in skills training and workforce planning and will inform the development of strategies and programs to respond to those priorities. In terms of exercising its statutory functions and developing its advice to government, Jobs Queensland is completely independent.

Establishing Jobs Queensland was one of our key election commitments—to establish an independent entity to provide industry led advice on skills and workforce development and planning. Jobs Queensland is established under legislation to ensure that it has a firm basis for its independence. The new entity will have a clear focus on genuine industry engagement, research activities and

providing strategic advice on skills and workforce development and planning. Importantly, it will be specifically tasked and resourced to work with other bodies to advise and support workforce planning—a key difference from previous bodies. This is a critical initiative allowing the state to better target our training programs and skill investment towards the current and future skill needs of our economy. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 9, as read, agreed to.

Clause 10—



Mrs D'ATH (12.38 pm): I move the following amendments—

1 Clause 10 (Members of Jobs Queensland)

Page 6, after line 22—

insert—

- (4) Also, the members must include at least 1 person the Minister considers has direct experience in the education, training or employment sectors.

2 Clause 10 (Members of Jobs Queensland)

Page 6, lines 23 to 29—

omit, insert—

- (5) A member other than a member mentioned in subsection (2) or (4) must have—
- (a) experience in a particular industry; or
 - (b) other knowledge, experience or standing relevant to Jobs Queensland's functions.

3 Clause 10 (Members of Jobs Queensland)

Page 7, lines 1 to 3—

omit, insert—

- (6) In recommending persons for appointment as members, the Minister must have regard to the following—
- (a) providing for balanced gender representation in the membership of Jobs Queensland;
 - (b) including as members of Jobs Queensland—
 - (i) Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders; and
 - (ii) persons from culturally and linguistically diverse communities; and
 - (iii) persons from regional and remote communities.

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper: Jobs Queensland Bill 2015, explanatory notes to Hon. D'Ath's amendments [[1522](#)].

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 10, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 11 to 29, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (12.38 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. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (12.39 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.

PUBLIC HEALTH (CHILD CARE VACCINATION) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 15 July (see p. 1350).

Second Reading

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (12.40 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I thank the Health and Ambulance Services Committee for its detailed consideration of the bill and its recommendation that the bill be passed. As the committee noted in its report, vaccination is an effective, proven public health measure. The committee strongly endorsed the need for children to be immunised for the vaccine preventable conditions recommended by the National Immunisation Program. The Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 amends two health portfolio acts. The key policy initiative of the bill gives effect to a 2015 state election commitment by amending the Public Health Act 2005 to promote immunisation and protect children, their families and those who work with children against vaccine preventable conditions. The bill clarifies the circumstances in which an education and care service can refuse the enrolment or attendance, or only allow conditional enrolment or attendance of a child, on the basis of their immunisation status and be protected from liability from doing so.

Presently, the Public Health Act 2005 protects an approved service from liability where the service directs a child with a contagious condition or at risk of contracting such a condition from attending the service. An approved service is also free to exclude a child solely on the basis that they are not fully immunised. However, this is not covered by any legislative protection from liability. The bill does not require an approved service to exclude a child. Instead, the bill protects the service from liability if, after following a prescribed process, a child's enrolment or attendance is refused or cancelled on the basis of their immunisation status. This process involves the approved service requesting the parent to provide an immunisation history statement issued by the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register, the ACIR, for their child. Parents can easily obtain their child's immunisation history statement from the ACIR at any time free of charge through Medicare online services, the Medicare Express Plus app on a smartphone, by emailing Medicare, calling the ACIR or in person at a Medicare service centre. Alternatively, parents may also obtain a statement from a recognised immunisation provider, for example, their local doctor, council or health service, clearly stating whether or not a child is up to date with their vaccinations. This process may further include an agreement between the approved service provider and the parent on a reasonable time frame to obtain an immunisation history statement or provide a catch-up schedule approved by a recognised immunisation provider. Even if a parent fails to produce the statement or the statement reveals the child's immunisation is not up to date, the approved service may still enrol the child or allow the child to attend. Approved services are encouraged to take into consideration a child's circumstances when utilising their discretionary power under the act. If the approved service reasonably believes the child is a vulnerable child and refusing enrolment or attendance would not be in the best interests of the child, they may choose to enrol or accept attendance if their immunisation status is not up to date or waive the requirement to provide the immunisation record.

Consultation with key stakeholders has generally confirmed a willingness to use the new process as an opportunity to talk to parents about their child's immunisation status and encourage them to vaccinate rather than immediately deciding to exclude their child from the service. An approved service includes education and care services approved under the Education and Care National Law (Queensland) Act 2011 or the Education and Care Services Act 2013. While she is in the chamber I do

wish to acknowledge the Minister for Education and the support that she and her department have provided in relation to the preparation of this bill and, importantly, the preparation that has now been done by the Department of Education—

Ms Jones: And stakeholders.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection from the Minister for Education, and education stakeholders, the work done by both the department and those stakeholders, to prepare for this. I do thank them sincerely and I will say that again at the conclusion of the debate.

The definition of approved service under the act means, in effect, that the bill will apply to family day care services, kindergarten services, long day care services, limited hours care services and outside school hours care services. The bill will not apply to unregulated services as these services are often short-term ad hoc arrangements. Schools are also excluded from the scope of the proposed bill. Immunisation has long been recognised as one of the most successful public health interventions introduced in Australia, enabling community health to be maintained and protected by reducing and eradicating vaccine preventable conditions. The majority of Queenslanders support immunisation and have their children vaccinated. This is validated by the high childhood immunisation rates in Queensland. The target for childhood immunisation coverage is set at 95 per cent to prevent the transmission of highly contagious diseases such as measles. Presently around 91 per cent of Queensland children aged five and under are fully immunised. Although this coverage is high, it still means up to 35,000 children within this age group are not fully immunised which falls short of the 95 per cent target. With groups of young children of various ages closely assembled in approved services, it is important that most, if not all, children are up to date with their immunisation to best protect children and employees at the service from vaccination preventable conditions.

In April 2015 the Commonwealth government announced federal budget measures to the effect that parents who fail to immunise their children would no longer have access to family tax and childcare benefits. In keeping with these planned national changes, the bill does not exempt children whose parents object to immunisation on the ground of conscientious objection. However, the bill makes allowances for children who are unable to be immunised for medical reasons or children who are on a recognised catch-up schedule.

The amendments to the Public Health Act 2005 will commence on 1 January 2016 should the legislation be passed through the Legislative Assembly. A comprehensive implementation plan, including a communication strategy and marketing campaign, has been developed by the Department of Health in collaboration with the Department of Education and Training to inform all stakeholders of the proposed changes and how they may be affected. Immunisation is an area where parents understandably have real and genuine concerns and the decision whether or not to vaccinate their child can be difficult for some. That is why a key feature of the implementation plan is the development of a marketing campaign promoting the benefits and importance of childhood immunisation. Communication resources will also be developed to assist families and approved services to understand the changes to the Public Health Act 2005.

I would like to turn briefly to the amendments to the information-gathering powers in the Health Ombudsman Act 2013. The proposed amendments have been developed in response to a recent decision of the Supreme Court that section 228 of the act is too ambiguous to support the issuing of a notice requiring a person to attend and answer questions. The proposed amendments address this by expressly providing that an authorised person may require a person to attend at a stated reasonable time and place to answer questions or produce documents. The amendments will ensure the Health Ombudsman has appropriate powers to carry out investigations into serious matters relating to the provision of healthcare services. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those stakeholders, both in child care, in health and in education, who provided submissions to the Health and Ambulance Services Committee and I thank them for their interest in and support of this important bill. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (12.48 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. I congratulate the committee on the work that they have done with regard to this bill, those who made a contribution by way of submissions and, importantly, the secretariat of the committee who worked so very hard to bring it all altogether. I acknowledge the deputy chair and member for Mudgeeraba, Ms Ros Bates, the member for Buderim, Mr Steve Dickson and the member for Moggill, Dr Christian Rowan, for the work that they have done. I indicate at the outset that the LNP will support this bill in its entirety. Immunisation is a

cornerstone of public health. Because we recognise the importance of immunisation in protecting individuals and the community against serious and life-threatening vaccine preventable diseases, the LNP is strongly committed to Queensland's immunisation program.

The Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 primarily aims to amend the Public Health Act 2005 to give the person in charge of an approved education and care service the option to refuse, cancel or place a condition on the enrolment or attendance of a child who is not vaccinated or up to date with their scheduled immunisations. The bill will also amend the Health Ombudsman Act 2013 to provide an authorised person with the power to require a person to attend and answer questions and produce documents in relation to investigations into serious healthcare complaints and offences under the act. The fact is that high immunisation rates need to be achieved and maintained, otherwise vaccine preventable disease will return with potential dire consequences. It is a fact that, at this point in time, there are currently 15,000 Queensland children aged one, two and five years who are not fully immunised for their age group.

The prior LNP government released an immunisation strategy outlining the broad goals, priorities and actions for Queensland's immunisation program. The strategy calls on all Queenslanders, especially Queensland families, to work together to achieve the highest immunisation rates in Australia by 2020. The strategy's aim was to achieve a 95 per cent immunisation coverage for children at one, two and five years of age. The package included a targeted communication strategy to promote immunisation, an immunisation app to improve access to reliable programs and also to be used as a reminder of information for carers, and improved public access to evidence based immunisation information.

The strategy was so good that in a submission to the committee on the bill, Associate Professor Julie Leask of the School of Public Health at the University of Sydney wrote—

The QLD immunisation strategy 2014—2017 appears to have been removed from the government website this year. However, to my recollection that strategy included a comprehensive set of measures to improve coverage.

It is important and I ask the minister to address the other initiative that the government will have in place to augment the contents of this bill to ensure the message is out there by way of education and other means, reinforcing the need for children to be immunised against preventable diseases, thus saving them, other children and others in the community from the consequences of those diseases. The risk of complication from childhood diseases such as measles is much higher than the risk of immunisation. Vaccination protects against infection, saves lives and protects those who are too young or too sick to be immunised. This bill aims to bring vaccination back to the forefront of family's minds by way of deterrent. The LNP's policy was to do that through reminders. Hopefully, a combination of both initiatives will get a larger and better result.

In the age of the internet, misleading and deceptive information about the benefits and risks of vaccination is easily disseminated and can be difficult to correct. However, the truth is that vaccinations save lives and are essential for public health. Those who choose not to vaccinate their children are placing them at risk of illness and perhaps even death, as well as those in the community who are too young or unwell to be vaccinated. Just one infectious person can introduce diseases such as whooping cough, measles, polio and diphtheria to children or adults who are not vaccinated. We can all recall the absolute horror we felt on seeing news pictures of very young children with whooping cough, as well as the empathy we felt for the parents and the small children. Those pictures send a very clear message about the need for immunisation.

Unfortunately, we cannot fully vaccinate babies until they are at least one year old. Some children and adults cannot be vaccinated, others may lose their immunity due to cancer, HIV or other immune diseases and for others the vaccine is not fully effective. That is why the term 'herd immunity' has been coined. It is important. Herd immunity is a concept that recognises that infants and people with immune problems cannot be directly protected by vaccines. However, ensuring that all others they encounter are protected greatly reduces their risk of being exposed to those infections.

It is pleasing to see that over time vaccination rates have been improving. Queensland childhood vaccination coverage rates are similar to those in other states. About 92 per cent of children are recorded on the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register or ACIR at 30 June 2015 as being fully vaccinated for age when they turn one year old and 92.3 per cent as fully vaccinated when they turn five years old. However, there are some areas across the state that are not faring so well. I am sad to say that one of the areas is, indeed, my area of the Sunshine Coast. That is a major area of concern, with only 89.6 per cent of one- and two-year-olds fully immunised and 87.9 per cent of five-year-olds, which is well below the state average. More work needs to be done in that region to ensure those figures measure up and, if possible, pass the state average.

Currently in Queensland, the AICR website shows that the proportion of vaccine refusers is at about 2.17 per cent, which is why, in part, the federal government has moved to improve immunisation rates. As from 1 January 2016, families will need to meet strengthened immunisation requirements to be able to receive childcare assistance and the family tax benefit part A supplement. The only exemptions under the proposed legislation will be for medical contraindications, natural immunity as a result of already having had a disease or where a child is part of a study in regard to a vaccine. In the past, there have been a number of headings for 'conscientious objection' that will be removed by the terms of the bill. The bill has now passed the lower house and is before the Senate and, indeed, a committee of the Senate is looking at it.

I also note that today's *Australian* newspaper has published an article stating that the Law Institute of Victoria recommends that that bill not be passed on the basis that there are better ways to provide education and incentives in regard to children being immunised. I do not agree with that statement. I fully believe that the proposal here will provide incentive. I also fully believe that the education that will come with it will provide incentive. I believe that the financial incentive provided by the bill before the House in Canberra will assist parents come to a reasonable conclusion that their children need to be vaccinated.

One area of concern is in regard to Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children of one year of age. Their rate is lower than other children at the same age. In her submission, Associate Professor Julie Leask detailed a 4.6 per cent gap in the immunisation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children at 87.5 per cent compared to non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children at 92.1 per cent. There is work to be done to ensure all children across the state are immunised at least to the herd immunity figure. Associate Professor Leask maintains that the continuing challenge in closing this gap is communicating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents the importance of having children vaccinated on time. As data shows, this does not occur in many cases, thereby putting the children at risk of contracting and transmitting serious vaccine preventable conditions.

It is imperative to protect public health and increase vaccination rates to achieve solid herd immunity from vaccine preventable diseases. The bill before the House is a good step. I add one point: when one reads the terms of the bill, one may see a risk of significant red tape being imposed upon the providers. We need to be very careful that we do not impose additional work upon childcare and other providers. There needs to be a method whereby that can be reduced, so as not to stymie their principal activity, which is providing care and/or education to children.

I simply repeat that the LNP will support the bill. We believe the bill is a good first step. We do want to see education coupled with that. I look forward to the passing of the bill in Canberra, which will provide a three-pronged incentive to ensure we get the full outcome required for the children of this state and the nation.

Debate, on motion of Mr McArdle, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 12.59 pm to 2.30 pm.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Drivelt NQ

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.30 pm): I rise to inform the parliament of an important infrastructure initiative in North Queensland. On 7 October I attended the launch of Drivelt NQ, together with the members for Townsville and Thuringowa and the federal member for Herbert. Rarely have I seen so many political and community leaders come together with such a unified purpose.

Drivelt NQ, formed by the Driver Education Centre and Motorsport Action Group, comprises a group of passionate motorsport enthusiasts and community members committed to delivering a motorsport precinct in North Queensland. This is a group that has been lobbying all levels of government for nearly 10 years to have this project established in Townsville.

Last weekend a random toll road initiative to help crowdfund the cost of a development application took place in Townsville. Over the course of the weekend in excess of 1,000 community donations were collected at five toll sites across the city where volunteers collected donations and gave out merchandise branded with the message, 'I paid the toll to save the toll'. Importantly, Drivelt NQ are not content to sit back and put their hand out for funding. They are actually out there fundraising and showing their commitment to have this project delivered.

The group require seed funding for a development application that will enable them to move forward with this project. The \$28 million precinct on Townsville City Council land at Calcium, comprising 288 hectares, would foster driver education and motorsport in Townsville. Once completed it is expected that the Drivelt NQ facility will be home to more than 11 clubs, with a total membership of more than 6,000 members.

Beneficial impacts associated with establishing the driver education and motorsport precinct include: improved driver education and road safety; reduced incentive for illegal and dangerous driving and street racing; and improved tourism and events profile for the Townsville local government area, particularly as a destination for motorsports. This facility could also be utilised for other recreational purposes such as concerts, field days, auctions, major city outdoor events et cetera. AEC have performed an economic impact assessment which showed that the project could return \$22.7 million in extra economic activity each year and provide employment totalling 120 full-time equivalent employees.

The social cost to Australia of road crashes is valued at \$27 billion annually. There is no question that government has a significant role to play in facilitating and supporting driver education programs. I commend Drivelt NQ for taking on this initiative and I stand here today publicly stating my support for the establishment of a motorsport precinct at Calcium west of Townsville.

As a police officer for 25 years I attended my share of fatal traffic accidents across Queensland and there is nothing more tragic than losing young lives in this manner. If this driver education facility can save even one life, it will have been well worth it. I am now calling on the government to get behind this initiative, which is long overdue, and provide the necessary funding and support to ensure this vital project is delivered in a timely manner.

Ipswich Rosewood Coalminers Memorial Trust



Ms HOWARD (Ipswich—ALP) (2.34 pm): Recently it was my great privilege to represent the Premier at an important event at Limestone Park in my electorate. For a city built on mining like Ipswich, the unveiling of the Ipswich Rosewood Coalminers Memorial was a significant day indeed.

It was an especially poignant day for the many family members in attendance who lost loved ones in the most tragic of circumstances. They included Keith Terry and Bill Perry, who I believe were the oldest direct descendants in attendance at the unveiling ceremony. Both were infants when they lost their fathers in the Hart's Aberdare explosion in 1936. It was also an emotional day for the survivors of the Box Flat mine disaster who, 43 years ago, lost 17 of their mates. It was an emotional day for the many people in my electorate who have worked tirelessly to see this memorial built.

This was a day that has been many years in the making. The Ipswich Rosewood Coalminers Memorial is the culmination of seven years of concerted campaigning by a group of retired miners who started out with nothing more than an idea. In the best Anzac tradition, they resolved to never give up on their mates—mates who went to work one day and never came home. So, while born out of tragedy, ultimately the memorial is a triumph—a triumph of mateship and true grit.

The coalmining industry was not only the lifeblood of Ipswich, but the lifeblood of the colony. It was coal that powered the steamers, the power station and industry in general. As well as paying tribute to the 186 miners who lost their lives between 1859 and 1997, this memorial commemorates an industry that laid the foundation for our state's economic prosperity.

Ipswich owes a great debt of gratitude to the members of the coalminers committee and coalminers memorial trust. Their determination and impressive fundraising skills have ensured that this city's place on history's stage will not be forgotten.

I would like to make particular mention of Beres Evans, who led this group, John Walker and Keith Chicken for their hard work and persistence in making the idea of the memorial a reality. Thanks to the mighty efforts of the trust, we now finally have this permanent and fitting tribute to those boys and men who lost their lives while working on the Ipswich and Rosewood coalfields.

Alongside the books and powerful documentaries that bear witness to the human cost of coalmining, we finally have a place in Ipswich that everyone can come to to reflect on and honour our fallen miners and our coalmining past. It was my great honour to unveil the memorial with the capable assistance of Ipswich Mayor, Paul Pisasale.

This was a particularly moving day for the 400 people who attended. Particularly in Safe Work Month, it is important for us to remember all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice at work. As long as workers are getting injured and dying, there is more each of us can do, especially if we want to see workplaces in our state become the safest in Australia.

The Ipswich Rosewood Coalminers Memorial in Limestone Park now stands as a legacy for those who have lost their lives at work in the coalmines of Ipswich. It was my great pleasure to be part of its unveiling.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): Order! Before I call the next speaker, can I acknowledge the school students in the gallery from schools across the state who are award recipients in the 2015 Buy Smart competition.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Old Cleveland Road

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (2.37 pm): I rise today to call on the Palaszczuk government to step up to the plate and start delivering the infrastructure our communities need. Our great state is stalling, grinding to a halt, stuck in the congestion of the Labor government's incessant need for reviews. We are now eight months into the government's term and we are yet to see any discernible progress. Our entire state is suffering from infrastructure paralysis, but, today, I would like to localise it to my electorate of Chatsworth.

Old Cleveland Road runs through the heart of my electorate and is a critical road transport artery. From mums and dads doing the school run, students heading to university, to the many workers who commute to the CBD, both on public transport and in private vehicles, Old Cleveland Road is important to getting them where they need to go safely and on time.

Many members would know that Old Cleveland Road either touches or impacts upon the electorates of Chatsworth, Capalaba, Greenslopes, Bulimba and right through to the Deputy Premier's electorate of South Brisbane. If the Deputy Premier cannot upgrade a road that runs through four Labor electorates, then who can? I will tell members: the Liberal National Party.

Unlike the Labor Party, the LNP took a fully funded plan to upgrade Old Cleveland Road to the election earlier this year. The LNP had allocated \$50 million to fix Old Cleveland Road. As the former assistant minister for public transport, I ask for this important project to be planned and costed. This upgrade would have potentially cut 10 minutes off the commute time for more than 54,000 cars that travel along Old Cleveland Road each and every day. But, instead, we have stalled. The Palaszczuk Labor government has no plan, no solution and no idea.

Doing nothing is not good enough for the tens of thousands of residents who commute along Old Cleveland Road. I will ask the Labor government yet again to show us the money. Obviously as our population continues to grow, traffic congestion will only get worse. And, thanks to the Palaszczuk government, residents are now paying more in car rego fees and have growing traffic congestion to show for it. I have doorknocked residents along Old Cleveland Road around Carina and Camp Hill and there is an overwhelming consensus that this important arterial road needs upgrading as it cannot cope with the ongoing increase in vehicle movements.

We saw the diatribe infrastructure document that the Deputy Premier trotted out recently, wearing a flash pair of pink safety boots, essentially sprouting already known infrastructure projects. The Labor state government's democratic socialist comrades running for City Hall have at least tried to come up with a bandaid solution to improving traffic flows along Old Cleveland Road. As we continue to spiral into more debt under Labor, the residents of Chatsworth do not have a glimmer of hope of receiving this vital road infrastructure upgrade that they deserve that will enable my Chatsworth community to prosper.

Startup Mackay Weekend

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (2.40 pm): The Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Science and Innovation visited Mackay on Wednesday last week to address stakeholders from business, industry, entrepreneurs and the university sector to engage with their community in the Advance Queensland investment of \$180 million over four years to create the knowledge based jobs of the future. The Advance Queensland initiative will assist new businesses to start up. The Palaszczuk Labor government has a plan to grow industry and jobs—jobs for now and jobs for the future. This is exactly what the Mackay community needs to grow our economy and jobs.

The organisation Startup Mackay was one of the stakeholder groups at the minister's briefing. Startup Mackay is the region's leading tech based entrepreneurship group. The minister's visit dovetailed into the Startup Mackay Weekend. Mackay's start-up sector impressed some of the best minds in business when budding entrepreneurs throughout the region came together to develop and pitch their ideas to potential investors.

A 54-hour start-up weekend held at the Central Queensland University in Mackay was an opportunity for students, businesspeople and all those with a good idea to develop their business model further with support from local experts and industry mentors.

Mr Seeney: Even Mulherin was more interesting.

Mrs GILBERT: Excuse me. They are being offensive.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): Order! Was there a specific comment that you found offensive? Continue please. I remind members to be orderly.

Mrs GILBERT: This is a workplace, and it was only last sitting week that we all went down to the park for Red Rose Day when the Leader of the Opposition actually said that we should not accept offensive behaviour in the workplace. So those opposite should listen to the words of their leader.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. My point of order is that those of us on this side of the House have to listen to offensive things being thrown at us all the time. Just because the honourable member over there is part of the government—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I call the member for Mackay.

Mrs GILBERT: The start-up weekend was a great time for Mackay to showcase the innovation that is happening in our centre. The top three presentations of the weekend were as follows. One was an app for coin and bank note collectors. This app has already been picked up by one of the investors and has the potential to go worldwide. There was also a safety bracelet for children. It will allow children to send messages back to their parents without needing a phone. They can send a message to say, 'Yes, I have arrived safely at tennis,' or 'It is time to pick me up.' Another innovative idea was a wireless smoke alarm, for which you will not need to stand on a ladder to change the batteries. This alarm will be able to send you information about heat and smoke when you are away from your home.

(Time expired)

Dimbulah Hospital

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (2.43 pm): On Tuesday, 27 October I tabled a petition containing 787 signatures calling for an urgent and critical upgrade to the Dimbulah Primary Health Centre, locally known as the Dimbulah hospital. The Dimbulah community are passionate about this issue and have been very proactive in lobbying my office and the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service for a replacement facility to house the only medical service in that rural community.

In recent days, just prior to his resignation, the chair of the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Board acknowledged the urgent status of this project. This need has further been acknowledged by the Minister for Health. I also take this opportunity to thank the former chair of the hospital board, Bob Norman, for his work and dedication to bettering health services across the electorate.

This petition of the residents of Dimbulah and district draws to the attention of the House the critical need to upgrade the Dimbulah Primary Health Centre as a matter of urgency. The Dimbulah hospital is a major centre and it provides a combination of essential health services for members of communities in both the Dalrymple and Cook electorates.

This facility was built in 1964 and no renovation has been carried out to this day, with asbestos known to be an issue in the structure. On behalf of my community, I bring to the attention of the House that the building is rapidly deteriorating under the harsh elements experienced in Far North Queensland. Significantly, the outdated and deteriorating facility frankly does not lend itself to the delivery of contemporary health services. There are constraints relating to the safety of patients and health workers. The administration hub is situated in the hallway, which has no capacity for confidentiality and privacy—a major concern for health professionals and patients alike. The narrow doorways also prevent access for wheelchairs and trolleys. This raises grave concerns for patient transfers and impacts ambulance officers and hospital staff in the course of doing their job in caring for patients.

The Dimbulah hospital works in conjunction with the Mareeba Hospital located 45 kilometres away and reduces the burden of Mareeba families. Significantly, the Dimbulah hospital service reduces the number of vehicles on the main road network and is of enormous benefit to elderly and vulnerable members of the community. The Dimbulah hospital plays a critical role in providing a place for people who are isolated by distance or illness. An upgraded health centre would ensure that patient care and emergency services are maximised.

On behalf of the petitioners, I respectfully request the House to fast-track the upgrade of the primary health centre at Dimbulah. Accordingly, I also table in the House letters of support from the community and, further, a non-conforming petition calling on the minister to visit the hospital site so that

the minister can see firsthand the appalling conditions of the Dimbulah hospital. I respect the minister and ask him to respect the wishes of the good people of Dalrymple by doing them the courtesy of attending the electorate in response to the letters and petition.

Tabled paper: Non-conforming petition regarding the Dimbulah community healthcare facility [1523].

Tabled paper: Correspondence, various dates, addressed or copied to the Member for Dalrymple, Mr Shane Knuth MP, regarding the Dimbulah Primary Health Care Centre [1524].

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the next speaker, I acknowledge in the gallery the teachers, students and parents of Aspley State High School.

Gold Coast, World Surfing Reserve

 **Mr de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (2.47 pm): This morning in question time the Premier reinforced the government's elation at the elite status recognition of a key tourism generator in Queensland. Literally tens of thousands of people have been supporting the adoption of a world surfing reserve on the Gold Coast, and I did too. Who else did? Surfers, beach goers, tourism operators, the Commonwealth government, the Gold Coast City Council and the Palaszczuk Labor government. They all supported the adoption of a world surfing reserve. But who was hoping for a wipe-out on this, as the Premier described this morning? It was only the LNP—out there on their own. They were rejecting some great positives for Queensland. However, in stark contrast, let us talk about what the world surfing reserve and the surfing industry means—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Continue, member for Springwood.

Mr de BRENNI: The community benefits of the surfing industry mean \$1.4 billion worth of direct tourism investment; 20,000 jobs supported by surf tourism; the opportunity to achieve the highest accolade for our state; the views of the families, the hundreds of thousands of tourists, who head in droves to the coast; and the emergence of surf sports as a highly sophisticated organised sport. It is somewhat pathetic that the opposition still ignored all of those factors. But ignorance has been the MO of the opposition all year. They ignored the economic benefits of safe workplaces. They ignored the conventions of this parliament. They ignored logic by claiming that moving public holidays in Queensland would impact on when New South Wales tourists visited the state.

It is probably of little surprise that many in the surfing community have gone so far as to use surfing lingo to describe those opposing the world surfing reserve as 'kooks'. The dictionary defines a 'kook' as 'a person regarded as strange, eccentric' and is often used to describe a person with disregard for the norms of a social or community setting. Kooks, indeed.

It does not surprise, then, that the estimates process this year revealed the LNP cut the tourism budget in half, but during the last sitting week, despite the kooks and their isolated moaning, our coastline was crowned a world surfing reserve—right here in the heart of our job-creating tourism mecca on the Gold Coast. I place on the record for everyone who loves the beach and the surf, and especially on behalf of everyone who works in tourism on the Gold Coast and in Queensland, thanks and congratulations to the Premier, the ministers, their staff and the team at the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve, especially Andy Mac and Wayne 'Rabbit' Bartholomew. I want to thank the pro and recreational surfing community, the supportive Gold Coast City councillors, the tens of thousands of Queenslanders who did their bit, whether they signed a petition, put a sticker on their car, paddled out or turned up to a rally. Thank you to all those who trusted this Labor government to do our bit.

Royalties for the Regions

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (2.50 pm): The Royalties for the Regions funding program was the best thing that has ever happened to country towns and country people across Queensland. We put in place the Royalties for the Regions funding program when we came to government as a multichannel funding conduit despite the fact that we had inherited a horrific financial situation where we were heading towards \$100 billion worth of debt. A lot of those projects under Royalties for the Regions are now coming to fruition, and we are opening a lot of them across regional Queensland. It is no surprise that within the current Labor government attempts are being made to discredit the program.

We have heard the minister come in here and talk about a range of projects that supposedly were not properly assessed. We have heard comments about the projects not being properly administered. It is no surprise that this government would seek to discredit and discontinue what has been one of the most successful programs for country towns and country people. On the department's website—the minister's own website—the evidence is there. Royalties for the Regions funded 64 road

projects totalling more than 282 kilometres of road. RFR funded 23 bridges and intersection upgrades. It funded 16 regional airport upgrades, and they are desperately trying to criticise the airport upgrade in my own electorate even though it was one of 16, including one at Lockhart River, which gave access to that community.

The program funded 35 water, sewage and waste management projects across Queensland. It funded 20 flood mitigation projects and it funded 18 diverse community infrastructure projects, and some of those were very gratifying. We aim to fund projects that could not be funded any other way. We aim to fund projects that could not receive funding through the normal departmental prioritisation program—things like two childcare centres in small country towns; a new purpose-built medical centre in Dysart; the replacement of a commercial wharf at the Innisfail boat harbour, and what a great job that one was; revitalisation of the Yeppoon foreshore; and my personal favourite, the swimming pool for the kids in Karumba. It would never pass a value for money test, but anybody who wants to criticise it needs to stand in front of the kids at Karumba and tell them they cannot have \$1 million for their swimming pool despite the fact that they have been part of the resources industry for so many years.

I confidently predict that we will hear more from this government trying to discredit Royalties for the Regions. We will hear more from that lot over there trying to bring into disrepute one of the best funding programs that country towns and country people have ever enjoyed.

Foodbank

 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (2.53 pm): Members of the House received an invitation not so long ago from Foodbank, the astonishing organisation based in my electorate which is the largest food relief organisation in Australia. The invitation came from Ian Brusasco, as the chair, and encouraged members to visit Foodbank to see the work that they do. I am not sure how many members took up that invitation. However, having spoken to many who did, I could see that, like me on my first visit there, they were deeply touched by what they saw. It is impossible not to be a slightly different person once you have been there.

Last week marked a milestone in Foodbank's history when Ian Brusasco stepped down as chair. At 87 years of age, and after 19 years in the position, he felt it was time. He was the second only chair since its inception 20 years ago, the first being Clem Jones, and he leaves the position in the capable hands of John Debenham. In the 20 years of its existence, Foodbank has distributed through the charities it supports, of which there are now 300, the equivalent of 126 million serves of food. Foodbank referred to Ian as 'the father figure of the organisation responsible for so much of its success'. He has been completely driven to make sure the organisation can fulfil its mission, and I do not believe there is any business, politician or anyone who could be of use to the organisation who has ever been able to say no to him. It just would not be worth your while.

Ian has dedicated himself to the community for his entire working life. In 1988 he was named a member of the Order of Australia in recognition of the sport of soccer. In 2001 he was awarded the centenary medal for distinguished service to business and commerce. In 2008 he was honoured as a 'Queensland Great'. In 2012 he was named an Officer of the Order of Australia for distinguished service to the community of Queensland through leadership roles with a range of public administration, sporting and charitable organisations, particularly Queensland. That is without even mentioning the 50 years he spent on GOC boards, including chair of the Gladstone Ports Corporation and WorkCover Queensland, and over 10 years as a Brisbane City Council alderman. However, Ian will tell you that, of all those things, his involvement with Foodbank gave him his greatest satisfaction in his public life.

I know that he would want me to use this speech to give a plug to Foodbank. He would want me to tell you that each year two million people rely on food relief. That is one in every 10 Australians in need—around half of them children—and that you need to go to Foodbank to see what it is really like, to donate, to support or to help in any way you can. I urge everyone in this House to do that. However, I also urge everyone in this House today to pay tribute to a man who has left an indelible mark on Queensland.

Mooloolah River Interchange

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (2.56 pm): On 15 October, which was the previous sitting of the parliament, I raised an issue of the Mooloolah River interchange and the lack of infrastructure that the Labor Party is not investing in the Sunshine Coast. I said in that speech God forbid anything happening

on Kawana Way that the hospital is cut off, bearing in mind that the hospital has not yet opened. Lo and behold 24 hours later a water tank exploded onto Kawana Way spilling three million litres of water, and the road was closed for four days. It was also closed last weekend.

For six days the major arterial road to the Sunshine Coast university hospital was completely out of action. Cars could not get to it. Businesses were cut off. Businesses lost money because Main Roads put signs up 'Kawana Way closed' which was only meant to be for a portion of it. That was 24 hours later after I delivered a warning to the Minister for Main Roads, who in his arrogant style stood up here and said that it is no issue; the LNP were not going to invest in that road. Well, we were. We were going to invest \$400 million into the Mooloolah River interchange, which would mean that when the hospital opens in 2016 congestion would be eased a lot more than is the case at the moment.

The minister cannot keep hiding behind the fact that the LNP lost the election, because we did lose the election. But the reality is that that does not mean the Labor Party does not have an obligation to the Sunshine Coast community to deliver the roads and infrastructure that the Sunshine Coast community will need into the future. I see them laughing over there. I see Rick Williams, the member for Pumicestone, laughing. They can laugh all they want. The reality is a \$2 billion hospital is coming online next year. If we have proven anything in the last few days, it is that the roads and infrastructure around the hospital will not be adequate to deal with the pressure that will be mounting on that hospital and the roads.

We know what is going on. The Labor Party is a do-nothing government that has no plans. It released an infrastructure plan which is a regurgitation. What would we think when we have the likes of the member for Mackay sitting over there who takes a point of order because someone said she was delivering a boring speech and we were nearly accused of domestic violence with her speech. For goodness sake, what has this parliament become when we have incompetent members like the member for Mackay not knowing what her due responsibilities are to her constituency, not having a clue about the roles and responsibilities in this place, sitting over there with such a glass jaw that we talk about the incompetence of the Labor government, the mismanagement of the Labor Party, the fact they are driven by union bosses and their preselection relies on them. They sit over there and say, 'Don't offend me.' This is a place of debate of policies and ideas. If you cannot stand the heat in this kitchen, then get out. That is what I would say to the member for Mackay. I hope she takes offence, because I am offended by her incompetent presence in this chamber.

(Time expired)

Epidermolysis Bullosa

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (2.58 pm): Earlier this year I met Ken, a good man cooking a fundraising sausage sizzle at the FoodWorks at Burpengary. Ken was fundraising for an organisation called DEBRA. DEBRA is the national Dystrophic Epidermolysis Bullosa Research Association of Australia. DEBRA is the peak national support and advocacy organisation for people who have epidermolysis bullosa and their families. Children born with EB are also known as butterfly children. EB is a very rare genetic disease that causes the skin to blister and peel with the slightest touch. Living with EB has been likened to living with third-degree burns. It is very painful and sufferers must be bandaged everyday with dressings to protect and medicate their wounds. There are around 1,000 Australians living with EB.

To be honest, before meeting Ken I had not heard of EB or DEBRA. Naturally, I asked Ken why he was involved with DEBRA. Ken informed me that a family member, Gavin, had had EB. Sadly, Gavin passed away a few years ago but, being a Burpengary boy through and through, I knew exactly who Gavin was. Everyone in Burpengary knew who Gavin was, even if they did not know his name. Every day, people would see Gavin, limbs bandaged, travelling around on his souped up motorised scooter. A few years ago, I was pleased to meet with Gavin. Gavin was an inspirational young man, and I know he is missed by many people.

Having been inspired by memories of Gavin and the fundraising efforts of Ken, I made contact with DEBRA and was pleased to meet with DEBRA's chairperson, Dr Jenny Marty, and I briefly attended this year's national EB camp and conference. Jenny outlined to me the great work being done by DEBRA every day—from providing support to people with EB and their families, to delivering awareness training for medical practitioners, supporting medical research into EB and being a strong advocate. DEBRA is fighting hard to make the lives of people with EB just that little bit better. In fact it was DEBRA's strong advocacy in 2012 that convinced the federal government to increase funding for the national EB dressing scheme and expand the scheme's eligibility criteria.

In Queensland, DEBRA provides funding to support a dedicated EB nurse at the Lady Cilento hospital. It would be remiss of me not to say that DEBRA would be eager to explore additional partnership opportunities with Queensland Health to support the EB nurse program and expand their good work. Whilst there is always more to be done, as this week is national EB Awareness Week I encourage everyone to find out more about EB and the good work of DEBRA.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): That concludes the time for private members' statements.

PUBLIC HEALTH (CHILDCARE VACCINATION) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 2598, on motion of Mr Dick—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (3.01 pm): It is good to get up and continue the good discussion on the childcare vaccination bill. I think we need to look at a bit of the history of childhood vaccinations in Australia to understand this a little better. Since the introduction of childhood vaccination for diphtheria in 1932 and the widespread use of vaccines to prevent tetanus, pertussis, which is more commonly known as whooping cough, and poliomyelitis in the 1950s, deaths in Australia from vaccine preventable diseases have declined by more than 99 per cent. It is important, however, that the downward trend in morbidity and mortality from these vaccine preventable diseases is maintained and carefully monitored and that changes are interpreted in relation to the vaccine coverage.

I congratulate the minister for bringing this bill into the parliament. The primary objective of the bill is to increase childcare vaccination rates and to also give the person in charge of an approved education and childcare service the option to refuse, cancel or place a condition on enrolment or attendance of a child who is not vaccinated or not up to date with their scheduled immunisations. The committee received 45 submissions on this bill and they were published on the committee's web page. A public hearing was held and there was good consultation all around.

The World Health Organisation describes vaccination as 'the process by which a person is made immune or resistant to an infectious disease'. For the benefit of fellow members of the House, I will quote from Queensland's Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, because I believe she best summed up immunisation with her comments. She said—

Immunisation has long been regarded as one of the most successful public health interventions introduced in Australia, enabling community health to be maintained and protected by reducing and eradicating vaccine preventable diseases.

Nobody wants to see an unwell and sick child spreading an otherwise preventable disease to other children in childcare centres. History demonstrates what can occur to populations with the spread of disease, such as rubella and other well-documented plagues—they have wiped out millions of people around the world. Vaccination is a key health priority in the modern age and rightfully remains a key priority for the Queensland government. It is generally recognised as a simple, safe and effective way of protecting people by reducing the incidence of vaccine preventable disease.

The Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services said it right during his introductory speech when he said that Queenslanders support childhood vaccination with the evidence showing that vaccination rates are at 92 per cent. However, the fact that we have 15,000 children who are unvaccinated means we still have some work to do to increase the target rate to 95 per cent. There are of course some people who cannot, for medical reasons, receive vaccinations, such as newborns, pregnant women or immunocompromised individuals. However, with herd immunity—that is, the greater population being vaccinated—this cohort of people still receives some protection because the spread of contagious diseases, such as influenza, measles, mumps, rotavirus and pneumococcal disease, is relatively contained within the broader population.

I believe more can be done to protect our children—through education of parents and communities that childhood vaccination is vital in preventing serious illness in children. This is particularly so in rural and remote communities, where data shows that the percentage of fully immunised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children is lower than in the general child population. That is something I saw in my years as a flight paramedic, having retrieved serious ill children from remote communities in the north. Sometimes the outcome of these cases is tragic, with the child succumbing to an illness that could otherwise have been prevented. Many infants and children from rural and remote communities suffer as a result, so I congratulate the Minister for Health on his

commitment in introducing this bill and, in particular, on closing the gap on Indigenous health with his record announcement of \$200 million of funding over the next four years which was delivered in this year's state budget. I would, therefore, recommend that part of that funding goes towards educating and providing more services around education in child vaccination services in these particular areas of North Queensland to further close the gap on Indigenous health.

I would like to speak about those who oppose vaccination, and I respect that everyone has a right to have their views heard. However, as I have said, given my experience in paramedicine over the last 25 years, I have relied on evidence based research, as have many in the Queensland Ambulance Service. For example, the Australian immunisation handbook 10th edition demonstrates a number of diseases, effects of same and side effects of vaccine.

I wish to share with the House the example of meningococcal infection, which causes septicaemia and meningitis. One in 10 patients die. This is a terrible disease which we have seen take young lives. Those who survive can have long-term permanent problems, such as loss of limbs or brain damage. By contrast, when given the vaccine to prevent meningococcal infection, one in 10 have some local swelling, redness or pain at the injection site, fever or irritability. Serious side effects are very rare.

I think on a risk benefit analysis, it is clear to me that we need to ensure that our children are vaccinated—like mine are. We want to protect our children with vaccinations. I just want to add a bit on the meningococcal vaccine. It is currently available. It is not funded by the Commonwealth so I hope that the federal health minister, Sussan Ley, takes note of the good work that we are doing here in Queensland on improving the vaccination rates. We are certainly doing our bit to improve those rates. The federal government can certainly do their bit by providing funding for that particular vaccine for meningococcal. I implore the Commonwealth to do that. Again, I have retrieved sick babies and have seen babies and young children with meningococcal disease or septicaemia and it is horrible.

The Queensland Ambulance Service carries a specific antibiotic called ceftriaxone to combat the disease. When it reproduces inside a child it is quite devastating. That is probably one drug I wish that the Queensland Ambulance Service did not have to carry. Let's get some further funding from the federal government for meningococcal. It is \$130 a shot and it is needed, particularly in those rural and remote communities.

I would like to acknowledge the good work done by all members on the Health and Ambulance Services Committee on this bill, our chair, the secretariat and all those who participated in the public hearings on the important issue of vaccination. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (3.10 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. The purpose of this bill is to amend the Public Health Act 2005 to give the person in charge of an approved education and care service the option to refuse, cancel or place a condition on the enrolment or attendance of a child who is not vaccinated or is not up to date with their scheduled immunisations. Currently, the Public Health Act does not require parents to provide information about their child's immunisation status at enrolment or empower those in charge of a service to refuse to enrol a child or place conditions on their enrolment if they are not immunised.

Immunisation remains one of the most successful public health interventions introduced in Queensland. As not only the deputy chair of the Health and Ambulance Services Committee but also a registered nurse, I know that immunisation is crucial to making sure our kids are healthy. Immunisation allows for communities to be protected from outbreaks of sickness and particularly in the case of early childhood it allows us to feel as confident as possible in our ability to place our kids into the care of institutions such as early childhood centres.

Whether it is to boost immunity or to protect against travel, occupational or lifestyle risks, it should be recognised that the need for accessible vaccinations is lifelong and begins at childhood. That is why we must allow for the administrators of early childhood centres in Queensland to have the discretion to remove or suspend the enrolment of kids who have not been vaccinated and who do pose a risk to the health of other kids in their care. This in turn will also provide a greater incentive for parents to make sure their children are immunised to allow them to continue with their early childhood education.

When considering this bill, it is important to note the history of immunisation policy in Queensland and how successive parliaments have set about to boost vaccination rates in this state. Historically, immunisation and vaccination policy has been largely bipartisan, and this bill continues with this tradition. In the past both sides of this House have recognised that a healthy society requires elected representatives of all political persuasions to work on common-sense solutions to increase the rates of immunisation in Queensland. When the LNP was in government a \$3 million incentive was implemented

to improve vaccination rates in a bid to inspire local strategies to protect young Queenslanders. Announced by the Leader of the Opposition during his outstanding tenure as the Minister for Health, we said that while our statewide vaccination rates were amongst the best in Australia, we need to plan new strategies to lift rates of inoculation to a new level. Recognising that local health services are the most effective way to address a large number of health issues, a key plank of our vaccination strategy for Queensland was a bonus system to reward hospital and health boards for effective strategies that boost local rates. Our policy gave local hospital and health services that improved vaccination rates a share in \$3 million in additional funding. This was to be achieved in a variety of ways like outreach services and tailored reminders aimed at parents and individual communities.

At that time our vaccination rates were exceeding the national rates in a number of categories including in early childhood but we knew that we needed to do more. With Queensland being home to a wide range of communities, climates and cultures, we tackled this issue through effective local strategies based on local knowledge. Similarly, the comprehensive vaccination and immunisation policy we took to the 2015 state election recognised that immunisation is the most cost-effective way to prevent outbreaks, illnesses, hospitalisations and death from diseases like measles, whooping cough and diphtheria.

At the time we said we want Queenslanders to have the lowest incidence of preventable disease in Australia, and this still holds firm today. Our strategy was to help parents keep better track of their kids' immunisation needs and to make vaccines more accessible for everyone by enabling community pharmacists to administer them. We set a target of 95 per cent coverage for children at key milestones, and the bill we are debating today also recognises that a 95 per cent target is necessary to achieve herd immunity which prevents the transmission of highly contagious conditions.

The history of this issue is particularly important in relation to this bill as during the tenure of the former LNP government, a similar private member's bill was introduced with the same primary objective of this bill. It was different in a number of ways to the bill we debating today. Members may recall that as a member of the former health and community services committee at the time, I did raise a number of concerns about the private member's bill and as a result the former committee recommended that that bill not be passed. The concerns I raised included the ability of parents to prove that their children had acquired immunities and how we can deal with babies who were too young to have gone through vaccination protocols at the time their parents enrolled them in childcare facilities. With the federal government's no jab, no play legislation coming into effect, which largely changed the landscape by strengthening immunisation requirements and decreasing the extent to which conscientious objections can be raised, my concerns have largely been addressed. It is with this in mind that this bill received a bipartisan recommendation from the committee that the bill be passed.

We want the positive legacy of the former LNP government in relation to vaccinations and immunisations to be continued so we can achieve our 95 per cent herd immunity target, which is what this bill sets out to do. This recommendation comes after a thorough committee review process during which we heard from a number of health experts about the importance of vaccination and the way they can help to make the community safer from sickness. I am aware that many Queenslanders feel strongly about vaccinations and there are some in the community who are ideologically opposed to vaccinations, believing them to be potentially unsafe.

During the committee process opponents raised allegations about neurotoxins and other substances in vaccinations, the interactive effects of vaccines, allergies and the research behind widely used vaccines. In response, the Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, noted the strong evidence which exists to assure the committee that vaccines were both safe and effective. She emphasised that the majority of submissions which opposed the bill had been made by individual members of the public and that many of the concerns were largely nonspecific. Not only that, but she noted worldwide there has been estimated that immunisation programs prevent approximately 2.5 million deaths each year and that due to immunisation, diseases such as diphtheria, tetanus, haemophilus influenzae type B and poliomyelitis do not occur or are extremely rare in Australia.

As a nurse I was pleased to see Dr Young reassure the community of the safety of vaccines, noting that they have been trialled extensively and that in the vast majority of cases no side effects exist. In addition to the committee's consultation, as the member for Mudgeeraba I have been consulting widely with childcare centres in my electorate to see how they would respond to this legislation and how federal policies are impacting their administrative practices. In my electorate I have approximately 28 early childhood centres and I make every effort to visit these centres regularly to hear their concerns. In most cases, as I have heard from them on a number of occasions, the centre staff told me that the

new requirements will be catered for and the systems that they operate within can be changed to accommodate legislative changes, particularly if these proposed changes give more power to early childhood providers in relation to their children's health.

In turn, as we debate this bill today, it is important that we acknowledge the importance of vaccinations to our community, particularly as early childhood education remains incredibly important to our kids. In turn, we need to ensure that proper safeguards are in place to ensure the health and wellbeing of our kids whether they are at home or in the care of an early childhood centre in our community. As I have said, this is an area of policy which has always received bipartisan support, whether under the former LNP government, which introduced a number of common-sense methods to increase vaccination rates at a local level, or through this bill, which has received the support of the Health and Ambulance Services Committee.

As a mother of three children, one of whom faced some serious difficulties when receiving her vaccinations as a result of allergies, I want to ensure that the kids of today are given the care they need to withstand the diseases that they can routinely face in everyday life. On a personal note, when my daughter was very young she was diagnosed as a superallergy baby. Among those allergies she had a very severe egg allergy which resulted in anaphylactic shock. Back then—24 years ago—most of those were egg based. I had to make the decision as to whether or not she was vaccinated.

She also had a hole in the heart at the time, so every time my daughter had a vaccination she went to the OR and had them done with an anaesthetist. I would be down in the children's ward waiting to hear 'respond blue, theatre' because I knew it would be my daughter. But with all of the other issues that she had to face, I took the informed decision to vaccinate her. At around the same time in Melbourne in the early 1980s there was a huge pertussis outbreak and there were a number of children who had had severe reactions. I think there was one death as a result of the pertussis vaccination, so that led to a whole campaign to stop newborns or neonatals and babies under six weeks of age from having their injections. I will never forget being in the paediatric unit at Box Hill Hospital, and every one of our single rooms was filled with babies under six weeks of age with pertussis. Luckily no child died, but that was as a result of a bit of a scare campaign. I do understand that one per cent of the population really do have a medical reason for not being vaccinated—I was one of those one per cent with my own child—and I took the decision to protect her from other diseases.

I would also like to thank local childcare operators when I have been out and about in my local area for the time that they took to provide me with their insights into childcare vaccination requirements, and I look forward to continuing to work with them to foster even better and healthier early learning environments for our kids.

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (3.20 pm): I wish to speak in support of this bill, and in the interests of public health I urge all members of the House to also support this bill. Like most of the issues we deal with in the Health and Ambulance Services Committee, there are extremely strongly held views about vaccination. As a health practitioner I must go where the evidence leads, and the case for vaccination is strong.

Professor Leask, a social researcher; Beth Mohle of the Queensland Nurses' Union; Dr Jeanette Young, Chief Health Officer and Deputy Director General, Prevention Division, Queensland Health; and Dr Richard Kidd of the Australian Medical Association, all agreed during our hearings that vaccination is effective and its benefits far outweigh the risks. According to Ms Mohle, other than clean water, vaccinations had the most significant impact on people's health during the 20th century. The inquiry into this bill is not, and never was, an inquiry into the effectiveness of vaccination; it is instead a debate about a proposed method to achieve herd immunity in our community. Health professionals accept that vaccination is effective, and this view is supported by the overwhelming majority of the community. I just want to take a moment to remind people about what we are dealing with here.

In our modern society we have forgotten what damage infectious diseases can do. During the inquiry I asked Queensland Health to compile a list of adverse outcomes related to vaccination and compare that to the effects of an infectious disease. I will not go through them all, but a few are instructive. Meningococcal infections will kill one in 10 patients and leave two in 10 with permanent long-term damage such as the loss of limbs or brain damage. I have nursed several patients who have lost all of their limbs as a result of this infection.

I note that there are several types of infections and complete immunisation is not available for all types of meningococcal, although I wish there were, and the number of types of meningococcal that can be immunised against is growing every year. Meningococcal is a devastating disease for the

individual and their family; I will never forget those brave people who rebuilt their lives. But I am sure that, like me, they would not want this disease running wild in our community. We can, and we must, immunise against meningococcal C and continue to search for vaccinations against the other strands.

Compare the one-in-10 death rate to the adverse outcomes from meningococcal C vaccination. One in 10 people will experience localised swelling, redness and pain at the injection site. Serious adverse events are extremely rare—in the order of over one in a million—so this certainly does not compare with a 10 per cent death rate. I should say that those serious adverse events are anaphylactic events and they do not result in death. The numbers that result in death are extremely small compared to one in a million.

You can also ask any nurse, and they will tell you that at some point they have cared for someone with post-polio syndrome. Next year will mark 50 years since the introduction of the polio vaccine, and we are still dealing with the aftermath of polio infections 50 years later. Post-polio syndrome has lifelong impacts on survivors and their families; however, the survivors are the lucky ones. Up to three out of 10 people who contracted polio died from it; a 30 per cent death rate. The adverse outcomes are similar to those from meningococcal vaccination; that is, they are extremely rare and incomparable to the damage done by an unrestrained infectious disease. You only have to look at the Ebola outbreak to see how devastating an infectious disease can be, with a death rate of 50 per cent.

All health interventions involve risks, and parents are constantly called upon to make decisions that involve risking their children's health. This is an extremely difficult thing to do. I often think about the risks involved in general anaesthesia. The rate of mortality for healthy individuals receiving general anaesthesia, according to the Australian College of Anaesthetists website, is about one in 100,000. That is still a high-risk procedure, yet the benefits of modern surgery still far outweigh the risks and parents regularly rely on general anaesthetics for their children's wellbeing.

We know that for vaccines to be effective we need to reach what is called herd immunity, which requires about 95 per cent of the population to be vaccinated. Current rates vary, but in Queensland the rate is currently sitting at about 92 per cent. This small number can make a big difference. Put simply, as the number of unvaccinated people decreases, the number of potential disease carriers increases and so does the number of people who are susceptible to infection. Anything below a herd immunity of 95 per cent means that we dramatically increase the chance of a disease carrier and a disease recipient encountering each other and spreading the disease.

This bill proposes to authorise childcare centres to exclude children who are not up to date with their immunisation schedules. This bill is broadly supported by childcare centre owners, managers and workers. It will respect those children who, for medical reasons, cannot be fully vaccinated. This represents a very small percentage of the population and those children are deemed to be up to date.

Professor Leask argued against taking what some might consider to be a punitive approach, advocating education programs as being more likely to increase vaccination rates. She noted that there is a certain proportion of the population who will never vaccinate their children due to strongly-held convictions. That number is estimated to be somewhere around two per cent. Professor Leask relied on her extensive and academically sound research to back her arguments. She and other witnesses raised concerns about the impacts of excluding children from childcare centres and listed a number of unintended consequences such as the clustering of non-vaccinated children into a single childcare centre.

It should be noted that this bill does not compel parents to vaccinate their children, but it does propose serious consequences for their decisions. Like all members of the committee, I deeply dwelled on Professor Leask's evidence, as she is a great supporter of vaccination with the aim of achieving herd immunity. In my view, there are already numerous initiatives aimed at increasing vaccination that rely on education, encouragement and the provision of free, easily-accessible vaccines. There remains another group of people who are not opposed to vaccination per se but who, for a range of reasons, do not get organised to vaccinate. I believe that this group will be motivated by this legislation to vaccinate their children. Queensland Health has committed to an administrative review two years after the commencement of this legislation. I join with the other committee members in strongly suggesting to the department that during the review they consider whether vaccination provisions, if passed, have resulted in any potential negative unintended consequences.

I would like to thank the committee, particularly those with a non-health background, for working through this legislation diligently. I also take this opportunity to thank the secretariat, particularly research director Brooke Hastie. Brooke is leaving his role in parliament this week, and I thank him for his service and wish him well in the future. I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the chair of our committee, the member for Nudgee, and wish her a happy birthday today.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr KELLY: As I have said, this bill is not about the efficacy of vaccination. I can name numerous diseases that I would like there to be a vaccine for. The recently developed and implemented HPV vaccination will, and is, protecting many people from cancer. I know there is research being done around vaccines that may have the capacity to significantly curtail autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, lupus and multiple sclerosis, all devastating diseases which I hope we will find a vaccine for sooner rather than later. I doubt that, with a mortality rate of 50 per cent, there would be one person in western Africa who would refuse an Ebola vaccination, and I wish the researchers the best of luck in finding a vaccine for that dreadful disease.

Health professionals constantly have to make difficult decisions. We rely upon ethical frameworks that often require us to balance competing interests to make decisions that can and do have extreme impacts on the lives of people we seek to serve. Often these decisions are made in very short time frames under extreme pressure. Like the other members of the committee who are involved in health professions, I have brought these skills and this thinking to the consideration of this bill. No healthcare professional takes this responsibility lightly and all of the members of this committee took their responsibility seriously. In the interests of public health, I commend this bill to the House.

 **Dr ROWAN (Moggill—LNP)** (3.30 pm): I rise to address the Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. Preventing the spread of potentially life-threatening infectious diseases via vaccination programs is an important public health measure which has delivered significant benefits for many communities not only in Queensland but also around the world. Reducing and eradicating the spread of vaccine preventable infectious diseases must remain a top priority of current and successive governments. There is clear and irrefutable data in relation to vaccine efficacy and safety, with the Therapeutic Goods Administration continuing its evaluation and monitoring of and reporting on the safety of vaccines.

The Health and Ambulance Services Committee of the 55th Parliament received a number of submissions during its deliberations with respect to this legislation. Based on sound evidence, the Health and Ambulance Services Committee has recommended that the Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 be passed. As a doctor and former president of the Australian Medical Association Queensland and the Rural Doctors Association of Queensland, I believe that this is the right thing to do for Queensland. I make this statement based on my years of professional training and clinical experience.

Along with other strategies being implemented by the Australian government, this legislation will assist in ensuring our community has high rates of immunisation, ensuring greater community protections against communicable diseases. As a doctor I have seen firsthand the devastating individual, family and social consequences of infectious diseases such as whooping cough, measles and the life-threatening complications caused by rotavirus and *Neisseria meningitidis*, otherwise referred to as meningococcus.

I take this opportunity to highlight some other matters in relation to communicable and infectious diseases. Not only in Queensland but also across other jurisdictions and internationally, growing antimicrobial resistance to commonly utilised antibiotics and antifungal and antiviral agents not only threatens our way of life but also has the potential to seriously curtail technical medical procedures including organ transplantation, intensive care services and the provision of chemotherapy for various cancers and malignancies. The issue of antimicrobial resistance needs to be viewed as a multifactorial problem, not just general practitioners possibly overprescribing. The use of antibiotics within the agricultural sector along with hospital based strategies to ensure judicious usage and compliance with recommended guidelines also need to be considered.

The Australian government has recently published Australia's first National Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy 2015-2019. This is a well-thought-out strategy and is to be highly commended. From a Queensland government perspective, new approaches could include (1) a statewide summit of key stakeholders using a 'one health' approach so that the agricultural industry's perspective can be heard alongside that of human healthcare providers; (2) support for a statewide antimicrobial stewardship program to provide assistance for smaller regional centres and their hospitals, given the significant work already progressed in larger tertiary metropolitan hospitals; (3) while statewide surveillance for antibiotic resistance already exists, integration of data from the community, particularly from pathology companies, does not occur but if this did happen Queensland would have a better overall picture; (4) support for innovative projects with the potential for commercialisation in rapid diagnostics and/or the development of new antibiotics; and (5) funding for fellowships within Queensland Health for clinical researchers involved in publishing about translational research in relation to antimicrobial resistance.

All jurisdictions including, Queensland, need to ensure a sufficiently large percentage of their populations have been vaccinated to achieve herd immunity. Vaccination is the most effective method of preventing the spread of infectious diseases. It should be remembered that widespread immunity due to vaccination is largely responsible for the worldwide eradication of smallpox.

There are a number of community groups that exist which question the validity, safety and scientific evidence with respect to the value of individual and community vaccination programs. I believe they are misguided at best. The antivaccination movement was given greater impetus following the publishing of the fraudulent paper of Andrew Wakefield in the *Lancet* in 1998. This fraudulent paper alleged that the measles-mumps-rubella, MMR, vaccine was linked to the onset of autism spectrum disorder. The article was widely criticised for its lack of scientific rigour and basis, with it further being discovered that fraudulent data was used in the preparation of the paper which was submitted for publication. The *Lancet* fully retracted the paper in 2010 and Andrew Wakefield was struck off the United Kingdom's medical register for the fraud he had perpetrated.

The World Health Organization coordinated the global eradication efforts in relation to smallpox. Whilst the World Health Organization year 2000 target for the eradication of polio was not reached, it is still incredibly close. Measles will be the next target. However, new and emerging infectious diseases remain problematic and are of concern. Infectious diseases such as dengue, Japanese encephalitis, melioidosis, bat associated viruses such as lyssavirus and Hendra virus, and other diseases such as SARS and avian influenza, Ebola and Middle East respiratory syndrome are all causing concern in our global community.

An ongoing understanding of disease emergent threats involves a range of research fields and disciplines including vector biology and ecology, host vector pathogen interactions and the prevalence and transmission of various pathogens. Research in these fields allows for knowledge to be developed to potentially keep track of diseases and develop comprehensive strategies to reduce their human impacts.

Since the introduction of vaccination for children in Australia in 1932, deaths as a result of vaccine preventable diseases have decreased by 99 per cent. This is despite population growth since that time in all jurisdictions across Australia. Vaccines are safe, given that rigorous clinical trials are undertaken prior to them being made available for clinical use. The Therapeutic Goods Administration maintains the Database of Adverse Event Notifications, which lists all adverse event reports made in Australia for all medicines including vaccines. The ability to deliver vaccine programs is one of the most important public health measures and is often rated as one of the foremost significant developments in modern medicine alongside sanitation, the development of antibiotics and the ability to deliver anaesthesia for surgical procedures.

I take this opportunity to thank the chair of the committee, Leanne Linard MP, the member for Nudgee; the deputy chair, Ros Bates MP, the member for Mudgeeraba; and my fellow committee members for their thorough work and commitment to this important area of health policy with respect to vaccinations. I also acknowledge the committee secretariat staff, Mr Brook Hastie, Ms Kathleen Dalladay, Ms Emily Booth and Ms Clare Keyes. The eventual passage of the Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 will allow for a comprehensive multidepartmental implementation plan to commence and continue, benefiting all residents in my electorate of Moggill and Queenslanders generally.

There are some matters which require bipartisan support. Vaccination is one of them and medicinal cannabis is another. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the announcement today of \$3 million in 2016 for a medicinal cannabis trial at the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital. I offer my support to this cross-jurisdictional trial for treatment resistant childhood epilepsy. I also offer my support for the proposed regulatory changes allowing Sativex to be used as an adjuvant treatment for the symptomatic relief of neuropathic pain and spasticity in multiple sclerosis patients. I commend the Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 to the House.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! Before I call the member for Nudgee, I would like to wish her a very happy birthday and promise her that we will not sing for her, but only because it would not be appropriate in the chamber.

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (3.38 pm): Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I rise to speak in support of the Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Media coverage earlier this year of infant deaths resulting from vaccine preventable conditions such as whooping cough has highlighted the need for government to continue to take action to protect the public from the health risks associated with vaccine preventable conditions.

The objective of the bill before the House is to promote immunisation to protect children as well as those who work with children from vaccine preventable conditions. Vaccination is an important public health strategy and a key health priority of this government. Immunisation has long been recognised as one of the most successful public health interventions introduced in Australia, enabling community health to be maintained and protected by reducing and eradicating vaccine preventable diseases.

The majority of people support immunisation and have their children vaccinated, which is validated by the high childhood immunisation rates in Queensland of approximately 92 per cent. Within my electorate of Nudgee, the immunisation rate is closer to 93 per cent. These rates are high and are the product of long-term and concerted public education campaigns at a local, state and federal level and are reflective of a broad acceptance in our community of the merit and importance of immunisation against preventable disease.

Commonwealth research indicates that, since the introduction of vaccination for children in Australia in 1932, death from vaccine preventable diseases has fallen by 99 per cent despite a threefold increase in the Australian population over that period. Beyond our borders, the World Health Organisation strongly supports immunisation as a proven means of controlling and eliminating life-threatening vaccine preventable infectious diseases and estimates that, globally, immunisation prevents between two and three million deaths each year.

Although childhood immunisation rates for Queensland are higher than Australian immunisation rates, they are still below the national and state target of 95 per cent required to achieve herd immunity for diseases such as measles. These statistics indicate that over 15,000 Queensland children aged under five are not fully immunised. For immunisation to provide the greatest benefit, a sufficient number of people need to be vaccinated to halt the spread of bacteria and viruses that cause disease. Herd immunity, while protecting those who are already immunised also protects those who are not, including the most vulnerable and at-risk groups, including children too young to be immunised and those who are unable to be vaccinated owing to a medical reason or who are immunosuppressed.

The bill before the House will amend the Public Health Act 2005 to give an approved education and care service the option to refuse, cancel or place a condition on the enrolment or attendance of a child who is not vaccinated or not up to date with their scheduled immunisations. Under the legislation, an approved education service act includes family day care services, stand-alone kindergarten services and long day care services and outside school hours care services. It does not apply to nannies, babysitters and playgroups.

A child's immunisation status is said to be up to date if the child is age-appropriately immunised, the child is following an approved immunisation catch-up schedule or the child has not been vaccinated owing to medical contraindication. The amendments mean that, if on request a parent does not provide an immunisation history statement showing that their child's immunisation status is up to date, the person in charge of an approved education and care service will be empowered to make a decision to refuse to enrol a child at their service, conditionally accept enrolment and/or attendance of the child at their service, or cancel the enrolment or refuse attendance of the child at their service. The power provided to approved education and care services is discretionary. It does not prevent a service from allowing unvaccinated children to enrol or attend their service. It also allows for an agreement between the service provider and parent on a reasonable time frame to obtain an immunisation history statement or provide a catch-up schedule approved by a recognised provider if required.

The bill is not seeking to be punitive but instead to encourage immunisation rates sufficient to achieve the broadest protection possible for this vulnerable cohort and, further, to provide approved education and care services with the ability and discretion to respond to parents' wishes for their child to be enrolled in an environment supportive of immunisation and the public health benefits that herd immunity provides. As part of discussions in this regard, many parents and early childhood workers have raised their desire for such an environment with me, the government and fellow members of this House.

The bill seeks to encourage those who do not have a genuine medical reason for not vaccinating to do so. Clause 6 of the bill includes a protection from liability for a person in charge of a service from making the decision to refuse enrolment or attendance. Similarly, protection is also afforded where the person decides to accept enrolment or attendance regardless of immunisation status.

Approved education and care services are encouraged to take into consideration a child's circumstances when utilising their discretionary power under the Public Health Act. If the person in charge of an approved service reasonably believes that a child is a vulnerable child and enrolment or attendance would not be in the best interests of the child, they may choose to enrol or accept attendance

if their immunisation status is not up to date or waive the requirement to provide an immunisation history statement. A vulnerable child may be one whose parents have limited literacy, where English is a second language, or is maybe the child of parents in rural and remote areas where distance has prevented children from being fully immunised. Closing the gap in the immunisation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children is also a continuing and important challenge.

The committee received 45 written submissions, many of which were not supportive of the proposed amendments. I appreciate that the issue of childhood vaccination elicits strong emotions on both sides of the debate and I thank those who made a submission on the bill to the committee and who appeared before the committee. Many of the submissions that were received were from those who conscientiously object on the basis of personal philosophical grounds or a medical belief that immunisation should not occur in full or in part. This is often referred to as conscientious objection and is estimated to represent just over two per cent of parents, with Queensland consistently having the highest rate of conscientious objection of all states and territories. Currently, almost 10,000 Queensland children are recorded as being not immunised or fully immunised owing to conscientious objection. Concerns raised by the Australian Vaccination-Skeptics Network included concerns about vaccine safety, the veracity of claims pertaining to herd immunity and a belief that vaccinations significantly contribute to the incidence of chronic disease and disability, particularly in the area of autoimmune disease.

Concern was also raised that the ability to refuse to enrol an unvaccinated child in the interests of public health is discriminatory. The bill's explanatory notes provide—

The Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 prohibits discrimination on the basis of a number of attributes ... however immunisation status is not a recognised attribute. The Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 also provides a broad exemption for actions which are reasonably necessary to protect public health ... It is therefore considered the possible infringement on individual's rights and liberties presented by the Bill are outweighed by the public health benefits it will achieve.

Advice provided at the committee hearing by Associate Professor Julie Leask of Sydney University raised a number of potential unintended consequences of the legislation. A key concern in her submission was the potential to punish children for the decisions of their parents by restricting their access to educational opportunities afforded by child care. The committee noted in its report that the—

... Department of Health has committed to an administrative review two years after commencement to determine whether further amendments are required to enhance the effectiveness of the legislation.

It was a strong suggestion of the committee that the department consider, as part of this review, whether the vaccination provisions have resulted in any potentially negative unintended consequences.

Importantly, supports will be put in place by the Department of Health to assist parents to access immunisation history statements through a range of options, including online and telephone services and through Medicare offices. A media campaign aimed at informing parents and childcare centres of the changes in the bill will also be rolled out by the Department of Health and a telephone service provided to answer questions that parents and childcare centres may have regarding the bill.

This bill promotes immunisation by sending a very clear message to parents that, unless a genuine medical reason exists, childcare centres have the discretion to exclude a child whose immunisation status is not up to date. The proposed changes accord with the Commonwealth policy from 1 January 2016 that families with children who are not immunised and who do not have an approved exemption will not be eligible to receive Commonwealth allowances.

As a mother of two children aged under five years of age, I understand at a personal level the concern and fear that parents can feel in regard to possible side effects of vaccination. As my first child approached the age for his first vaccination, the topic naturally came up with my GP at his normal check. My GP and paediatrician both took the time to discuss and outline the validity of immunisation and to provide me with some reputable empirical sources should I wish to do further reading, which I did.

According to the *Australian immunisation handbook*, about one in 15 children who contract measles develop pneumonia and one in 1,000 develop encephalitis—brain inflammation. The corresponding side effect of the vaccine is about one in 10 will have local swelling, redness or pain at the injection site or fever. About one in 20 develop a non-infectious rash. In regard to pertussis, or whooping cough, about one in 125 babies under the age of six months with whooping cough die from pneumonia or brain damage. About one in 10 will experience local swelling, redness or pain at the injection site or fever from the vaccine. After immunisation, children are far less likely to catch the disease if there are cases in the community and, if those children catch the disease, they are likely to exhibit only mild symptoms. For me, the benefit of protection against these diseases far outweighs the risks of immunisation.

I would like to turn now briefly to the amendments to the Health Ombudsman Act. The bill also contains an unrelated health legislation amendment to the Health Ombudsman Act to expressly empower an authorised person to require a person to attend and answer questions and produce documents in relation to investigations into serious healthcare complaints and offences under the act. Essentially, the amendment will clarify an existing power under the act, following a Supreme Court ruling in *Moosawi v Massey* that the existing power under the act was not sufficient. In that regard, without full powers the Health Ombudsman will be unable to effectively undertake investigations into serious healthcare complaints. The amendments will apply retrospectively to validate notices already issued under the existing provisions to ensure that information obtained and decisions made since the act commenced in 2014 are not invalidated because of defects relating to the issuing of notices.

In closing, I would like to thank my fellow committee members, committee secretariat, Department of Health and all who made a submission to the inquiry for their contributions. I would also like to make special mention of Mr Brook Hastie, outgoing research director for the Health and Ambulance Services Committee, for his valued assistance to the committee and wish him well in the future as he leaves the Parliamentary Service to pursue a new job opportunity. Finally, I thank the minister for his focus on this important public health measure. The Health and Ambulance Services Committee were unanimous in our bipartisan support of this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (3.50 pm): First of all I would like to thank the committee members, the staff who assist us with the information we require to come to a decision and also those people who attended the hearings. It was quite outstanding to hear the different perspectives and points of view from so many different Queenslanders. I rise to speak on the Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. This bill addresses an important issue and, from the outset, I would like to note my support for this bill.

Parents in Queensland who vaccinate their children really should feel confident to take their children to child care without worrying that their children could be at risk of contracting a serious or potentially life-threatening illness because of the conscientious objections of others. Unfortunately, this is not currently the case. Although vaccination rates in Australia have increased since the Childhood Immunisation Register was established by the Howard government in 1996, vaccine objection rates for children under the age of seven have also increased, especially under the conscientious objector category. This means that currently over 39,000 children aged under seven are not vaccinated Australia-wide because their parents are vaccine objectors. This is a worrying increase of more than 24,000 children over the last 10 years.

Having taken a lead from the New South Wales 'no jab, no play' laws, the Queensland government has proposed to give childcare centres the choice whether or not to accept children who were not fully vaccinated. The bill will see that those childcare centres that choose to reject enrolments based on immunisation status will be legally protected, but directors will have the discretion to leave their enrolment policy where it currently is. This means that in Queensland, childcare centres will be able to create their own policy on this issue. One has to wonder if that is enough because preventable diseases such as whooping cough and measles are making a comeback. Let us not forget that conditions like whooping cough, or the 100-day cough, may mean three months of discomfort for most healthy adults but are potentially fatal for very young children. One has to wonder if it is enough seeing that Queensland's immunisation rates for children sat at 92 per cent in the last quarter of 2014, short of the 95 per cent recommended for strong herd immunity. This is extremely concerning as it poses a great risk to other young children and the broader community. This choice, the choice not to immunise, is not supported by public policy or medical research.

I think Dr Google has a lot to answer for. Somehow, the anti-vaxxers have been alarmingly effective in planting seeds of doubt in certain pockets of the community. Vaccination is more than a personal choice, it is a social responsibility. It is like not driving drunk or not smoking around people who do not want to breathe in other people's cigarette smoke. Immunisation is a social responsibility because it is something that affects everyone in our communities, especially the vulnerable: those who cannot be vaccinated because they are too young or too sick. As a community we must have zero tolerance for misinformation about vaccinations. Scientific consensus, backed by extensive research, shows that vaccines are safe and effective. The debate against vaccination is one that has been manufactured by those with a vested interest in undermining confidence in vaccines. Those like Andrew Wakefield, who has been accused of an elaborate fraud by the *British Medical Journal* for suggesting there was a link between the MMR vaccine and autism. Mr Wakefield planned to launch a venture on the back of an MMR vaccination scare that would profit from new medical tests and litigation-driven testing.

It is important to acknowledge that major illnesses like polio have disappeared because of the availability and use of vaccines. In a major milestone Australia was declared measles free in 2005 by the World Health Organization, but this was before we became complacent, when we stopped being so diligent about vaccinating and it got a chance to take hold again in our great country. In many ways vaccines are a victim of their own success, as we no longer see children affected by polio in leg braces or confined to iron lung wards in hospitals. Out of sight, out of mind has lulled communities into a false sense of security.

In April this year the National Centre of Immunisation Research and Surveillance for Vaccine Preventable Diseases warned that nearly half of Australia's suburbs do not have enough people immunised against measles to protect them against outbreaks of the potentially deadly disease. Although measles has been officially eliminated within Australia, international travel means the condition is being imported, putting children who are not fully immunised at risk. Queensland Health issued health alerts as recently as August following an outbreak of measles at the University of Queensland and in Toowoomba.

The previous LNP government launched an immunisation strategy during its term of government to educate parents about the importance of vaccinations. Members would well remember that in April this year the coalition government introduced a no jab, no play, no pay for childcare support. Under the no jab, no pay policy, from January 2016 families will no longer be eligible for subsidised child care if their children are not up to date with their vaccinations or the Family Tax Benefit Part A end-of-year supplement. This means vaccine objectors will not be able to access these government payments. This policy has been put in place to reinforce the importance of immunisation and protecting public health, especially for children.

This is not aimed at people who have medical grounds for not vaccinating. As a matter of fact, the herd protection provided by having over 95 per cent of the population vaccinated is of great importance to this group. This is about the safety of our children. This is about the safety of our communities. I urge all people to inform themselves with fact and not with internet fiction. I would like to close by wishing our chairperson a very happy birthday and I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (3.56 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr Crawford: I will take that interjection and wish her and anybody else who might be having a birthday a happy birthday. I do not want to cover off a number of areas that have already been discussed, but I want to localise this issue to my electorate and the electorates around me. In Cairns in Far North Queensland we are on one of the frontiers of Papua New Guinea. Our medical services and our aeromedical retrieval services, the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the like, are often transporting and treating patients coming out of the top end of Queensland, from the Torres Strait and also many coming from the PNG area, an area where there is at times little or no vaccination and certainly pockets of rampant diseases such as tuberculosis, whooping cough and measles as we have heard members talk about tonight. Medical crews, pilots, nurses, paramedics, either in the air or on the ground, who have to transport these people in a very confined space often do not know that these patients have these diseases at the time. A person gets transported in a small plane for two hours and then sits in an ambulance for another 30 or 40 minutes and then it may be hours later that those crews actually find out that, by the way, that patient you brought in a few hours ago has measles; therefore, you and your ambulance or your aeroplane or whatever is now at risk and has to be decontaminated, you have to be decontaminated and you have to tell your family. I have been in that situation and I know that it is quite stressful for medical staff. However, it is even more stressful for the families around them. A number of staff have young children of their own and they do not want to go home. They do not want to expose their children to that risk. They have the stress of thinking, 'Do I have measles?' or 'Have I picked up TB?' My point is that, although the conversation tonight is not about the medical industry, I do not want to see people working in the childcare industry undergoing the same degree of stress, which affects not only staff but also parents and families.

I totally support the committee's recommendation to pass the bill and, certainly, the objectives of the bill. I endorse the comments of the member for Buderim. His analogy to cigarette smoke was bang on the mark and I totally agree with it. I thank the committee. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (4.00 pm): As a parent and a grazier, I value the importance of vaccination. As a parent, I value the protection that vaccination has given and will continue to give to my children and others with whom they may come into contact. As a grazier, I have been affected by

not being vaccinated and I have seen the benefits of vaccination on my stock. Vaccination is one of the greatest advancements science and medicine have given the world. It protects children, it protects us and it protects our community. It prevents serious ongoing health conditions and it saves lives. Vaccination is about making us stronger. It triggers our immune system to do the work, to fight against certain diseases. It means that our immune system can respond effectively, reducing the severity of a disease or preventing a disease from developing.

I am a living example of why vaccination is imperative. Through my own apathy, I contracted a vaccine preventable disease. In 2007, I contracted Q fever, a potentially life-threatening disease. It was my own fault. There was no need for me to go through the illness. I had not bothered to be vaccinated, despite knowing the federal government had a program to provide free vaccination for those in the industry. Since then, the decision was made to make sure my wife and children are protected and they have been vaccinated. This is about keeping us safe from diseases that are preventable.

This bill will protect approved childcare centres that chose to exclude children who are not immunised. As the explanatory notes state, it will do this by giving—

... the person in charge of an approved education and care service the option to refuse, cancel or place a condition on the enrolment or attendance of a child who is not vaccinated, or not up to date with their scheduled immunisations.

The bill will also ensure that the Health Ombudsman has the information-gathering powers needed to effectively carry out their duties.

This is about protecting some of our most vulnerable. For years governments have tried to cajole and encourage parents to vaccinate their children, but time and time again we have seen campaigns seeking to undermine the programs. The rate of conscientious objection to vaccination in Queensland is the highest of all states, rising from 1.92 per cent in March 2012 to 2.17 per cent in March this year. Currently, there are 9,747 Queensland children recorded as not immunised or not fully immunised due to conscientious objection.

Queenslanders are increasingly supporting immunisation. Since 1989, immunisation rates have increased from lows in various age groups of 76 per cent to 92 per cent. However, this means that there are still more than 15,000 Queensland children aged under five who are not fully immunised. The aim is to get 95 per cent of the community immunised. This is the rate recognised as critical to ensuring that those not immunised or not able to have certain vaccines, such as young babies, pregnant women and those who are immune suppressed, are less vulnerable to disease. Higher rates of immunisation give them protection, as there is less chance of an outbreak of a contagious disease.

Increasing immunisation rates are being tackled nationally, with the Australian government implementing a new policy so that parents will not be able to receive certain family tax and childcare benefits if their children are not immunised. From January next year, families with children who are not immunised will not be eligible to receive government benefits. There will be exemptions for approved medical reasons, but vaccine objection on the grounds of being a conscientious objector will no longer be an exemption category. Consequently, the parliamentary committee has advised that the removal in national legislation of conscientious objection as grounds for non-vaccination has made it no longer feasible to include provisions relating to conscientious objection in the Queensland bill. Queensland's Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeanette Young has pointed out that—

... conscientious objection was a process put in place and managed by the Commonwealth.

She also emphasised that—

... it is not a scientific term; it is a social term ...

No matter what the political persuasion, no government goes out of its way to make decisions to harm their citizens. They come with the intention to provide a safe, secure and healthy environment. Whenever children are not fully immunised through vaccinations, we leave other children vulnerable. That is why centres for children need to be safe environments. We are given a discretionary power to the person in charge of a childcare centre to make decisions for the good of the children at that centre, their families and the employees. The power is not mandatory; it is not compulsory. I emphasise that the person in charge has the discretion to refuse, cancel or place conditions on the enrolment or attendance of a non-vaccinated child.

Immunisation remains the safest and most effective way to stop the spread of many of the world's most infectious diseases. Before the major vaccination programs of the last century, diseases such as tetanus, whooping cough, diphtheria, polio, measles and tuberculosis killed thousands of young people each year. If enough people are immunised, the infection can no longer be spread from person to

person and the disease will die out. Members will remember the scourge of smallpox. It was officially declared eradicated in 1980. A similar campaign has existed for polio, with only a few isolated cases left throughout the world. As one submission said—

In many ways immunisation programs have become the victims of their own success.

Unfortunately, those programs have meant that people in industrialised countries have had no experience or memory of the tragedy caused by those diseases.

This is about protecting young people and the vulnerable. This is about protecting them from conditions that can be prevented with vaccination. It is necessary and should be supported. I encourage all members to support the Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! Before I call the member for Pine Rivers, I welcome to the gallery Ms Marsha Ivins, former NASA engineer and astronaut, and guest of the member for Ipswich.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

 **Miss BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (4.06 pm): At the outset, I wish the member for Nudgee a very happy birthday. Today I rise to speak on the Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This bill does a very important thing: it empowers our early educational professionals to make judgement determinations based on evidence about the exposure of the children under their care to infectious diseases. As an early education professional, I know the kinds of environments that exist in centres. The reality is that our children in those environments come in very close contact with one another. Very regularly, it is the perfect environment for the spreading of infections. Children are more vulnerable than adults in this regard.

The importance of this bill to me personally is based on my career in an industry where I got to see firsthand, in a practical sense, the potential exposure to children. Every day as an early childhood professional, you get to make decisions that are in the best interests of children in your care and to whom you have a duty of care. I see this bill as an extension of that. The question that our opponents ask is: how does my child being nonvaccinated affect other people's children in early education? The science is conclusive about herd immunity: non-vaccinated children present an exposure risk for everyone with whom they come in contact.

If many in populations are not vaccinated then that breaks down the power of vaccine resistance and creates the perfect environment for outbreaks to occur. Opponents of this bill say things like, 'I have the right to say no to vaccinations.' In our free society people do have the right to ignore sound medical advice and say no to vaccination. This bill empowers our early education professionals with the same right: to say no to exposing those in their care who are at risk.

There is a lot of misinformation, confusion and hysteria in some parts of our community about vaccination. There are tragic examples where side effects are pointed to as being the case study for why children should not in fact be vaccinated.

A paper entitled 'Changing patterns of infant death over the last 100 years: autopsy experience from a specialist children hospital' published in the journal of the Royal Society of Medicine outlined the pure statistics. It stated—

The commonest cause of death in 1909 was infection (74%) compared to 20% per cent of deaths in 2009.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that if turn of the century infant death rates had continued an estimated 500,000 live born infants during 1997 would have died before the age of one year. Instead, 28,045 infants died. The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia's August 2012 paper on immunisation and vaccine preventable diseases estimated that tens of thousands of child deaths were prevented in Australia by vaccination in the 20th century.

Locally I have seen many examples of vaccination. I was honoured to attend my local Institute of Urban Indigenous Health located in Strathpine. There I launched their bubs onesie a couple of months ago. The onesie is an initiative of Deadly Choices that is aimed at getting children in and vaccinated at an early age. Immunisation is the first step. The follow-up care for mums is the other essential step.

What this really promotes is ongoing health in a preventive and health promotion way. I have to pay tribute to the work that the staff are doing at the Urban Institute of Indigenous Health. They do fantastic work. I launched their bubs onesie along with Warren Snowdon and Shayne Neumann.

Locally we have also seen some great initiatives from our local Rotary groups. They are committed to ensuring that there is access to polio vaccinations right across the world. That vaccination eliminates polio. They should be commended for their fantastic work.

People have a right to say no in our society. As an early education professional, I would do everything I could to protect those in my care. This empowers those who are still working in the profession to do that explicitly and with the backing of the law. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (4.12 pm): I rise to make my contribution to the debate on the Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. As the honourable members have heard from the shadow minister, the honourable member for Caloundra, the LNP will be supporting the bill.

The purpose of the bill before us today is to amend the Public Health Act 2005 to give the person in charge of an approved education and care service the option to refuse, cancel or place a condition on the enrolment or attendance of a child who is not vaccinated or not up to date with their scheduled immunisation. The terms in this bill before us today are very similar to a bill introduced by the opposition spokesperson in 2013. In essence, this bill is as much about access as it is about vaccination which leads to full immunisation.

Our world is quickly becoming a global village with really nasty germs mutating and creating megaviruses and superbugs. New diseases are evolving and resisting current trends. That is why the target of 95 per cent immunisation to reach what is termed herd immunity is so important and why governments at both a state and federal level are bringing in measures to assist in reaching this target. Once this target is reached, not only are those who are immunised protected, but so are those who are not. One cannot argue against the importance of vaccinating for known diseases with proven, preventative properties, which is why we must never forget the severity and past prevalence of the diseases that we vaccinate against today.

My vocation as a paediatric nurse many, many, many years ago gave me a special insight into the scale and deadliness of these diseases. Diphtheria is seldom, if ever, seen post vaccination, but in 1921—and I have to say that I was not nursing quite that long ago—in the USA there were 15,200 deaths from 206,000 confirmed cases.

An opposition member interjected.

Mrs STUCKEY: Florence is my middle name. Polio epidemics have occurred through the millennia. In 1949 there were 2,720 deaths from polio in the USA alone. Post vaccination the incidence is close to zero.

My cherished elderly Adelaide neighbour contracted polio as an infant and lived her whole life as a spinster with a pronounced limp and a partly paralysed leg. Simple vaccination, not available back then, would have prevented this.

In my years nursing at the Adelaide Children's Hospital I witnessed two deaths from measles—one a four-year-old with encephalitis at the time of infection and one a 13-year-old who developed subacute sclerosing pan encephalitis, some eight years after the initial infection. I shall never forget those children or their grieving families for as long as I live.

One year our hospital was overflowing with pertussis, whooping cough, patients. Many patients were bedded in corridors. Our own tiny son had a case of whooping cough before he was fully vaccinated, but thankfully he did not require hospitalisation.

Among my saddest memories I include nursing a number of children who had contracted haemophilus meningitis but had survived. Their heart and lungs were fine, but their brains were dead. Most days the devastated parents would visit, stroke and kiss their child gently and wonder whether a twitch of an eye or a limb would signal some recognition or awakening. Invariably, this was not the case.

Tetanus is never seen post vaccination. Our hospital had one case of this where, due to a language barrier, a booster dose was not administered. Full recovery was made following artificial ventilation for a week. Another was a three-year-old girl from Port Augusta who had sucked on an icy pole stick that had fallen in the dirt. She too made a full recovery after her ordeal. Not every child was so fortunate.

With regard to pneumococcus, in 1996, before inclusion in the immunisation schedule, in the USA alone there were 5,000 cases of pneumonia, seven million of otitis media and 3,000 of meningitis. In my nursing days the gastro ward was usually full with children hospitalised with rotavirus gastroenteritis. This seldom occurs post vaccination. Mumps virtually never occurs and rubella is very rare post vaccination.

Why then, honourable members, would people choose not to vaccinate? This bill does not address this question. However, it should be asked. Perhaps the reasons have been highlighted most in the autism community. Autism was virtually unheard of in Australia 30 years ago, but today we see an alarming increase in the incidence of varying degrees across the autism spectrum, with an estimated one in 90 children affected, with four times more prevalence in males. It is very easy to be a sceptic about the frequency and diagnosis of this truly puzzling illness until you meet some of the children and their families who are affected by it.

A paper that was mentioned by the honourable member for Moggill by a British gastroenterologist in 1998 entitled 'ileal-lymphoid-nodular hyperplasia, non-specific colitis and pervasive developmental disorder in children' was met with very keen interest by the autism community and severe criticism by the medical fraternity. The doctor was later struck off.

In the rare cases of regressive autism, vaccination has been considered by some to be one of the triggers. Within the years following this paper the mercury based preservative used in vaccines was changed. Despite all this, there is still an inherent and somewhat understandable unease regarding vaccination in infants who have older siblings with autism and booster vaccines in autistic children.

Perhaps separating the vaccines and administering them on separate days may allay parents' fear and increase vaccination rates within this community. I would like to suggest to the minister that parents are given the option to have the vaccines administered on separate days, which may possibly increase those rates in some sectors of our communities.

Vaccination has helped us to become an enviable First World country and to avoid the killer epidemics seen in other countries. We have an obligation to our children to keep it that way, and this bill helps to do that.

 **Hon. CJ O'ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland) (4.19 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This bill is about an issue that is very close to my heart not only as a mother but also as a previous director of an early years education and care centre. This bill will give greater protection to young and vulnerable Queenslanders against conditions that are preventable through the process of vaccination, and it will also give support to staff within early learning centres to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children in their care.

This is an issue that I feel very strongly about. As a former early learning centre director, I know how incredibly important vaccinations are for protecting our children and also for protecting everyone in our community. I saw how quickly illness and sickness could spread between young children in a large group environment. I have seen how fast a gastro virus can be transmitted from one child to another and how it can go through an entire centre in less than a week. Thankfully I have not seen how a preventable virus through vaccination like whooping cough has impacted on any of the children in my care. But that is why I feel strongly about vaccination, because these are viruses that can be prevented and can stop unnecessary deaths of children who have had no opportunity to receive that lifesaving protection.

Although preventable childhood diseases like whooping cough can be mild for adults, we know that they can have absolutely tragic consequences for young children. For this reason, I absolutely believe that we have to put the safety of our young children first. That is why as the director of an early learning centre I had an immunisation and illness policy in place that outlined the requirement for unimmunised children to be sent home and excluded for the duration of a notified preventable illness. I had families at my centre who had conscientious objections to vaccinations and I had very detailed conversations with them so they fully understood the reasons why I had to make the decision to send their child home when we had an outbreak of chicken pox. This was not a decision that I took lightly as a director, but my main concern was the safety and wellbeing of that child.

I have had parents defend their conscientious objections and I have spoken to them later on and they have still defended their conscientious objections because their child never got sick. For them I am incredibly grateful that they never experienced what some families have experienced. But for me that is not an excuse to not vaccinate our children. I have also spoken to families who have had a lot of difficulty in making that decision and predominantly because of the fears that have been put into the public space with regard to vaccinations causing illnesses and disabilities like autism. But the one thing that we must remember, particularly for those staff working in early learning centres, is that the primary responsibility of those early years education and care educators is the safety and wellbeing of the children in their care.

I have seen educators talk about and worry about a child who is sick. When a child has a temperature, the concern is how high is that temperature? What other symptoms do they have? What are the concerns about what this could be? Is it just a virus or is it something else? We take their shirt off. We check them. Is there a rash? It is not just a simple case of saying, 'Oh, they have a cold.' We not only have to worry about them but also have to worry about the other children who are around them at the time.

From my experience in an early learning centre, as I said, I have seen people who have chosen not to vaccinate and those who have chosen to vaccinate. The majority of parents choose to vaccinate, and they choose to do that because they want to prevent their children from being exposed to the risk that is associated with non-vaccination. I also understand that for parents with young children life can get very busy and sometimes we forget or lose track of maintaining the immunisations for our children. But this bill will empower early years education and care services to have a conversation with those parents if their immunisations have fallen behind, to have a conversation with those parents about the importance of vaccination but also about the reasons why centres will choose to exclude a child if they are not vaccinated. It is not out of spite; it is for their safety and nothing more.

This bill also provides those early childhood providers protection should they choose to implement the exclusion policy that they may have in place for a child who is not fully immunised. It lets them make those decisions about enrolment based on the best interests of all children in their care. I chose to vaccinate my children because the thought of losing them to preventable illness was something that I just could not bear. From the stories that I have heard—and I am sure we have all heard them on the news—whooping cough is the one preventable illness that is absolutely making a comeback. It was said earlier in the House that these diseases are making a comeback because more and more people are choosing not to vaccinate their children. I am sure we probably all remember the stories or have even seen the video footage of hospital rooms and the rows and rows of hospital beds of children who were sick with polio. That is an era that I do not want our communities to go back to. The only way we can prevent that is by increasing the percentage of young children who are being vaccinated and fully vaccinated.

I am very concerned that, if we do not as a community stand behind this bill and stand behind the centres that are enforcing childhood vaccination, then we will end up back in those dark days of losing our young children to illnesses and diseases that we can absolutely prevent. This bill is about preventing any further tragedy. I absolutely encourage everyone to take the time to check their child's vaccinations; to visit their GP; to have that discussion with their GP if they have concerns around vaccination; to get the facts, not the myths; to vaccinate your children; and to ensure that your whole family's vaccinations are up to date.

Ultimately, this bill is about protecting Queenslanders from young to old against diseases and conditions that are absolutely preventable. That is something that I am absolutely proud to support. It is for the reasons that I have outlined that I support this bill.

 **Hon. JR MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (4.27 pm): Let me start by saying that I am really delighted to be able to speak in favour of this Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.

Mr Dick: It goes back a long way for you.

Mrs MILLER: It goes back a very long way, Minister for Health. I take the interjection. This is a matter that is very dear to me. It is an issue that, as shadow minister for health, I brought to the attention of this House in May 2013 when I presented a similar amendment to the Public Health Act 2005. At that time I sought bipartisan support from the Newman government. But, sadly, for reasons I fail to understand, that support was not forthcoming, because then, as now, it was an amendment that was sorely needed. At that time, I informed the House that the Sunshine Coast was identified as the Queensland area with the lowest rate of compliance with the national immunisation schedule.

Mr McArdle: And that's a worry.

Mrs MILLER: I take the interjection from the member for Caloundra. That is a real worry, and I know that the member is from the Sunshine Coast and he is quite concerned about that as well.

At that time, I pointed out that the rate of immunisation for children in Noosa, Nambour, Surfers Paradise and Kuranda was comparable with developing countries such as Uganda and Angola. I pointed out that in inner-city Brisbane there were 3,371 unvaccinated children and that fewer than 85 per cent of five-year-olds were fully vaccinated. Then, as now, the objective is to give the person in charge of an approved education and care service the option to refuse to allow children who are not fully immunised to enrol in that facility.

The amendment has a simple purpose—it is designed to give children enrolled at childcare centres and the staff who look after them protection from preventable infectious diseases. It is an amendment that will reinforce the message to parents that they should do the right thing by their own children and by the community. It is not about punishing parents who exercise their right not to have their children immunised—and I understand that because this went before a parliamentary committee in the last parliament—rather, it gives childcare workers a legally binding right to protect themselves and children in their care from the considerable and unnecessary risk of disease.

The bill has provisions for those children who, on medical advice, are unable to be vaccinated. I think we all understand that. Vaccinations are a tried and true public health initiative that save lives. The intent of this amendment bill is to encourage more parents to vaccinate their children and thereby protect them from preventable diseases. We know that, when immunisation rates are not maintained, vaccine preventable conditions, such as measles and rotavirus, can spread rapidly. These conditions we are talking about include whooping cough, rotavirus and chickenpox.

I would also like to say that adults need to keep up with their vaccination schedules as well. It is important to realise that this legislation is about children, but it is incumbent upon all of us as citizens of Queensland to make sure that as adults we are also vaccinated and that we keep up with the vaccination schedules. I know in some instances when mums are having babies they are spoken to about whooping cough. I know several grandmothers and grandfathers in my electorate who have also had their whooping cough vaccine. It is very important to keep up with your tetanus schedule as well. When any adults go to see their GP, I believe they should ask about the immunisation schedules for adults and they should, if it is appropriate and on the medical advice of their GP, get their vaccinations.

It is very clear, as we have heard from many other members today, that these diseases can kill. They can also cause lasting medical problems and extreme suffering. The measures contained in this bill are common sense. They are simple; they are common sense. This is what we have to do to look after our community. I know these measures are broadly supported in this House. I certainly support them and I commend this amendment to the House.

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (4.33 pm): I also stand to commend the Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 to the chamber today. The bill delivers on the commitments of this government to better protect young and vulnerable Queenslanders from vaccine preventable conditions. It will amend the Public Health Act 2005 to clearly protect approved childcare centres if they decide to exclude children whose immunised status is not up to date. The bill will also amend the Health Ombudsman Act 2013 to ensure that the Health Ombudsman has the information-gathering powers necessary to perform their duties effectively.

Vaccination is a critically important public health strategy and is a key health priority of the government. We live in a lucky country. Some other countries around the world are not as fortunate as ours. We are a small world, and with many visitors and many migrants coming to our country it is important that we make sure, despite the fact we are an island nation, we protect our most vulnerable, our children.

I was privileged and very fortunate to travel to a number of countries in my previous career, and I might just touch on some of the experiences I had with immunisation and health in those countries for the benefit of the chamber this afternoon. I start, firstly, with Afghanistan. I travelled there in my capacity as chair of the defence committee when I was in the Senate. I recall travelling through Kabul and seeing young children walking to school through the dusty and dirty streets of the capital of Afghanistan and I wondered what their future would be as children in that country. For the benefit of the chamber, I note that Afghanistan has chronic disease rates, with 30 per cent of people dying as a result of chronic disease. There are changes happening in that country. The joint strike force of many nations has made fundamental changes, not only through health but through education and other circumstances, to make that a better country.

I was also very fortunate to travel to a number of African countries on a study leave journey. I went to Mozambique and Tanzania to study water sanitation. At that time, the Australian government was funding AusAID into those countries. You would know, Deputy Speaker Barton, that water sanitation is a major priority in many of those countries, as it is in this country as well. We need to ensure that water is appropriate and purified because water often causes many diseases in children and adults as they come into contact with it—whether it be through showering, drinking, washing their cooking implements or other contact. It was a real privilege to see the benefits that the then Australian government was achieving from the AusAID funding into Mozambique and Tanzania.

In terms of water sanitation, I also reflect on the many times I have been to Indigenous communities—and certainly the health minister would be aware of this—and have seen the effects on our Indigenous children when they have come into contact with water. It is extremely imperative that we as the government in Queensland act on this bill. It is great to see bipartisan support for this bill so that it will pass through the House this afternoon and we can make sure our most prized possessions, our children, are protected in our communities.

Immunisation has long been recognised as one of the most successful public health interventions introduced into Australia, enabling community health to be maintained and protected by the reduction and eradication of preventable conditions. Queenslanders support immunisation. I reflect back on the time when my parents made sure when I was going to school that I was appropriately immunised for the variety of diseases that were around in those days. It is great to see that there has been eradication of many diseases in the time that children have been attending school in this state.

High childhood immunisation rates in Queensland of approximately 92 per cent are validation. That it is a very high and appropriate percentage for the children of our state. However, over 15,000 Queensland children aged under five are not fully immunised, which falls short of the 95 per cent target required to achieve herd immunity for diseases such as measles. Herd immunity prevents the transmission of highly contagious conditions such as measles and protects those who are not immunised such as babies who are too young to be immunised and people who are immunosuppressed. Labor has long recognised this is a problem we need to address. During the 54th Parliament when in opposition and in her capacity as shadow minister, the member for Bundamba, who was on her feet previously, introduced a private member's bill in similar terms to this bill. It would have empowered childcare centres to refuse enrolments from children who are not vaccinated. Sadly, the then government chose to vote it down and the private member's bill offered no alternative legislative change in this area. I am proud, as I am sure are all of us parliamentarians, to stand in this chamber as part of this government that is now prepared to make reforms that are aimed at improving immunisation rates in our community.

The bill makes a number of amendments to the Public Health Act 2005 to promote immunisation and protect children and their families and those who work with children against vaccine preventable conditions. The bill also authorises approved early childhood education and care services to exercise a discretion to refuse, cancel or place a condition on the enrolment or attendance of a child whose immunisation status is not up to date. Currently the Public Health Act 2005 protects a childcare centre from liability where the centre excludes a child with a contagious condition or if the child is at risk of contracting such a condition. A childcare centre is also free to exclude a child solely on the basis they are not fully immunised. However, such a decision does not attract any legislative protection from liability. The bill does not require the childcare centre to exclude a child. Instead, the bill protects the centre from liability if, after following a prescribed process, a child's enrolment or attendance is refused or cancelled on the basis of their immunisation status. This process involves the childcare centre requesting the parent provide an immunisation history statement. The statement issued by the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register specifically notes whether or not the child's immunisation status is up to date.

There are many ways in which such a statement may be obtained including online or at a Medicare office should a parent have difficulty obtaining the statement or if they prefer to only deal with their local healthcare provider, and that may occur in remote Indigenous communities. The bill extends the meaning of an immunisation history statement to include a statement about a child's immunisation history given by a recognised immunisation provider.

As honourable members can see, this bill puts sensible criteria in place, not strict enforcement around children, but also makes sure there is a process which can occur in a methodical way to ensure not only that the children and their families are protected, but also that the childcare providers can ensure we have a community and an environment in which our best, valuable and considerably innocent children in our communities are protected to the maximum level. That is why I stand here today in commending this bill to the House.

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (4.43 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution on the Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. Like most other members in the House, I am supporting this bill. Of course, we all love our children and our grandchildren. I have a new grandchild, a fifth grandchild, a lovely little granddaughter. She is two weeks old.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr RICKUSS: Hear, hear! Yes. I am not quite sure what the parents were thinking, but her name is Lucy Skye Rickuss. I do not know. It is a lovely name. Her mother's middle name is Skye and they liked Lucy.

I know a lot of people will find this hard to believe, but I am old enough to remember when whooping cough, measles, polio and mumps were devastating diseases. I am sure the health minister would tell me that adults with mumps, particularly males, are an issue. So we do want to keep these types of community diseases at bay. I remember when the TB caravans travelled around the communities X-raying most of the Australian adult population to ensure we got rid of tuberculosis.

As a point of interest I looked up some of the life expectancy rates from 1901 to now. The life expectancy has gone from the fifties in 1901 to virtually in the eighties now. This has been through modern science, vaccinations and keeping diseases such as whooping cough, measles, polio and all those sorts of things under control. It has been a way of improving our health and lifestyle generally.

The LNP party room had a debate about this and the result we came to was to support this bill. It was a wholehearted debate and we looked at all angles. That is what good policy is about. I even contacted some friends of the member for Southern Downs and I, Shane and Melissa Williams, who own childcare centres in Wallangarra, Laidley, Blacksoil and Gatton, and they support most of the provisions in this bill. It is a logical, common-sense sort of approach. Having that authority to look at the children's circumstances and make those sorts of decisions is important for childcare centre owners because they have a duty of care to the rest of the children who are at the centre. Whether it be whooping cough, measles or whatever, I think that is only right.

It is quite interesting. I will ask the minister while he is here—and it is good to see the Minister for Education in the chamber as well—is there anything in place for prep? We have children going to prep at age five. Is there anything in place that checks their vaccinations then?

Ms Jones: Yes, there is.

Mr RICKUSS: Are they going to be excluded from prep? It is an interesting point.

Ms Jones: No, we can't exclude anyone, but they can demonstrate vaccination history at enrolment.

Mr RICKUSS: It is a different criteria that is going to be used for prep, 1 and 2?

Ms Jones: Yes.

Mr RICKUSS: That is the natural transition. It is important that children are educated. So it is a difficult one. I was thinking about whether it would have to be done by correspondence or some other form that could make it difficult for people. I know it is important they do have vaccinations, but they are starting to get older in the system as well.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. This is an important bill. As I said, most people here will support it. I was talking to my colleague the member for Everton. When I coached kids at football we had to have hep C vaccinations because of the fluids and that sort of thing that might be passed while coaching and training kids on football fields.

There are a lot of preventable vaccinations that can and should be used. I encourage parents to really look into these matters. Unfortunately, you cannot believe everything you read on some wacky website. People need to look at the qualifications of some of these people who are making these ridiculous claims—and we see it all the time—such as the person who did not have cancer who supposedly cured themselves by eating good, healthy vegetables. We have to have real, bona fide science. We have only to look at the life expectancy rates in the last hundred years and how they have dramatically climbed. That has not been through good luck but through modern science, good logic and intelligence. I support this bill. Hopefully it will be carried through to the community.

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (4.49 pm): I rise in support of the Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. I would like to commend the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services for the bill that is before the House today. As we have heard, promoting immunisation in the community is of critical importance to reduce the incidence of vaccine preventable diseases, and I thank many of the honourable members for their bipartisan support of what I think is a critical public health issue.

This bill will help protect children, their families and those who work with children against vaccine preventable conditions. In 2014 there were nearly 208,000 Queensland children aged five years and under who were enrolled in an early childhood education and care service such as long day care, outside school hours care, kindergarten, family day care or limited hours care. We know from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register that by five years of age 92.4 per cent of Queensland children are vaccinated. This is positive, but we can do better. This government is determined to lift childhood vaccination rates to 95 per cent to stop the transmission of vaccine preventable conditions.

The recent outbreak of measles in Brisbane serves as a timely reminder of the importance of infants and young children being vaccinated, because vaccine preventable diseases have not been eliminated from our communities. Children who are not vaccinated pose a potential health risk to babies and young children who are yet to complete the full immunisation schedule. This legislation will give more than 2,800 approved early childhood education and care services choices when they enrol children: they can choose to refuse, cancel or place a condition on the enrolment or attendance of a child whose immunisation status is not up to date. They can decide whether accepting an enrolment is in the best interests of all children at the service. Service providers must follow the process in the legislation and request an immunisation history statement, or parents could provide a statement from the child's doctor to confirm their immunisation status is up to date. When services follow the process they will be afforded protection from liability. This bill does not require a service to exclude a child who is not immunised; rather, the bill gives services the discretion to refuse to enrol or to apply conditions to the attendance of children who are not immunised. For example, a service may choose to enrol a vulnerable or disadvantaged child regardless of their immunisation status or lack of evidence. The Department of Education and Training will continue to work in partnership with Queensland Health and our key early childhood education and care stakeholders to ensure that any potential changes are easy to understand and implement.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the ECE sector for their consultation and work with regard to this. The peak bodies represent over 2,800 services here in Queensland and they are supportive of the proposed changes, given the primary consideration is children's health and safety. They indicated that the new laws will provide a process for a discussion with parents and also afford legal protection from liability should a service choose to make a decision that impacts on a child's attendance or enrolment. Leading up to this piece of legislation being introduced into the parliament and being debated here today there have been a number of meetings with our key early childhood and education service providers, and I want to thank them all for their work. In conclusion, this bill is part of our commitment to ensuring that by working with the sector our children have access to quality education and care services that provide a safe and nurturing environment for children. Evidence shows that these environments are critical in enabling children to thrive and reach their full potential, and I thank everyone in this parliament who is speaking in a bipartisan way for something which I think is a step in the right direction. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (4.53 pm): I rise to support the Public Health (Child Care Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, and I do so with a great deal of seriousness as the parent of two young children who on average spent 12 hours five days a week in child care until attending school. I recognise that vaccination is a critically important part of our health regime. Labor has a great record on children's development, be it in the health sector funding our hospitals or in the education sector and our success with the kindergarten program in Queensland.

As I mentioned, this is a particularly serious issue. We are seeking to prevent diseases like rotavirus which, as we know, is one of many viruses that could cause severe gastroenteritis in infants. Many patients with chickenpox develop encephalitis, which is severe brain inflammation, resulting in congenital malformations in newborns. Measles, as we know, is an acute and highly infectious disease with serious complications, and death can occur as a result of this infection.

This bill is the result of significant consultation with the community and the sector. I note that targeted consultation occurred with peak industry bodies, representatives of child care, independent schools, play groups, teachers' associations and the like. These are organisations that set a high standard in terms of child care such as Lady Gowrie Queensland. It is important that we conduct such targeted and widespread consultation to get this bill right, because as we know there are over 15,000 Queensland children aged under five who are not fully immunised. This falls well short of the 95 per cent target that we have set ourselves which is required to achieve herd immunity from diseases such as measles, so it is pleasing that this parliament for the first time will allow approved early childhood education and care services to be legally protected if they decide to exclude children who are not fully immunised against vaccine preventable diseases. This is important because preventable conditions

like whooping cough or others like the ones I mentioned earlier such as measles et cetera can have tragic consequences for very young children like my two-and-a-half-year-old son Charlie, who is in child care for up to 12 hours a day. It is important that we ensure that he is protected.

As many speakers have said, we know that most parents are doing the right thing and making sure that their children are fully immunised, but some simply forget to take this important step. I can now disclose that I thought I had forgotten to immunise my son Charlie, so I raced off to the Beenleigh neighbourhood library where you can access these vaccinations between 9 and 10 am each Friday through the Logan City Council service. It was an extremely busy day. There were about 20 parents there with their children, and I waited dutifully in line because I did not want to come into this place and be one of those people who had forgotten—only to find out that he is not due for another year and a half! Explaining to the nurses that I was there on a very important mission to get my house in order before speaking to this bill today was somewhat embarrassing.

I also want to commend the Minister for Health for bringing this bill to fruition. Minister Dick said that every year there are tragic cases that highlight the importance of ensuring that everyone in your family is fully immunised. Importantly, these laws will protect early childhood education and care services when they make decisions—and they do make critical decisions right throughout the day about enrolment based issues—in the best interests of children in their care. As Minister Dick said, just like good progress on the preschool and kindergarten programs—which he initiated—has been made in Queensland, we have also made good progress towards our targets, with around 92 per cent of five year olds in Queensland being fully immunised. But there is obviously more to do.

This is sound policy; it is not some thought bubble. In fact, the World Health Organization strongly supports programs that support and encourage immunisation, which this bill does. It says it is a proven means of controlling and eliminating life-threatening vaccine preventable conditions. The World Health Organization estimates that globally immunisation prevents between two million and three million deaths each year. If just one of those deaths is prevented in my community, then I think the decisions made by childcare centres in the electorate of Springwood in the best interests of children and families are worthwhile.

We know that vaccines used in Australia are made available for use only after they have been rigorously tested in thousands of people in progressively larger clinical trials which are monitored for safety. In addition, all vaccines must pass stringent safety testing before being registered for use by Australia's medicines regulator. Not only is this a sound policy; it is also a safe policy.

Parents and consumers of childcare services in Queensland should have great confidence in the directors of those centres. We know that those childhood education and care services that are impacted by this bill will make those decisions with great care and caution in the best interests of children. I know this having worked with the members for Pine Rivers and Mundingburra. I have seen them exercise discretion, care and consideration in the course of their work as childcare professionals. I am sure that other childcare professionals in Queensland will provide a similar level of care.

If enacted, this bill will authorise a person in charge of an approved childhood education and care service to exclude a child whose immunisation status is not up to date. The discretion will not be exercised in a way that creates any civil or criminal liability for excluding the child from the service. A service is not presently protected from liability where a child is excluded on the basis of their immunisation status alone. This bill gives childhood education and care service workers the mechanisms they need to act in the best interests of all children.

As I mentioned earlier, great credit should be given to the Minister for Health. As one of my colleagues mentioned, credit should also be given to the member for Mundingburra. Back in May 2013 they were outspoken about this particular issue. I also note comments made by the now Premier in the media. An article state—

'We know that if over 95 per cent of children are vaccinated in childcare centres then they are completely covered, and at the moment on the Sunshine Coast we have rates of 85 per cent,' Ms Palaszczuk said.

'We don't want our little ones to be exposed to the risks that these diseases can bring about.'

That was a message that resonated throughout my community, which has a large number of young families. This is a matter I campaigned on in the lead-up to the state election. I believe that many voters with young families supported me to ensure we got this done.

The then health minister, Lawrence Springborg, said at the time that the Newman government was looking at a range of ways to boost immunisation but would not be drawn on whether that included the sorts of measures included in this bill. He said—

For me it's about doing the right thing for the right reason, not just because of some reaction, because they—

Labor—

want to follow what New South Wales ... has done.

He also said—

The Government is already looking at how we can improve our immunisation rates ...

Good things come to those who wait. We have waited 2½ years since those comments were made, and now we have an opportunity to see these measures enacted. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr WHITING** (Murrumba—ALP) (5.03 pm): I rise to speak in favour of this bill. I also feel strongly that vaccination is the responsibility of all of society. If we do not meet that responsibility, we suffer individually and also collectively. Not only that, when we survive those preventable diseases often our individual potential has been reduced. We do suffer for years. This is an issue of critical importance to me because I have two young children and another one on the way.

Ms Grace: Congratulations.

Mr WHITING: Thank you very much indeed. My son, Guy, was interviewed last week. He starts prep next year. I was quite happy to go along for his interview. Part of that was having to provide certification and proof of vaccination status. I was very glad to provide that. That they asked for that gives me confidence in the school, as they are making sure their students are immunised. It allays parents' fears when we are asked to do that.

My family's tale shows why I strongly support vaccination. Vaccination is not only about fatalities; it is also about the long-term effects on people who recover from diseases that could have been prevented through vaccination. My grandfather caught polio as a young man and walked with a limp for the rest of his life. He managed to be a wool classer—he worked out in Western Queensland—but he carried this disease in a way he probably never expected to. He was not able to enlist to serve in World War II, even though all of his mates did. Many of his mates did not come back after enlisting and going to Singapore. He carried the hurt of not only polio but also the loss of his mates for the rest of his life.

My mother caught measles at the age of four. She has had to wear glasses ever since. She experienced ongoing health effects from a disease that could have been prevented. She became a teacher, so she especially knows the importance of vaccination. She said to me—

Watching a small baby with whooping cough is enough to make anyone think very carefully about deciding not to vaccinate.

My sister Elizabeth caught whooping cough at age 12. Her lungs were scarred and she has had health problems ever since. She is one of the few people for whom the vaccine did not work. She also became a teacher and teaches early childhood. She said—

I am at the mercy of whatever the parents choose to send into the classroom. I rely on herd immunity, which is why I have caught whooping cough three times.

I will give the last word on this to my mother. She asked me to send this message to the parliament—

We are a community and we need to protect all, especially the most vulnerable.

That is why I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (5.07 pm): I rise to speak in favour of this bill. Childhood immunisation is a very serious issue. It is all about children. We must protect children: they are the most vulnerable people in the community.

I can remember the days when parents encouraged their kids to go out and play with their neighbours when they had measles, mumps or chicken pox. Once upon a time it was a rite of passage. You would tick off the childhood diseases as you got them and parents would say, 'That is finished in my family.' I have friends who experienced complications from those childhood diseases. We know that it is very serious. It is not the case that once it is over and the spots have disappeared you will be safe for the rest of your life. You do not know when it is going to come back.

As a former teacher I know how quickly illness can spread through the classroom. Once one child comes to school with a tummy bug, it quickly spreads throughout the whole classroom, especially with small children. I know that the utmost standards of hygiene are practised in day care centres. Even with very high standards of hygiene, the way small children play with each other means that they have physical contact all the time, so it is very hard to stop children from spreading diseases to each other. We do need to make sure all of our young children are immunised.

I will relate the experience of a colleague. They were very excited to show off their first-born child. They took their new baby to visit friends and to shopping centres, as all young parents do, because they were so excited to have their new baby. At two weeks the baby contracted whooping cough. At two weeks the baby was too young to be immunised. That family paid the ultimate price because of the selfish behaviour of some adults around them who refused to immunise their children. When there is a loss of a young baby such as that, parents do not recover. That family is scarred for the rest of their lives.

I urge all parents to immunise their children. Even if their children do not contract a disease, they may carry the virus and they do not know who they are going to spread it to. One death of a child is one too many and I urge everybody to support this bill.

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (5.10 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. The primary purpose of the bill is to amend the Public Health Act 2005 to give the person in charge of an approved education and care service the option to refuse, cancel or place a condition on the enrolment or attendance of a child who is not vaccinated or up to date with their scheduled immunisations. The bill will also amend the Health Ombudsman Act 2013 to expressly empower an authorised person to require a person to attend and answer questions and produce documents in relation to investigations into serious healthcare complaints and offences under the act.

The Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 will, for the first time, protect childcare centres if they decide to exclude children who are not fully immunised against vaccination preventable diseases. As the health minister said in his explanatory speech—

Every year, there are tragic cases that highlight the importance of ensuring everyone in your family is fully immunised. Conditions like whooping cough, while usually mild for adults, can have tragic consequences for very young children. We want to empower childcare centres to talk to parents about their child's immunisation needs and encourage families to vaccinate. These laws will protect childcare centres when they make decisions about enrolment, based on the best interests of children in their care. However, childcare centres will still have the discretion to admit children who are not fully immunised, where doing so is reasonable in individual circumstances. This bill gives power to those local childcare centres to make those decisions.

Subject to the passage of the bill through parliament, the government aims to have the new laws operating from 1 January 2016. Vaccination is a critically important public health strategy and a key health priority of the government. Immunisation has long been recognised as one of the most successful public health interventions introduced in Australia, enabling community health to be maintained and protected by the reduction and eradication of vaccine preventable conditions.

Queenslanders support immunisation, as has been proved by the bipartisan support of this bill through parliament. This is validated by high childhood immunisation rates in Queensland of approximately 92 per cent. However, over 15,000 Queensland children aged under five are not fully immunised, which falls short of the 95 per cent target that is required to achieve herd immunity for diseases such as measles. Herd immunity prevents the transmission of highly contagious conditions such as measles and protects those who are not immunised such as babies who are too young to be immunised or people who are immunosuppressed.

The amendments will apply retrospectively to validate notices that were issued under the existing provisions. Applying the amendments retrospectively will ensure that the information obtained and decisions made since the act commenced in 2014 are not invalidated because of defects relating to the issuing of notices.

The amendments will give certainty to those people who have been involved in matters before the Health Ombudsman, being matters involving serious healthcare complaints. People who have not complied with notices requiring them to attend and answer questions during this time will not be unfairly impacted. The bill makes it clear that a person will not have committed an offence by failing to comply with such a notice prior to these amendments commencing.

In conclusion, I would just like to speak about my personal experience with vaccination. I had the usual vaccinations at school—polio and TB. When I decided to travel overseas I was vaccinated against typhoid and cholera. I have had no serious health problems during my life, but my brother, Brendan, was not so fortunate. At a young age my bother contracted meningitis. Vaccines were available, but he was too young to receive the vaccine. But what would have protected him would have been herd immunity. That is what is so important about this bill. That is why we need to support it fully. I am pleased to say that Brendan survived meningitis. He was deaf in one ear as a result of that disease but, tragically, it cut short his life and he died a few years ago. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (5.15 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. Just as importantly, I also rise to congratulate the member for Lockyer and the Rickuss family on their latest grandchild, Lucy Skye. While wishing to express my best wishes, I am also reminded of my own daughter, Lucy Rose, who is now four, and of the time when she was a baby. With my youngest child, it was my responsibility to take her down to get her vaccinations. With good and clear instructions—Jackie does not trust me that much so she made sure that I knew exactly what to do—I took Lucy Rose down to the local GP's surgery with the handy red immunisation passbook and waited to get her immunisations. Whilst sitting in the waiting room I allowed my mind to stray and to think and dwell on the task ahead. I knew that there are tiny chances of adverse side effects. Of course, not being a great fan of needles myself, I felt for little Lucy as she squirmed in my arms.

However, I certainly resisted these urges and I certainly did not allow my mind to wander through the darker recesses of the internet that so many on the other side have spoken about where there is really an active rejection of science and of the importance of public health. When Lucy finally got in to see the nurse to get her immunisation, she sat mesmerised by the promise of a bright-red lollipop and briefly cried as the needle surprised her, but was instantly gratified by the unwrapping of the lollipop. I was proud, not just that I protected my daughter from a series of diseases, but that I took my family to be part of the collective shield against the threat of diseases. In our society, we can do so little as individuals and so much more as part of a collective. That is true when it comes to immunisation to protect against childhood diseases.

After Lucy was born, every time I took her out I lived with a little fear for the reasons that the member for Mackay spoke about when she referred to her friend's baby, that she could be exposed to the dangers of whooping cough. As members no doubt know, whooping cough is a very contagious respiratory infection.

Mr Butcher: It is terrible.

Mr POWER: Indeed. I take that interjection. It is a terrible disease. It is a terrible disease and it is caused by bacterium. We probably have all seen those terrible videos of young children suffering from whooping cough. The major symptom of whooping cough is the characteristic nature of the cough, which is often followed by a whooping sound on inhalation as the child struggles to breath. One in every 200 babies who contract whooping cough will die. The best way to prevent whooping cough is through immunisation.

The member for Murrumba put it perfectly when he said that watching a baby with whooping cough is the best advertisement for immunisation. We rely on herd immunity to protect our children in the first few months of life. We rely on the collective shield that we build together in order to protect our children. We as Queenslanders have to work together as a collective team in order to protect our young and those who are immune deficient and are unable to be vaccinated. It is so important that we act collectively. Let us see how we are going as a society. The majority of Queenslanders support immunisation and have their children vaccinated. It is fantastic that Queenslanders work collectively and do not take the selfish option to rely on the good work of others. That is validated by the high childhood immunisation rates in Queensland. Vaccination rates for Queensland children indicate that there are 35,000 children aged five and under who may not be fully immunised. These children remain at risk of contracting and transmitting serious life-threatening conditions.

I would like to reflect on the nature of the debate. As we have seen, vaccination is something that this House universally supports. It is also a recognition that sometimes in this House we must take the option to look at the science, to look at the best advice, to look at public and collective health and make a regulation that encourages and then enforces collective action in order to get the greatest result for Queenslanders. For those reasons I commend the bill to the House and encourage all the members to give it their fulsome support. I thank the minister for bringing this bill to the House and the committee for its good work in examining this bill so thoroughly.

 **Ms GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (5.20 pm): I rise to support the Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. What could be more important than saving the lives of young babies and children? I think all in this House agree that that is probably one of the most important things that we can do as parliamentarians and hence we have a unified position in relation to this legislation. I join the member for Logan who spoke before me in congratulating the committee and the chair and those who worked on this bill to ensure that we do what we can to push it along a little bit so that we do have parents vaccinating their children.

Access to vaccines for preventable infectious diseases is probably one of the most important elements of a universal healthcare system when one considers that vaccination, according to World Health Organization estimates, prevents between two million and three million deaths each year. That is staggering. One has to consider how sick a child who caught one of these preventable diseases when they were young would have been, particularly those who caught polio. Recently I was at a Polio Australia fundraiser held at the Brunswick Hotel in New Farm. Many elderly people who unfortunately contracted polio before the immunisation for that particular preventable disease had become available are still suffering to this day. I note that we do have some pretty good immunisation rates. I think in 2015 the immunisation rate for one-year-olds was around 93 per cent; for two-year-olds about 91 per cent; and for five-year-olds about 92 per cent. But the target is 95 per cent. We think that that is probably the minimum target required to achieve what the member for Ipswich West spoke about and that is herd immunity for diseases such as measles. In order to get to that level we are going to have to give our organisations such as childcare centres the ability to ensure that parents get these immunisations up to date and to make sure that their staff and other children in those centres are protected from these preventable disease. I know that my daughter Alexandra is up to date with all her immunisations. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (5.24 pm), in reply: I thank all members who have contributed to this debate and have taken the opportunity to put their support for vaccination on the parliamentary and public record. I think we are privileged to have so many members in this House who have professional medical and clinical experience, whether as nurses, paramedics or doctors, and I thank them for sharing their professional expertise. But I also thank members for sharing their personal experience with preventable illness. This bill is about ensuring that preventable illness can be eliminated, as far as possible, from our community. On that point I want to share one fact about vaccination in the control of disease. Since the introduction of vaccination for children in Australia in 1932, death from vaccine preventable conditions has fallen by 99 per cent despite a threefold increase in the Australian population. If people do not think vaccinations work, they should remember that figure.

As I said earlier in the debate, immunisation is one of the most successful public health interventions introduced in Australia. I thank the shadow minister and those members opposite for their support for this legislative measure. We often are very willing in our debates in this House to hold to our positions very passionately—that is why we are here—but very often we have debates like this where people very thoughtfully put their views on the record and we have a consensus around important measures for public health and other measures for our Queensland community that we know on a bipartisan basis are in the best interests of our state. I thank all members, including the opposition, for their support.

It is essential that the 95 per cent immunisation coverage target is met if we are to prevent the transmission of highly contagious diseases such as measles. As the member for Greenslopes reminded us, achieving herd immunity will protect the most vulnerable in our community—that is, young children who are not fully immunised and those who cannot be vaccinated. Queensland's rates of immunisation are high, but could be higher. I think we can do more. In August this year I announced the Immunise to 95 initiative, which aims to achieve 95 per cent immunisation coverage for Queensland children aged five years and under. The project, which commenced on 1 October 2015, focuses on children who are overdue for immunisation. If a child is overdue for immunisation 13HEALTH will endeavour to contact the parents to encourage them to see their healthcare provider and have their immunisation status brought up to date. I say that to respond to some of the issues raised during the debate around what are the other actions of the government. The Immunise to 95 initiative will help close the immunisation gap for Indigenous children. This is particularly important, as demonstrated by the member for Thuringowa whose insight as a former flight paramedic highlighted the potentially tragic consequences for children in rural and remote communities not immunised against vaccine preventable diseases.

I would like to briefly address a couple of matters raised earlier. A point of clarification first. A number of speakers have indicated that 15,000 children are unvaccinated while others have referred to 35,000. To clarify, the figure of 15,000 relates to three age cohorts: one, two- and five-year-old children. However, when one looks at the population of children five years old and younger, it is estimated that up to 35,000 children are not fully immunised.

The member for Caloundra asked why the immunisation strategy is not currently on the department's website. The strategy is being updated to reflect various changes, including these legislative changes and the Immunise to 95 initiative. That will be put up on the website when the parliamentary process is completed around this legislation. The member for Caloundra also raised

concerns regarding red-tape impacts on early childhood education and care services. A childcare centre need only check an immunisation history statement obtained by the parents from the existing national register to determine whether the child's immunisation status is up to date. No further assessment is required. The Department of Health and the Department of Education and Training are working closely with early childhood education and care peak provider bodies to ensure smooth implementation. This will include the development of resources for services, parents and health providers.

I note that the member for Currumbin asked that I give consideration to allowing parents concerned about the alleged link between autism and childhood vaccines the option to separate vaccination doses. We need to be careful about giving any credence to the connection that some in the community put forward between autism and vaccination. Research indicates that there is no difference in the rates of autism between vaccinated and unvaccinated children. From a public health perspective, it is essential that we follow the national immunisation schedule. I think we need to act on the advice of experts.

I note that US presidential candidate Donald Trump has suggested the same thing. I do have concerns about aligning anything with Donald Trump.

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection from the member for Chatsworth. I will not comment on Donald's hair because of the interjection from the member for Chatsworth.

I do think we need to be careful about giving any credence to that because that has caused great concern in our community—unrealistic and improper concern in our community. I am not saying the member for Currumbin is doing that at all. I do think we need to be careful about anything that gives any sort of substance to those in the community who put not only children but also families, communities and all of us at risk because of the argument that people should not be immunised.

The member for Moggill raised the issue of antimicrobial resistance. This is outside the scope of the bill. However, I would encourage the member for Moggill to write to me about those issues. I thank him for his support of the bill and the medicinal cannabis trial at the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital.

I thank the other members of the House for their contributions. I thank the member for Nudgee for her contribution and her work on the committee's inquiry into the bill, along with other government members including the members for Greenslopes and Thuringowa. I thank the member for Nudgee for reminding members that the bill has the flexibility to accommodate vulnerable children whose immunisation status may be unknown or not up to date. It is not the intention of the legislation to disadvantage vulnerable children.

The member for Lockyer asked whether the legislation should apply to school-age children. In my view, there is no need to do that at this time. The national immunisation program is designed to ensure that most children are fully immunised by the time they reach school age. That is the five-year immunisation point I was talking about earlier. Where children who have not been immunised attend school they will benefit from the herd immunity of their peers and are eligible to have their immunisations brought up to date.

The member for Buderim asked whether these laws are enough. It is important to recognise that this legislation is intended to be discretionary. It is a start. I have said previously that the department will do a review in two years time. If there are any perverse outcomes or any outcomes that are inappropriate we will look to strengthen the laws should we have the great privilege of forming government at that time or in the future.

It is also worth mentioning the amendments to the Health Ombudsman Act. These changes will address a drafting anomaly ensuring that the Health Ombudsman has appropriate powers to conduct important investigations into serious healthcare complaints.

In summary, there is much that we disagree about in this House, but I am greatly encouraged that on this important issue we agree on the need to give Queensland children the best start in life. All children have the right to access quality education and care. The bill delivers on the Palaszczuk government's election commitment to empower early childhood education and care services to decide whether to enrol children based on their immunisation status. It provides flexibility for services to make decisions in the best interests of children and their families and to consider individual circumstances so that no child is unduly disadvantaged. It strikes the right balance between continued access to quality education and care and sound public health policy.

I again thank the Health and Ambulance Services Committee for its work on this legislation. There is an enormous amount of work that goes into the preparation of legislation. I wish to acknowledge a number of officers of the Department of Health who have assisted with this. I acknowledge the Queensland Health staff who worked to prepare this important legislation, in particular Dr Jeannette Young for her comprehensive presentation to the Health and Ambulance Services Committee and for her leadership. I acknowledge Sonya Bennett, Scott Brown, Gary Boddy from the immunisation program team and David Harmer, Mark Zgrajewski, Kirsten Law, Megan Cole, Paula Cotter from the Legislative Policy Unit in Queensland Health. I thank Lisa McCoy and Ben Gordon from the Department of Education and Training for their significant contribution. I also thank Barnaby Kerdel and Stephanie Challen for their contribution to this important health measure. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—



Mr DICK (5.35 pm): I move the following amendments—

1 Clause 4 (Amendment of s 158 (Definitions for ch 5))

Page 4, line 13, 'Section'—

omit, insert—

(1) Section

2 Clause 4 (Amendment of s 158 (Definitions for ch 5))

Page 5, after line 2—

insert—

(2) Section 158, definition *vaccine preventable condition*, after 'contagious condition'—

insert—

, or another medical condition,

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper: Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes to Hon. C R Dick's amendments [[1525](#)].

Members of the House may be aware from the material circulated earlier that a minor amendment is proposed to clause 4 of the Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This clause in the bill amends the definitions in section 158 of the Public Health Act 2005.

The amendments I am moving today will make a minor change to one of the existing definitions in section 158, being the definition 'vaccine preventable condition'. At present this definition of 'vaccine preventable condition' is 'a contagious condition that is prescribed under a regulation as a vaccine preventable condition'. The amendment to this definition will allow 'another medical condition' to be prescribed under a regulation as a 'vaccine preventable condition'.

The need for this amendment is because not all vaccine preventable conditions for which a child must be immunised are necessarily contagious conditions—for example, tetanus. The amendment will facilitate a corresponding amendment to the Public Health Regulation 2005 to expand the existing list of vaccine preventable conditions which presently only includes measles.

One of the objectives of the bill is to promote immunisation and to give effect to this objective. An expanded list of vaccine preventable conditions in the regulation is required to capture not only measles but all of the conditions in the Australian immunisation handbook. The new stand-alone list will not affect the operation of the existing provisions in the act in relation to directing a child to not attend school in the event of a contagious outbreak.

It is a sensible measure to include those conditions which may not necessarily be contagious. We are moving away from that definition which is designed to focus on contagious conditions to more vaccine preventable conditions. I think we need to have that flexibility to ensure we can capture new and emerging diseases as they develop that may be otherwise preventable by vaccine. It may not necessarily be contagious. I think that is an important measure. I do not think it will be regarded as controversial. It is a sensible proposal, I believe, that the House should consider.

An honourable member: An interjection from the gallery.

Mr DICK: We have some young children in the gallery. They are the people we are seeking to protect today. I am not going to make any comments about the sense of the interjection compared to the sense of interjections down here. I welcome families to the gallery. This parliament belongs to you as much as it belongs to any of us in the chamber. I would encourage the parliament to accept the amendments.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 16, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (5.39 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. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (5.40 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 14 October (see p. 2200).

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (5.40 pm): I rise to deliver my speech on the address-in-reply in the 55th Parliament. I acknowledge His Excellency the Governor Paul de Jersey and thank him for his address at the opening ceremony. I also acknowledge Queen Elizabeth and congratulate William and Kate on the safe arrival of Princess Charlotte, sister to Prince George.

It is a privilege to be re-elected for a third term. I am deeply honoured by the vote of support that I have received from the people of North Stradbroke Island, Ormiston, Wellington Point, Birkdale, Cleveland and Thornlands and for the opportunity it provides for me to continue to work hard for them and to achieve the goals that they have. We delivered much for the people of Cleveland in our time in government. Residents benefited from improved health services at Redland Hospital, better education in our schools and a safer community with more police on the ground. The Toondah Harbour priority development project, approved by the LNP government in 2014—and recently re-announced by the new government—will bring \$1.3 billion of investment and over 1,000 jobs per annum in the construction stage into the Redland City region.

On North Stradbroke Island, the LNP's legislation allowed for a carefully planned transition away from mining—to end in 2035—while not changing the substance of the government's ILUA with the Quandamooka people. This pro jobs plan was received well by the overwhelming majority of the 2,000 island residents, saving up to 600 jobs and stabilising the island's economy after the Bligh Labor plan imposed recession that saw house prices and business lending plummet and business confidence disappear.

I want to thank my campaign team and volunteers for their hard work and dedication. None of them are hirelings, paid to do the campaign work, but campaign on a volunteer basis. While time does not permit me to list my full campaign team of volunteers, I want to acknowledge key team members such as Shaun, Mike, Suzi, Mal and Mark. In particular, I want to thank my campaign manager, Mark Neville, for another successful local campaign.

I also thank my staff—Sue and Mark—who worked tirelessly through the 54th Parliament. I congratulate my fellow state MP for Redland City, Matt McEachan. I also extend my congratulations to Don Brown, the new member for Capalaba, while at the same time acknowledging the good work done by the previous member, Steve Davies. I am also grateful to my greatest supporters—my family. Julie, my wife of almost 30 years, and our wonderful children have sacrificed much for me to do this work. I love and appreciate them greatly.

I was honoured in the 54th Parliament to have served as the Deputy Speaker. I want to thank Campbell Newman for the chance to serve in that capacity and former Speaker Fiona Simpson and her staff—Ruth, John and Clare. The opportunity to represent the Queensland parliament as an executive committee member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the CPA, was a highlight of that time.

Many local and regional issues were important in my re-election. The LNP's Toondah Harbour project, our local job protection plan for North Stradbroke Island, our small business policies and job creation, Redland Hospital, Cleveland schools, transport issues, recreational fishing and boating, amongst many other areas, were very important.

In terms of jobs, business and major projects, in Cleveland and on North Stradbroke Island most jobs exist in small business, retail, tourism, mining, construction, health and marine related industries. Local job creation is of paramount importance to the residents of Cleveland. About 60 per cent of Cleveland workers leave Redland City each day to travel to work outside the area, particularly into the city centre. Our challenge is to keep creating local jobs so that a smaller proportion of our population need to leave Redland City for work. Naturally creating more small business jobs and attracting more major projects to the Redland City region is critical in that regard.

In terms of the major project of Toondah Harbour, now for some 6½ years I have spoken in this House about the need for a major upgrade of Toondah Harbour—one that would improve the ferry facilities to North Stradbroke Island for residents and tourists, and include a marina and mixed commercial and residential development. Since 1989, successive Labor state governments have failed to progress any plan, leaving very basic facilities. Only the private work done by the two ferry companies—Stradbroke Ferries and Stradbroke Flyer—and more recently the Big Red Cat, or Transit Systems, the owners of such, have made the situation bearable for island residents and tourists. But something has needed to be done for a long time.

It was not until the LNP came to government that any real progress took place. The LNP's economic development legislation that created priority development areas broke the Labor deadlock. The positive and innovative approach of the Walker Group, plus an enterprising LNP state government and the leadership of the Mayor of Redlands City Council, Karen Williams, has made the project possible, when the bureaucratic Labor government via DERM and DEEDI only bogged down the potential of this project.

This \$1.3 billion LNP project will create 1,000 jobs per year in the construction stage and hundreds of jobs in tourism and small business afterwards. I will never forget that historic day on 18 September 2014 at the Grand View Hotel, which overlooks the Toondah Harbour area, when Jeff Seeney, Lang Walker and Karen Williams met and signed this historic agreement that made the Walker Group the preferred partner—all in front of the TV and local media. This was a significant moment in the history of Redland City as a region. All state MPs in the region were invited and gathered with locals and media.

In recent months the current Deputy Premier visited Toondah Harbour, where she said to those gathered that the jobs generated at Toondah Harbour would cover for the job losses on North Stradbroke Island. While I certainly do not diminish the importance of those jobs—and they are critical to the future prosperity of Redland City and North Stradbroke Island—there is a problem in that statement in that the time line for the rollout of jobs and the types and categories of jobs do not match many of the jobs that will be lost on North Stradbroke Island. So nobody believed that statement that it would be an immediate solution in the next few years—not the AWU, who know that mining workers do not automatically transfer into other industries; not the mining company Sibelco; not the Resources Council; not the chamber of commerce; nor anyone else.

In fact, the Deputy Premier, in answering one of my questions on notice—question on notice No. 777—about Toondah Harbour and job creation, could not provide the jobs time line in an annual format that would give confidence that this government has any such plan. In fact, she admitted that the Walker Group was working on a plan and there were some overall dimensions of potential jobs to

be created. But, in terms of an explanation from the Deputy Premier about an exact plan—that is, by category of worker that shows that particular types of jobs on North Stradbroke Island will be picked up in Toondah Harbour and in a timely manner—that was not there in that answer. She could not confirm what jobs, if any, will exist and the particular time frame that is needed. In other words, there was not an existing jobs plan to meet the gap that will be created.

The chamber of commerce president issued a statement on the day the current Deputy Premier visited and it was reported in the *Redland City Bulletin* on 22 June. The title was 'Chamber chief says Toondah won't save Straddie', and it said that it was wrong to rely on jobs at Toondah Harbour to provide jobs for miners. The story quoted the chamber chief as saying—

Saying that sand mining jobs can be turned into construction jobs at Toondah Harbour is the easy answer—but it is the wrong answer.

I now turn to some comments on health. I am proud of what we achieved in government in terms of health services in Redland city, particularly with respect to Redland Hospital. Under the LNP government, Labor's waiting lists at Redland Hospital were significantly reduced and the local dental waiting list was reduced from over 10,000 to zero. But the health achievement I am most satisfied with under the LNP government was the establishment of a new palliative care service of \$5.9 million at Redland Hospital. This new health service includes a five-bed palliative care service based at the hospital plus an additional in-home capacity of another five bed equivalence—all based out of the Redland Hospital. This was a very significant achievement. We also completed construction of the new emergency department at Redland Hospital, including a paediatric section and 10 new short-stay beds among other things. More ambulance officers and new ambulances were provided at Cleveland and Birkdale stations, and a new and better station was built in Cleveland to replace the old one that was burnt down.

In regard to health, it is of great concern to me and the residents of Cleveland and Redland city, however, that the budget had nothing to say specifically about Redland Hospital—there were no new announcements and no new significant projects or investments announced. It appears, as I raised during my budget reply speech, that there is an infrastructure freeze on health in the Redlands. I call on the health minister to invest in the Redland Hospital precinct. It is a growing region of Redland city and it has increased demands because of that growth and also because of the ageing population. I call on the health minister to address some of these emerging issues.

In terms of education, under the LNP government the students of Cleveland received a better education. Cleveland schools warmly received the introduction of the Independent Public Schools initiative, the Great Results Guarantee funding, the maintenance funding and construction of important facilities, like the Cleveland high school year 7 building and the BayView State School indoor auditorium. These were significant achievements in our time, but there are still challenges remaining that were the legacy of the former Labor government, like the school hall that is desperately needed by Cleveland high school. This high school has close to 2,000 students and it is one of the few schools in Queensland that does not have a hall in which the whole school can meet. There is nowhere that they can fit undercover.

Mr Rickuss: I've got one, Mark.

Dr ROBINSON: You have one? You're going to transfer it for me; thank you. The flashing lights for school zones mean that the children of Cleveland now have safer journeys to and from school each day—with the installation of flashing lights on South Street in Thornlands, Birkdale Road in Wellington Point, Passage Street in Cleveland and Anson Road in Wellington Point. I call on the government to continue to roll out more of these very important safety measures across the electorate of Cleveland. But, as with health, there is nothing in the budget that I could find for education that was a significant infrastructure investment in schools in Cleveland. Again, it appears there is an infrastructure freeze on the Redland city area. I call on the government and the Minister for Education to invest in the Redlands and Cleveland area so that we get our fair share of the state's funds.

In terms of transport and roads infrastructure, major arterial roads—like Rickertt Road, Old Cleveland Road, Mount Cotton Road and Cleveland-Redland Bay Road—are heavily congested now due to the 14 years of neglect from Labor's last term in government. With respect to rail, in government we added 450 seats on the Cleveland line at peak time and we upgraded the Cleveland station, but the biggest need with regard to upgrading the Cleveland rail is the duplication of the Cleveland line between Cleveland and Manly. I look forward to the government progressing this project in this term after promising it during the 14 years they were previously in power in successive elections. The most recent

promise to duplicate the rail was made by the Labor candidate for Cleveland during the 2012 election, so I look forward to Labor honouring that commitment now they are back in power. We also funded cycling paths in Cleveland and Ormiston and we continued to call for road safety measures, including signalisation at the Shore and Wellington streets roundabout.

I have spoken before in this place about the Eastern Busway. The deputy mayor, Adrian Schinner, and I put together a petition to this parliament calling on the government to prioritise the Eastern Busway. It is clear from the response of the people in that survey that this continues to be an important project. I call upon the government to keep it in their priorities, even though I did not see it in the infrastructure plan. The people of south-east Brisbane continue to call for the Eastern Busway to happen.

In terms of recreational fishing, boating and the coastal lifestyle in Cleveland, I have worked hard on behalf of Cleveland's and Moreton Bay's boaties, divers and recreational fishers to deliver more and better marine infrastructure, artificial reefs and fairer access to sustainable recreational fishing in Moreton Bay. As a coastal Moreton Bay seat, Cleveland has a comparatively high proportion of boat owners and recreational fishers. As a member of the LNP government, I was able to secure \$1 million in funding over the three-year period of our government from our \$50 million Marine Infrastructure Fund. We built a new boat ramp in Cleveland and funded floating walkways that have just been built. We upgraded the Wellington Point boat ramp, we provided new artificial reef material, such as reef balls, for West Peel and Coochie reefs and we sunk a barge to extend Harry Atkinson reef. The LNP government also funded the Turner Artificial Reef for Moreton Bay that was recently constructed at Scarborough, about one kilometre offshore. I congratulate the former minister, Steve Dickson, for his good work in that regard.

Another important recreational boating activity in Moreton Bay is scuba diving. Being a scuba diver myself, I understand the needs of divers and the importance of this activity to tourism in Queensland. The diving community and small tourism businesses are keen for more dive sites, and I encourage the government to consider proposals outside of the Moreton Bay area in the deeper waters in the future. Whale watching is another important marine and ecotourism activity that takes place around Moreton Bay and Straddie. I appeal to the Minister for Tourism to include Straddie in all publicity as a whale-watching destination.

Within my electorate, there is an isolated community of three townships that together are the equivalent of a country town of 2,000 people. This community is an eclectic mix of people and includes a significant Aboriginal population. Another unique aspect of the community is that it has had a major employer for many years. It is a good employer which has paid good wages to up to 300 workers—it is 220 workers currently. It has been a good corporate citizen, underpinning the local economy and helping the community in many ways. It has helped with many projects, such as power infrastructure, roads, marine infrastructure, volunteer marine rescue, and cultural, arts and Indigenous projects.

The company employs 50 Indigenous workers currently. Further, up to 300 small business jobs are dependent upon the jobs of this company. So the total impact should the largest employer leave prematurely would be massive job cuts and a major hit to the economy. In the townships the morale among the workers is now low and businesses are struggling. People are trying to sell their homes. There is very much a feeling of recession, something that absolutely needs to be addressed. Obviously I am speaking about North Stradbroke Island. While there is a bill before the House I cannot say anything further. I am very concerned about the future of the families and the workers. I will park that one there for now.

I have also mentioned Toondah Harbour and job creation. I have mentioned a whole range of other things that we did whilst in government. I would like to conclude by saying I look forward to working hard for the families of Cleveland during this term in parliament, to getting our fair share of infrastructure and services and to holding this government to account. I will be pressing the government to deliver on the LNP's Toondah Harbour project in full, North Stradbroke Island economic transition, transport, roads, education and Redland Hospital to continue all the good things that we put in place while we were in government.

Let me close by thanking the residents of Cleveland for their trust and support once again. I recommit to working hard for their sake.

Debate, on motion of Dr Robinson, adjourned.

MOTIONS

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (6.01 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, notwithstanding anything contained in the standing and sessional orders for this days' sitting, the House will not break for dinner at 6.30 pm but will continue until the adjournment is moved, followed by a 30-minute adjournment debate.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Member for Cook, Order for Production of Documents

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (6.01 pm): I move—

That, in accordance with standing order 27, this House orders the Premier to produce to this House by 12 November 2015 all inward and outward email correspondence between the Premier's staff or ministers or ministerial staff and the member for Cook or his office, since 30 March, that provides assistance with speeches, media, event attendance or advance notice of government announcements.

In speaking to the motion this evening, I have to say that the eight months that the member for Cook has spent in this parliament has been nothing but a sordid affair. We have seen controversy after controversy surrounding the member for Cook. The motion we are debating tonight involves the level of support that he receives from the Labor government, of which he used to be a member. He quit in extraordinary circumstances or was fired in extraordinary circumstances from the Labor Party or was expelled from the Labor Party. What has been revealed in the last few weeks is the high level of assistance he continues to receive.

I will go over the reasons why I have huge concerns with respect to the level of support the Labor Party have continued to give Mr Gordon since his election. There are the allegations that have been made against the member since he has been a member of this parliament. He announced a criminal history prior to the election, which has since been disclosed. That forced him out of the Labor Party. He had child support debts. Members opposite come in here every day—and they did it today—and talk about women and domestic violence and they continue to pat on the back a member who sits up the back who only a few months ago had outstanding child support debts. So much of a father is he that he had all these debts to his children outstanding, but he is still a good bloke; he gets the pats on the back from those opposite. There were allegations of domestic violence made by a former partner, which I will not talk about because there are still some under investigation. More recently, there were allegations of him sending explicit text messages not to one woman, not to two women, but to three women.

This member has a pattern of behaviour that is not deserving of a person who serves in this place. If the public were to see the member for Cook and have a look at his rap sheet, they would ask the question: how does a member like that, firstly, get elected but then continue to serve in this place? How does a member like that, who does not pay child support to his children and yet confesses that he is a great father, which he has said in this place—and I see the member for Mirani shaking his head—

Mr Pearce: You're a disgrace.

Mr BLEIJIE: I say to the member for Mirani that that was not an accusation; that was a fact, and that is why the Labor Party kicked him out. At the time in relation to the member for Cook the Premier said—

I have always maintained integrity is fundamental to any government that I lead. Today I am prepared to put my premiership on the line. This is a very serious issue. Just half an hour ago I spoke to the member for Cook. I told him very clearly that today I would be writing to the state secretary to expel him from the Australian Labor Party.

She also said—

I have made it very clear he does not meet my standards and ... does not meet Queensland's standards.

I'm putting my premiership on the line.

So we have a member sitting at the back who continues to come into this House with all these allegations, sexual allegations against him, the sending of explicit text messages to three women, domestic violence allegations made against him, not paying child support—and I can assure honourable members that he is someone who is not going to win a father of the year award—and still has the Labor Party's support.

If the Premier were serious about putting her premiership on the line, why last night did we have a situation where, after they sold out rural Queensland, including the member for Cook, he went over there like he was back in the fold, getting pats on the back from ministers? 'Well done, mate. Welcome back to the pack.' Yet we have to continually remind Queenslanders and this parliament that the Premier said that not disclosing one's criminal history and not paying child support were enough to be expelled from the Labor Party. She went further and said he should resign from parliament. Then we have had all these other accusations and allegations since then: the explicit text messages and the domestic violence allegations. The Premier said he should resign from parliament over child support, but everything else that has happened since then is not a worry; they still take his vote and they continue to support him.

I put to you, Mr Speaker, that the behaviour and the history of the member for Cook is unbecoming of a member of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland. He should not be in this place; transparency should prevail. That is why the information that the motion calls for should be provided.

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (6.06 pm): I rise to contribute to tonight's debate and to oppose the motion of the LNP in what is a lame, lazy and desperate attempt by those opposite—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, member for Kawana. The Attorney-General listened to you in silence. I urge you to allow her the same courtesy.

Mrs D'ATH: Thank you, Mr Speaker, but I do not know if I really listened to the member for Kawana. I should note that.

This is a lame and lazy attempt to undermine the Right to Information Act. All Queenslanders, including parliamentarians, have the right to apply for access to government documents under open and transparent legislation, a right-to-information regime that puts the onus on releasing documents rather than withholding them. That is legislation that the member for Kawana should be very familiar with because he was the minister who oversaw that legislation for three years.

Some members might be confused with the opposition's approach with this motion. They might rightly be asking: have the opposition never heard of RTI applications or the legislation? Are they so out of touch that they do not even know about their rights under RTI, the rights enjoyed by all Queenslanders? Perhaps members might think they could ask the members of the media gallery. Journalists know about Queensland's RTI system. On a regular basis they submit applications, receive information, produce news bulletins and write articles. Having read the opposition's motion, my colleagues would be right to wonder why those opposite do not engage in this simple and open process.

However, those opposite have submitted RTI applications on the very issue of the interactions between the member for Cook and government officers. We can see that the opposition is already pursuing the content in tonight's motion with details there for everyone to see on the public disclosure log of RTIs. The first application was lodged by the opposition in March this year. I understand that the material was dutifully gathered and prepared for release, but the opposition was so lazy or so incompetent that they could not be bothered to collect the material and the application lapsed.

The opposition has lodged a second application with the Premier's office. It is a wideranging application that requests 'All correspondence held in the office of the Premier including, but not limited to, emails, memos, letters, briefing notes and reports within and between the Premier's office relating to the member for Cook and/or the Cook electorate office.' It sounds familiar, doesn't it? It is actually almost identical to the motion before the House. In fact, it is wider than the motion before the House tonight. This application was only made 10 days ago, so you have to wonder whether the opposition has no clue as to what it is doing. It is moving a motion tonight to access documents that only 10 days ago they made an RTI application for, so one hand does not know what the other hand is doing. As is clearly shown in the disclosure log, that application is currently being processed.

At a time when Queenslanders want their representatives to focus on the big issues facing our communities, the LNP opposition come into this place to try to abuse parliamentary procedures to demand information which they are already seeking through the appropriate right-to-information process. I also understand that the opposition has asked a range of questions on notice asking for similar information around what information is provided around local events, for example. I remind those opposite that, at least on this side of the House, we respect parliamentary processes and rulings and we take the responsibility for answering these questions very seriously.

Those opposite have used the RTI options available to them, and I understand that, under the allowances that the opposition office receive, the opposition has a right to use those allowances to make an RTI application just as Labor did when we were in opposition. But now they think that they do not have to apply for it because they are too good for that. 'We will just bypass it. We will apply, but we will not wait for it. We cannot be bothered. We will come in here and we will just demand it in a motion before the House.'

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Nanango, you are warned under standing order 253A for your continuous repetitive interjections. Not one interjection has been taken. You are now formally warned. Please desist. I call the Attorney-General.

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Speaker, despite making an RTI application, they do not think they should wait for it. They think that they are above the law and that they will just come in here and demand it in a motion. Every day at question time we see from their tactics that they have run out of ideas. They have no idea. They do not come in with motions asking about the economy, jobs, health, education, training or anything else that Queenslanders want. They are just wasting the time of this parliament and the people of Queensland.

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (6.11 pm): How contemptuous is it to hear the Attorney-General of this state bag out the right of parliament to ask for these documents, to put a direction to the Premier! I think it is quite disgraceful. I think the Attorney-General 'protesteth too much'. What have you got to hide? What has this government got to hide? What we hear are excuses. This is a government that is an accidental administration and it has been stumbling from one crisis to the next.

Queenslanders never voted for the unsavoury sideshow that is the member for Cook, Billy Gordon, whom the Labor Party have inflicted upon Queensland. As we have heard from the Attorney-General tonight, they continue to want to keep this protection racket going. While the Palaszczuk government continue to bumble along without a plan for the state, incredibly they have made this man one of the most powerful in Queensland. This motion is an opportunity for Premier Palaszczuk to walk the walk and not just talk the talk about the standards of integrity she claims for her team. Premier Palaszczuk and her team cannot on the one hand claim outrage about the member for Cook, Billy Gordon's, behaviour, while on the other hand they provide him with support and encouragement to stay in the parliament in order to keep propping up her administration. That disgraceful contribution from the Attorney-General means that they are continuing to protect the member for Cook. It is a confusing twostep which is typical of this accidental ad hoc government.

Tonight's motion is a litmus test of how genuine the Premier is about her supposed rejection of the behaviour of the member for Cook, Billy Gordon, whose election as a Labor MP in January helped her form government. Either the Premier condones the actions of the member for Cook, Billy Gordon, or she does not. There have been many unsavoury things that have hit the media recently about the member for Cook, but it is the allegations of domestic violence and the prior criminal history which were not disclosed before the election which are the most serious and which have been brought forward into the public eye. This motion is a reasonable test of the parliament, which the Attorney-General is so contemptuous of. It is a reasonable test to see whether the Premier's claims of having put the member for Cook, Billy Gordon, outside the circle of government support are genuine. If this Labor government have nothing to hide, they will support this motion here tonight.

There have been great members for Cook who represented their people well in the past without the stain of public disgrace such as the late Eric Deeral, who was a giant amongst his community. It is a tragedy that this area, which has so much need, carries the burden of an MP who should resign—and who the Labor Party should do more to encourage to resign, rather than their encouragement here tonight to oppose this motion. They continue to encourage the member for Cook and they continue to prop him up. What we have seen on the parliamentary precinct indicates that Labor members continue to gather around and support the member for Cook, Billy Gordon, such as last night, when he voted with the government with his Labor colleagues and afterwards they were there slapping him on the back. It sure looked like encouragement to me!

This government is hanging on to power by a thread, and that thread is the member for Cook, a man whose own community has started a petition to get rid of. We have given the government two opportunities to show some integrity and to reject the member for Cook's vote, but they have refused. Last night it became clear: the member for Cook's decision to vote against a bill that would have provided his own constituents with better representation goes to show that he is a member of the Labor team first and the member for Cook second.

This motion is a test for the Labor government to prove their claim that they have some shred of integrity, that they will reject the behaviour of the member for Cook and they will clearly put into the public domain whether there have been other contacts to prop him up. The motion tonight is also tied to the recent behaviour of the allegedly rogue member for Rockhampton, whose office provided support for the member for Cook. The Premier claimed that she was very angry with the member for Rockhampton and that this was one rogue minister or rogue staffer. If that is the case, let this government support this motion. Put some integrity into the process and let us see what the real story is.

 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (6.16 pm): This is just the most blatant display of hypocrisy. Queenslanders would be absolutely appalled if they heard about this motion which has been put up tonight. Are we talking about jobs? Are we talking about the economy? Are we talking about front-line services like health and education? Are we talking about a plan for the future? No, we are focused on talking about what the member for Cook did next. No wonder Queenslanders threw them out, because after nine months they still have not learned anything.

Do you know what, Mr Speaker? I go about my electorate quite a bit. I do mobile offices, I doorknock, I go to community events, I visit schools and community groups, I hold lots of different things and so I talk to a lot of people, and not one single person has ever asked me about the member for Cook. No-one has asked me what the Labor government has or has not done for the member for Cook. No-one has asked me what the Premier might have said or might have done for the member for Cook. In fact, the only thing anyone has ever mentioned to me is, 'Why does the LNP keep going on and on and on about the member for Cook?' It was the Premier who asked the member for Cook to resign—

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Chatsworth, I would urge you to control yourself or you will follow the lead of the member for Nanango.

Ms FARMER: What they do ask me about is why these people keep going on and on about the member for Cook when it was the Premier who asked the member for Cook to resign from the Labor Party—and he did resign and he has not been a government member since then. They find the whole thing—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Members, I am having difficulty hearing the member for Bulimba.

Ms FARMER: There are a couple of things going on here. One of them is about spite. Isn't that just what these people display? Last night they were desperate for the member for Cook to vote for their bill. We could see them all going up to him and we could sense the positive vibes towards the member for Cook. If the member for Cook had voted for their bill, he would have been their buddy. But the member for Cook did not support their bill, so this morning we saw spite from those opposite. That is all they are about. Suddenly they had all these stories about what the member for Cook did or did not do in his electorate and about whether he was an effective member of parliament. But if he had supported their bill last night we would not have heard anything about that. That is just what they are like. They were spiteful to nurses, doctors, lawyers, teachers, public servants and community groups. That is the same thing they are displaying now.

The other thing this is about is laziness. Let us talk about the right to information. Every person in this state—even parliamentarians—has the right to apply for access to government documents under the right-to-information regime. It is openness and transparency legislation. This state's regime—

Mr Molhoek interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Southport, your interjections are frivolous. I cannot hear the member speak. Your interjections are not being taken.

Ms FARMER: The right to information regime puts the onus on the government to release documents, not withhold them. Funnily enough, thanks to the Newman government the RTI log is now public information. What did we find? Way back in March the opposition submitted multiple RTI requests, but two referred to the member for Cook.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member is referring to a document. I ask her to table the document so we are all fully briefed on what she is referring to.

Ms FARMER: I am happy to table my—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms FARMER: That's a desperate measure, isn't it?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, it is not going to be a shouting match. Member for Kawana, you have not moved that the document be tabled.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member is referring to a document. I move—

That the document be tabled.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion negatived.

Ms FARMER: In March 2015 they submitted an RTI application for all correspondence in relation to the member for Cook. The office commenced collating documents and the RTI decision-maker issued a charges notice for the opposition, but they failed to follow through or even get back to the RTI officer. They have recently submitted another RTI application, but they are obviously too lazy to wait for it.

This is about trashing a really important parliamentary process. Tonight those opposite are trivialising an incredibly important process of government. They are playing politics with an important part of being a transparent and open government.

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (6.24 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the motion moved by the member for Kawana. Not even I am going to assert that it is appropriate to describe the work of this parliament tonight as consistent with or equal to what should be the more noble concept of what sovereign parliaments' business should be all about, and that is being the grand inquest of the nation. The subject of the motion we are discussing tonight is a very unseemly one, but I assert that it is a necessary one because we need to get to the bottom of what has been going on in Queensland as it relates to the relationship between the Palaszczuk Labor government and the member for Cook.

Shortly after the member for Cook was elected and sworn in as a member of this House, the Premier and Labor took a decision to exclude him from the Labor caucus. Subsequent to taking that decision, the Premier and Labor took out a full-page ad in the *Cairns Post*. In part, that full-page ad, which was an open letter from the Premier, read—

... by failing to tell the truth about his past, Billy Gordon—

that is, the member for Cook—

left me with no choice but to expel him from the Labor Party.

The people of Cook deserve the highest standards of their MPs.

But the Premier and Labor went further by calling on the member for Cook to resign. The Premier in her open letter said—

That's why I'm putting my Premiership on the line and asking Billy—

that is, the member for Cook—

to resign so a by-election can be held.

I believe it's the right way to resolve this matter in the best interests of the people of Cook.

The Premier also said—

I promised the people of Queensland that I would lead a government of integrity and honesty, and I will not break that promise.

High standards indeed! Labor said that the member for Cook was out. Labor said that the member for Cook was not worthy. Labor said that he did not meet the standards of the Labor Party, that he was untruthful. And Labor said that he ought to resign in the best interests of the people of Cook. That is what Labor said.

The purpose of the motion tonight is to find out if they actually meant what they said. We need to see all of the inward and outward email correspondence between the Premier's staff or ministers or ministerial staff and the member for Cook or his office since 30 March that provides assistance with speeches, media, event attendance or advance notice of government announcements because Queenslanders need to know if the rhetoric from the Premier and the Deputy Premier, her other ministers and the whole of the Labor caucus actually lines up with what they did.

Questions about what they meant have become more pertinent recently and more pressing after it was emerging that the government were quite happy for the member for Cook to represent them—until they got caught out. The member for Rockhampton, the Minister for Agriculture, has acted as the

fall guy for what the opposition suspects has been very widespread practice, for the Palaszczuk government to consider the member for Cook as a de facto Labor member for Cook. We are expected to believe that the Minister for Agriculture has been acting alone—that he has gone rogue, as a lone ranger, in treating the member for Cook as a de facto Labor MP and part of the Palaszczuk government.

We need to see all of the documents because we need to see if the extent of the farce, the pantomime, the ruse that has been perpetuated by Labor on the people of Queensland is as apt as we suspect it is. There is a clue about how much the Premier and the Labor Party actually meant what they said in the letter from the Premier to the people of Queensland, and in particular to the people of Cook. That clue is not so much in the disingenuous, hollow, insincere and meaningless words of the Premier's letter but in the ironic date on which it was published in the *Cairns Post*: Wednesday, 1 April 2015—April Fools' Day. I table that document because it shows that that advertisement was placed in the *Cairns Post* on 1 April, April Fools' Day. Labor has been playing the people of Queensland for fools.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'An Open Letter from the Premier of Queensland' [1526].

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (6.29 pm): I rise to obviously not support the motion that is before the House. It is interesting to note that only the member for Hinchinbrook addressed the motion. The motion orders the Premier to produce to this House all inward and outward email correspondence between the Premier's staff, or ministers, or ministerial staff and the member for Cook or his office since 30 March that provides assistance with speeches, media, event attendance or advance notice of government announcements. The Right to Information Act 2009 states very clearly the following—

Parliament recognises that in a free and democratic society—

- (a) there should be open discussion of public affairs; and
- (b) information in the government's possession or under the government's control is a public resource; and
- (c) the community should be kept informed of government's operations, including, in particular, the rules and practice followed by government in its dealings with members of the community; and
- (d) openness in government enhances the accountability of government; and
- (e) openness in government increases the participation of members of the community in democratic processes.

Perhaps the members opposite are unaware of the right-to-information application. I will table the document.

Tabled paper: Queensland government: Right to Information and Information Privacy Access Application [1527].

If the members opposite do not have a blank copy, I will provide one for them so that they can fill it in. I am of the understanding that they have already done that and they have already submitted it. The information is sitting there, but they have not picked it up yet. But I offer them this blank form just in case they need another one. They can fill it in and submit it and then they will get all the information that they are requesting. The members opposite do not need to order the Premier; all they need to do is to complete the right-to-information form, submit it and all of that information will be provided. If the members opposite need help, I am more than willing to assist them to complete the form.

Once again, we see those opposite trashing the basic process of Westminster government, showing so little regard for this institution—the parliament, its members and the responsibilities that we have to use parliament's powers appropriately. We saw what little respect they had for proper processes during those three shocking years that they were on the other side of the chamber. During that time there were attacks on democracy, on important institutions such as our courts, the legal profession, doctors and firefighters. They were all within their sights. During that time there were also attacks on the CCC. Even this parliament's own committees were under attack by those opposite when they were in government. Although the issue of proper process might seem a boring subject to the members opposite—indeed, the concept of proper process might seem offensive to some opposite—when it comes to government and when it comes to this parliament, it matters.

As a former teacher and then a high school principal, I understand the need for a proper process, especially when we are dealing with public funding and the time of public servants. As the Attorney-General has already spelt out for us this evening, those opposite already applied for this information under the Right to Information Act—and, as I have said already, I am more than happy to help those opposite to complete another application form if they need to—but they were simply too lazy to pick it up.

I ask members to imagine just for a minute that, as a teacher, I ask my students to complete an assignment, ask them to hand it in by a certain date, have the pile of assignments waiting in the classroom to be marked, but I could not be bothered picking them up. Then a few months later I start complaining that I could not get access to those students' work. Then a few months later I ask them to

do the same assignment all over again. But that is not all. When the students are halfway through doing that, I then demand that the principal order the release of those assignments. It is an absolutely absurd situation, yet those opposite are asking us to do exactly that.

Mr Cramp interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment. Pause the clock. Member for Gaven, I would urge you to desist or you will follow the lead of the member for Nanango.

Mr STEWART: Thank you, Mr Speaker. As a proud North Queenslander, I could not stand by and watch how the LNP was destroying our state. I did not run for parliament and ask my constituents to put their faith in me to play petty political games because those opposite still cannot come to grips with the fact that the people of Queensland rejected their type of government. As a result, the LNP squandered the largest parliamentary majority in parliament's history. Let us get back to the real issues facing Townsville and Queensland: jobs, jobs, jobs.

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

AYES, 40:

LNP, 38—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Cramp, Crandon, Cripps, Davis, Dickson, Elmes, Emerson, Frecklington, Hart, Krause, Last, Leahy, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, McVeigh, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Perrett, Powell, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Stevens, Stuckey, Walker, Watts, Weir.

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

NOES, 41:

ALP, 40—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Pearce, Pease, Pitt, Power, Pyne, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

INDEPENDENT, 1—Gordon

Pairs: Pegg, Costigan; Hinchliffe, Springborg; Palaszczuk, Langbroek

Resolved in the negative.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (6.40 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 10 November 2015.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (6.40 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Mantle Apartments



Mr MANDER (Everton—LNP) (6.41 pm): I rise to speak about a couple of great developments that have occurred in my electorate in recent times. One is the establishment of a group of 14 units called Mantle Apartments, located in the heart of Mitchelton. I want to pay credit to the former minister for communities, the member for Aspley, for her foresight in providing funding for Mantle Apartments. Mantle Apartments is a complex that was funded under the Elderly Parent Carer Innovation Trial with an allocation of \$1 million. I am happy to say that the current government has continued that commitment to that trial.

This is an important development. It is designed for those mature age people with mental health issues who have traditionally lived with their parents. This is an opportunity for them to live independently under the supervision of professionals, giving them a very good quality of life as well as giving that great peace and comfort to their parents who wondered how their children will be cared for as they become older. There are 14 units. It was great to be involved. The Wesley Mission is the group that is running Mantle Housing. I am glad to see that they have been embraced by the Mitchelton community.

At the other end of my electorate in Albany Creek we have another project that we are hoping to get underway and that is the Youngcare project which will be in partnership with Multiple Sclerosis Queensland. This was a great initiative under the former government. I was fortunate as the minister for housing and public works to be involved in seeing this land donated to Youngcare. The former minister for communities provided some funding under the Elderly Parent Carer Innovation Trial to get that up and running. It has been a bit frustrating. I met with Youngcare the other day. They have assured me that project will be going ahead. I know that the current minister is working on that and is in favour of it and I urge her to continue to keep the ball rolling. I am looking forward to seeing those eight units at Albany Creek. The units will benefit young adults who in the past had no other alternative but to be in old people's homes. This is a great way to give them some quality of living.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr MANDER: I take that interjection. There is already a great development at Woolloowin. The community is happy to see that happen. It is a great block of land and a perfect place for the Youngcare development and I look forward to seeing that development in the New Year.

Woodridge Electorate

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (6.44 pm): The electorate of Woodridge was humming with activity on Saturday, 17 October and I had the pleasure of attending multiple events in our community. These included the Logan Brothers Rugby League presentation day, the official opening of the Logan mosque, celebrating Prachum Benda, or Ancestors' Day, with the Cambodian Khmer community and attending the Egyptian Coptic Christian community's Taste of Egypt Festival with the member for Stretton.

The mighty Logan Brothers have had an absolutely stellar year producing premiership winning teams in the under-11s, under-12s, under-13s, under-14s, under-15s and under-16s. The under-18s team also made the finals for the first time in many years. I was fortunate enough to sponsor and present the trophies to the under-6s who put in a mighty effort during the season. I am sure those players will represent Queensland in the coming decades. I want to encourage the work and dedication of the Logan Brothers president, Mat Mead, whose dedication and commitment in building and growing the club is evident. I also want to acknowledge secretary Christine Blackwell and committee members like Fred Sanderson, as well as Logan Brothers Old Boys like Brian Roberts for the work they do to keep the club vibrant and strong.

Logan Brothers is strongly represented throughout the NRL, including players like Cameron Smith, Corey Parker and Antonio Winterstein, who are all forging careers with major clubs. Indeed, former Logan Brothers players were a key part of the all-Queensland grand final just a few weeks ago with brilliant performances by Corey Parker for the Brisbane Broncos and Antonio Winterstein for the North Queensland Cowboys. I doubt there is another Queensland junior Rugby League club that has produced players for both grand final teams and I challenge all honourable members to prove me wrong.

I then attended the opening of the new Logan mosque at Slacks Creek which was a significant day for the community. I presented a commemorative poem to Dr Mohammed Hossain, chairperson of the Australian Unity Centre; Imam Akram Buksh, Imam of the centre; and Abdel Shamim Khan, secretary of the centre—all of whom play a key role in the Logan Muslim community.

I also attended the Khmer Buddhist Society of Queensland's Prachum Benda, or Ancestors' Day. This was an extremely special day where I was able to witness outstanding traditional Khmer dancing. I want to acknowledge and thank Sovannary Uk for all the work he does in supporting the community and organising and promoting these important events.

I finished the day at the Taste of Egypt Festival in Calamvale with the member for Stretton. This event was organised by the Egyptian Coptic Christian Church community with a key role played by Odette Tewfik. I thank Odette for the work she does to make our community a better place. Saturday, 17 October was a special day because in a single day it demonstrated the vibrancy, diversity and unity of the Woodridge electorate.

Maroochydore Electorate

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (6.47 pm): Another violent thug walked free from court this week and the Sunshine Coast community are asking how can an offender who committed such an assault get away with a suspended sentence. Recently we saw an alcohol-fuelled assault in

Maroochydore where the offender received a suspended sentence and had allegedly committed a similar offence on the Gold Coast just a week before. These two events are not only unsettling but also, I believe, undermine public confidence in our system of justice when we need to have confidence.

I have taken this matter up with the Attorney-General. I understand that the matter is with the police minister as an appeal request. I thank the Attorney-General for passing that on to the police minister. I would ask the government to appeal the sentence for this terrible, cowardly act committed in Maroochydore. I also believe there needs to be consideration given to appealing another sentence involving an incident where a security guard at a shopping centre was attacked with quite horrific impact. I call on the government to act now to appeal inappropriate sentences such as this which allow violent offenders to walk free from court while the suffering of their victims goes on.

I have met with family members of those who have been impacted by such crimes and they are horrified. The victims of crime are often left with serious injuries and damaged lives following a violent assault such as these. They, like the community, want to see justice done. They want to see a deterrent to this happening again. The community wants to see people who commit violent crimes such as this locked up, not given a slap on the wrist. There needs to be appropriate consequences and tougher penalties for offenders to deter people from such senseless violence. I call on the government to take action in this regard and to appeal these sentences.

I am also calling on the government to resolve the issue of funding for public safety measures in the Safe Night Out precinct on the Sunshine Coast. People of all ages, but young people in particular, come to the entertainment precinct. It has the busiest taxi rank on the Sunshine Coast. There needs to be an overall, integrated strategy to help tackle alcohol-fuelled violence. The LNP had such a strategy. This government has been in limbo. It is less than two months before Christmas. The festive season for some and the silly season for others is about to begin. We want to see people kept safe. The plans need to be in place, not this limbo. It makes it so hard for those who are doing the right thing to try to keep the public safe to have this undermined by a lack of action. I want to see plans put in place with funding to enable this to happen as soon as possible.

Ipswich Regional Advocacy Services



Ms HOWARD (Ipswich—ALP) (6.50 pm): I rise to speak about the reinstatement of funding to an organisation that provides vital services in my electorate. Last week it was my pleasure to attend the 2015 annual general meeting of Ipswich Regional Advocacy Services Inc., IRASI.

For 24 years, IRASI has provided essential services to the Ipswich community in the form of disability advocacy and tenancy advice. Before the election of the Newman LNP government, IRASI received funding for tenancy assistance through the Queensland government's Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service. With the majority of funding coming from interest accrued upon tenants' bonds held by the Residential Tenancies Authority, IRASI and 21 other organisations provided strong, independent advice and advocacy to tenants around Queensland.

This was a program that used the interest from tenants' own funds to provide vital assistance—often to some of our most vulnerable people—and to help prevent homelessness. In 2013 IRASI's figures indicated that 10 per cent of the 60 to 70 people assisted each week by their tenancy service would become homeless without their assistance.

In their wisdom, the LNP saw fit to axe the Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service funding in what can only be described as a callous and ruthless cash grab. This decision left Queensland the only state in Australia without a government funded tenancy advice service. At the time, the former LNP member for Ipswich told the *Queensland Times* that tenants already had enough protection, and if they had issues they could just 'talk to their neighbours'.

When I attended IRASI's 2014 AGM as a candidate, I was pleased to reiterate Labor's pre-election promise to restore funding for tenancy support in Queensland. Accordingly, it was my great honour to be able to tell IRASI's 2015 AGM a few weeks ago that the Labor government has delivered on this commitment. In September, the housing minister, the Hon. Leeanne Enoch, announced that the Palaszczuk government would reinstate Queensland's Statewide Tenants' Advice and Referral Service through an investment of \$26.4 million over the next four years.

Through this program, IRASI's tenant advice service has been re-funded to provide its service to the Ipswich community. I am proud to be part of a government that takes seriously its responsibilities in the areas of tenancy assistance and homelessness prevention. I am proud to be part of a government that has delivered on its commitment to reinstate vital services for the people of Ipswich and the people of Queensland.

Toowoomba North Electorate

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (6.52 pm): I rise to talk about a few events that have been happening in Toowoomba, and particularly in my electorate. I was very pleased to attend the 80th anniversary of the lady's section of the Toowoomba Bowls Club the other day. I would like to thank president, Margaret Podmore, and secretary, Dianne Cunningham, for the invitation.

Members in the House tonight might be interested to know that the women's club was started 35 years after the men's club. Its founding member was William Groom, one of the fathers of Toowoomba. It was a great event. It was nice to see the women's bowls community from the Darling Downs come together. They had a good, fun day. They certainly enjoyed celebrating their 80th anniversary.

The following day I was fortunate enough to go to Gemfest, which was held at Centenary Heights, which is in the electorate of my friend and colleague Dr John McVeigh. It was their jade anniversary. For 35 years the Toowoomba Lapidary Club has been holding Gemfest. I thank David Radke and Ron Tillack for their invitation to come and open the event. It is always an interesting event. A lot of grey nomads travelling through Toowoomba attend the event and enjoy the day looking at the various lapidary items available.

I enjoyed my Saturday last week. I got to go to a couple of spring fairs. The first I attended was at Fairview Heights State School. It was the 20th birthday celebration for Fairview Heights State School. They sealed a time capsule. I look forward to it being opened in 30 years time. I am hoping I will still be around to see that. I thank principal, Julie Raitelli, for the invitation to attend. It was great to see all the dance performances held that day.

I then went over to Mater Dei Spring Fair. I thank the principal, Chris Bartlett, and the P&C for the invitation. That was a particularly fun day. The Catholics certainly know how to do a spring fair! The kids were down in one section and a little further up there was music, a bar and a great atmosphere for parents to relax and enjoy the spring fair. I stayed with those guys for a little while.

The following day, Sunday, I went to the Mary MacKillop Catholic College's secondary college open day. I would like to thank principals, Peter Murphy and Donaugh Shirley, for the invitation to have a look at the new buildings as they are being constructed. It was interesting to have a look around. It will be the second high school available to the families of Highfields. That was approved during our last term in government. I really did enjoy the day looking around the school and looking at the facilities. Go the Wallabies!

Simonds, Mr R

 **Mr KING** (Kallangur—ALP) (6.55 pm): As everyone in this place knows, the role of being an MP has many ups and downs. I had an experience recently which can only be described as one of the ups. I have a constituent in Kallangur named Russell Simonds. Russell is a fellow motoring enthusiast and talks about how his father used to take him to Lakeside raceway as a kid and they would watch the touring cars. Russell dreamed of driving a car around and racing himself one day. However, Russell has never driven a car as he was diagnosed with cerebral palsy as a teenager and never got the opportunity.

That does not stop his love of racing. He regularly catches a train from Petrie station north to Dakabin station and drives his wheelchair down to the track to watch the racing. Sadly, when he travels home from Lakeside he has to catch the train one station north from Dakabin to Narangba to be able to cross the track to catch a return train as Dakabin has no disability access.

In March 2014 the footbridge was upgraded. Why there was no disability access added at this time, I cannot understand. This lack of disability access is one of the many reasons I am pushing for an upgrade and was happy to support the recent petition for an upgrade to Dakabin station.

Since being elected, I have met Russell, who is a strong advocate for disability services in the area, on numerous occasions. I have been working with council to assist him with access issues in the area. The other weekend we were able to go a bit further. On that particular afternoon I went out to Lakeside to give my old GT Falcon a run. I bumped into Russell and was able to get him in my car to be my co-pilot for a session.

I would really like to thank John and Amanda Tetley and their staff for their kindness in stopping the racing to allow Russell to cross the track. They treated him like a VIP as well as let us fit in with the other patrons' scheduled drives to allow the maximum track time for him. The visible enjoyment on his face certainly made my day and this will definitely not be a one-off event.

One of the key assets in the Kallangur electorate is Lakeside raceway. As I said in my first speech in this place, I am committed to supporting and seeing Lakeside raceway used as the great sports facility it is. Lakeside is special to so many people in our community who, like me, love motorsport. It has great potential as a facility for driver training. I will continue working with the facility operators, John and Amanda Tetley, council and the relevant state authorities and departments to further this work.

D'Aguilar Highway, Upgrade

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (6.58 pm): Last Friday was a fantastic day for the people of Glass House, particularly those in the south of the electorate, as the federal member for Longman, Wyatt Roy, and I turned the sod on \$16 million worth of upgrades to the D'Aguilar Highway between Wamuran and Woodford. This has been the culmination of seven long years of campaigning, first as a candidate and then as the member for Glass House. The D'Aguilar Highway is the lifeblood of these communities. It is what every person relies on to get their kids to school, to do the shopping, to get to work. It has been in desperate need of an upgrade, even more so since the floods that occurred in 2010, 2011 and 2013.

Thanks to Wyatt, we got a full federal contribution of \$16 million. Through TMR thinking innovatively during our term in government, we have been able to stretch that to not only rehabilitate the road but add an overtaking lane eastbound between the two Gamgee Road intersections. There is also going to be full signage upgrade, an intersection upgrade at Canando Street west of Woodford and enough money to do the design work for an additional overtaking lane heading east out of Woodford towards Ironbark Drive. This road project is long overdue and there is excitement throughout the community. My only request is that, as people will be driving through the roadworks for the next 12 months, they slow down, take their time and get to their destination safely and that they keep an eye out for those people working on that road project as well.

There are a number of things that can still be done to improve the D'Aguilar Highway. Earlier this week I tabled a petition on behalf of Woodford resident Mr Brenton Kelly, who is fighting to have a 60-kilometre sign shifted 300 metres further west out of the Woodford township. Why? Mr Kelly and several hundred Woodford residents live off Mary Street, and currently they have to take that intersection at 100 kilometres an hour. There is an undertaking lane, but unfortunately tourists are often parked there with their grey nomad outfit and that creates an issue. There is also an overtaking line as you are heading west. So often people turning left out of Mary Street on to the D'Aguilar Highway are confronted by traffic coming at them from both lanes in a westbound direction. There is a very, very simple solution—simply taking a 60-kilometre sign 300 metres down the road. It is not going to cost \$16 million. I hope for the sake of Mr Kelly and his late wife, who started this campaign some three or four years ago, that we are not going to have to wait seven years to see that. I do ask the Minister for Main Roads to seriously consider Mr Kelly's petition and assist us in moving that speed sign 300 metres down the road.

Baker, Ms C and House, Ms K

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (7.01 pm): I start by welcoming in the gallery tonight my brother-in-law, my niece who was interjecting earlier on, my sister-in-law and her parents. They are all passionate Labor people and huge passionate supporters of my election campaign.

I rise tonight to express my congratulations to a couple of women's Rugby League stars in my electorate. Chelsea Baker from the Wallabies club and Kodi House from the Calliope club have been selected to be involved in the Jillaroos train-on squad for next season. The sport of women's Rugby League has grown immensely in the last three years in Gladstone from the initial days when the Gladstone Raidettes were formed to give the game of Rugby League a go.

I pay special mention to Sarah Stewart, who approached me in 2012 to assist with forming a team in the local competition. Her dedication to this sport has been absolutely inspirational and the sport is in a fantastic position thanks to her efforts over many years. It is from these early days that Chelsea and Kodi have developed and are now true heroes to many young girls looking to play the game of Rugby League in Gladstone.

I played Rugby League with Kodi's father, Lloyd House, and he was one of the hardest running forwards in the game in Central Queensland. Tragically Lloyd passed away a few years ago and I am sure that he would be very proud of his beautiful and very talented daughter, Kodi. I can see many of Lloyd's attributes in Kodi.

Chelsea Baker is not only a speed machine on the field but a very talented footballer. She is also a mother of two young children. Between her and her husband they manage to raise the kids and both play touch football at the highest level, as well as play Rugby League together.

Both of these local champions represented the record-breaking Queensland women's Rugby League team that was successful over their blues counterparts in Townsville earlier on in the year. To see the skills that both girls displayed was absolutely fantastic and the effort that they put in was an absolute delight to watch. From Kodi's bone-jarring defence to Chelsea's skilful attacking raids, these girls made Gladstone proud to the bone. It was great to see Chelsea Baker score Queensland's only try that secured the trophy for Queensland this year, and seeing the elation on their faces after that game will remain with me for a lifetime. Both of these girls are dedicated to the sport of Rugby League and they have been inspiring to say the least, and I will be thrilled to bits when I can sit back and watch them when they have the opportunity to represent their country in the near future.

State Emergency Service

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (7.04 pm): Tonight I rise to speak about those who give so much to our communities and ask for so little. Many times in the House I have spoken about the wonderful work of our Rural Fire Service in my area, but tonight I will be speaking about those wonderful members of the State Emergency Service who are celebrating 40 years of unwavering commitment to serving our community.

I was deeply warmed to see within the Queensland State Emergency Service 40-year service book the name Terrence Arthur Chapman, or better known as Terry—a man who is revered by his peers as a legend in the Logan SES. Many members of the Logan SES have had the privilege of being mentored by Terry—a man always willing to give up his time for others. Whether it is heights training, ropes, searches or communications, Terry is a repository of knowledge. Some say he is a walking encyclopedia.

This leads me to another matter that I am rather concerned about, and that is the issue of communication. The QFES for many years has allowed SES units to use the ageing RFA, or request for assistance system. The RFA suffered multiple issues, especially breakdowns in major events, but this system has now been replaced by TAMS, or task and management system. During the initial phases of development of the new system, local councils requested that the system be able to be integrated with their local disaster management systems—systems like Guardian. Throughout the development of TAMS, information was provided from local councils to help with this integration. It is concerning to see that this new system will not be integrated at all with local government systems. That means that, when we have major activations within Queensland, the SES units will receive their tasking via TAMS and then manually enter job data into their respective council disaster management system. In a major event, this could mean double handling of upwards of 6,000 jobs.

In addition, I believe that there is no capacity to record multiple requests from separate sources against a single address. This could result in important details being missed in one or both systems. Why is it that the new system was not integrated with local government systems and therefore creating an extensive increase in the workload for our SES volunteers and potentially causing errors in critical emergency tasking information? This issue needs to quickly be addressed and rectified. As we are now heading into a very active summer storm season and quickly into a cyclone season, I ask that the minister take this issue on and have it investigated and rectified.

Domestic and Family Violence

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (7.07 pm): I have been so heartened by the number of organisations, community groups and influential Queenslanders who have stood up in recent times to say 'not now, not ever' to domestic and family violence. As the *Not now, not ever* report made clear, action from across all sections of the community is vital to tackling the scourge of domestic and family violence. That is why I was delighted to join with a group of local football clubs in my electorate of Waterford as they joined together to commit to having all of their senior players undertake a domestic violence education and awareness course at the Beenleigh PCYC next year.

Local rivalries have been put aside and different codes are joining together in a really practical way to ensure that education is spread through the community about domestic and family violence. The program is a joint initiative by me, the Beenleigh PCYC, Logan City Council candidate Michael Rose and local senior football clubs—Beenleigh Junior Rugby League, South East Suns AFL, Beenleigh Buffaloes AFL, Beenleigh Pride Senior Rugby League and the Eagleby Giants Rugby League.

The club presidents told me how their clubs' goal was not just to develop great footballers but to develop great people. I could not agree more. This is the kind of leadership we need. Sport is a fantastic way to bring people together and help develop the values and attitudes of young people. So having sporting role models stepping up like this is vital.

The Local Government Association of Queensland also recently spearheaded a series of rallies organised by councils across the state. I attended one in my local Logan community, where Mayor Pam Parker urged our community to sign the Logan pledge against domestic and family violence—our own version of the White Ribbon pledge. It was wonderful to have so many local members of parliament with me, such as the Minister for Housing, Leeanne Enoch; the Minister for Health, Cameron Dick; and many other local community leaders.

The media has played a huge role in raising the profile of this issue. I would like to pay tribute to my own local papers, the *Albert & Logan News* and the *Logan Reporter*, for helping shine a light on this terrible problem for our community. I have often spoken in this House about the wide range of actions from the government to tackle domestic and family violence, but we all know that without the community behind us we cannot eliminate this problem. From what I am seeing, I feel certain that Waterford residents and the Logan community are right by our side in their resolve to end domestic and family violence.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 7.10 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Bailey, Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, 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, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Power, Pyne, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Seeney, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Trad, Walker, Watts, Weir, Wellington, Whiting, Williams