



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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 Phone (07) 3553 6344 Fax (07) 3553 6369

## FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT

### Thursday, 18 August 2016

Subject	Page
<b>PRIVILEGE</b> .....	<b>2955</b>
<b>Speaker's Ruling, Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Minister</b> .....	<b>2955</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated 21 June 2016, from the member for Cleveland, Dr Mark Robinson MP, to the Speaker, Hon. Peter Wellington, regarding an allegation of misleading the House. ....	2955
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated 14 July 2016, from the Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment, Hon. Jackie Trad, to the Speaker, Hon. Peter Wellington, regarding an allegation of misleading the House. ....	2955
<b>TABLED PAPER</b> .....	<b>2955</b>
<b>MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>2956</b>
<b>Battle of Long Tan, 50th Anniversary, Motion to Take Note</b> .....	<b>2956</b>
<b>Beef Industry</b> .....	<b>2957</b>
<b>Cross River Rail</b> .....	<b>2958</b>
<b>Reparations Review Panel</b> .....	<b>2959</b>
<b>Mental Health, Services</b> .....	<b>2960</b>
<b>State Schools, Teachers</b> .....	<b>2960</b>
<b>Mining Industry, Exploration</b> .....	<b>2960</b>
<b>Vehicles, Offensive Slogans</b> .....	<b>2961</b>
<b>Gold Coast Commonwealth Games</b> .....	<b>2962</b>
<b>Road Safety Week</b> .....	<b>2962</b>
<b>Construction Industry, Subcontractors</b> .....	<b>2963</b>
<b>Racing Queensland</b> .....	<b>2963</b>
<b>MOTION</b> .....	<b>2964</b>
<b>Order of Business</b> .....	<b>2964</b>
<b>COMMITTEES</b> .....	<b>2964</b>
<b>Membership</b> .....	<b>2964</b>

Table of Contents – Thursday, 18 August 2016

<b>MOTION</b> .....	<b>2965</b>
<b>Referral to the Finance and Administration Committee</b> .....	<b>2965</b>
<b>FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE</b> .....	<b>2965</b>
<b>Report</b> .....	<b>2965</b>
<i>Tabled paper: Finance and Administration Committee: report No. 28—Portfolio subordinate</i>	
legislation tabled on 10 May 2016.....	2965
<b>NOTICE OF MOTION</b> .....	<b>2965</b>
<b>Black Lung Disease</b> .....	<b>2965</b>
<b>PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>2965</b>
<b>Mining Industry, Exploration</b> .....	<b>2965</b>
<b>LNP Economic Plan</b> .....	<b>2966</b>
<i>Tabled paper: Article from the Sunshine Coast Daily, undated, titled 'Where's road funding:</i>	
<i>Opposition Leader calls for commitment'</i> .....	2966
<b>Townsville, Crime</b> .....	<b>2967</b>
<i>Tabled paper: Article from the Townsville Bulletin, dated 16 August 2016, titled 'Soft approach</i>	
<i>no answer to young ratbags'</i> .....	2967
<b>Renewable Energy</b> .....	<b>2968</b>
<b>Moreton Bay Rail Link</b> .....	<b>2968</b>
<b>QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE</b> .....	<b>2969</b>
<b>Minister for Housing and Public Works</b> .....	<b>2969</b>
<b>Minister for Child Safety</b> .....	<b>2969</b>
<b>Advance Queensland</b> .....	<b>2969</b>
<b>Logan Renewal Initiative</b> .....	<b>2970</b>
<b>Jobs, Trade</b> .....	<b>2970</b>
<b>Cleveland Youth Detention Centre</b> .....	<b>2971</b>
<b>Queensland Economy</b> .....	<b>2972</b>
<b>Princess Alexandra Hospital, Industrial Relations</b> .....	<b>2972</b>
<b>Gladstone Hospital</b> .....	<b>2973</b>
<b>Industrial Relations, Commonwealth Games</b> .....	<b>2974</b>
<b>State School Students, Extracurricular Activities</b> .....	<b>2974</b>
<b>Moreton Bay Rail Link</b> .....	<b>2975</b>
<i>Tabled paper: Queensland Rail briefing note, undated, for the Minister for Transport and the</i>	
<i>Commonwealth Games and Leader of the House, Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe, regarding Moreton</i>	
<i>Bay Rail Link signalling options.</i> .....	2975
<b>Pelorus Island, Feral Goats</b> .....	<b>2976</b>
<i>Tabled paper: Nature Conservation Act 1992: Interim Conservation Order, dated 17 August</i>	
<i>2016, relating to the beach stone-curlew.</i> .....	2976
<i>Tabled paper: Letter, dated 17 August 2016, from the Minister for Environment and Heritage</i>	
<i>Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef, Hon. Dr Steven Miles,</i>	
<i>to the Mayor of Hinchinbrook Shire Council, Councillor Ramon Jayo, regarding an interim</i>	
<i>conservation order on Pelorus Island for the purpose of protecting the beach stone-curlew.</i> .....	2976
<b>Electricity Prices</b> .....	<b>2976</b>
<b>Seniors Week</b> .....	<b>2977</b>
<b>Logan Renewal Initiative</b> .....	<b>2978</b>
<b>Building our Regions</b> .....	<b>2978</b>
<i>Tabled paper: Photograph, undated, from the Facebook page of the member for Hinchinbrook,</i>	
<i>Mr Andrew Cripps MP, depicting the member for Hinchinbrook and the member for Southern</i>	
<i>Downs, Mr Lawrence Springborg MP.</i> .....	2979
<i>Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Royalties for Regions: Ensuring regional communities</i>	
<i>get a fair share'.</i> .....	2979
<b>Cross River Rail</b> .....	<b>2979</b>
<b>Drought</b> .....	<b>2980</b>
<b>Carrara, Commonwealth Games Venue</b> .....	<b>2980</b>
<b>Vocational Education and Training</b> .....	<b>2981</b>
<b>LIMITATION OF ACTIONS AND OTHER LEGISLATION (CHILD ABUSE CIVIL PROCEEDINGS) AMENDMENT BILL</b> ... 2981	
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>2981</b>
<i>Tabled paper: Limitation of Actions and Other Legislation (Child Abuse Civil Proceedings)</i>	
<i>Amendment Bill 2016.</i> .....	2981
<i>Tabled paper: Limitation of Actions and Other Legislation (Child Abuse Civil Proceedings)</i>	
<i>Amendment Bill 2016, explanatory notes.</i> .....	2981
<b>First Reading</b> .....	<b>2985</b>
<b>Referral to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee</b> .....	<b>2985</b>
<b>LIMITATION OF ACTIONS (INSTITUTIONAL CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE) AND OTHER LEGISLATION</b>	
<b>AMENDMENT BILL; LIMITATION OF ACTIONS AND OTHER LEGISLATION (CHILD ABUSE CIVIL PROCEEDINGS)</b>	
<b>AMENDMENT BILL</b> .....	<b>2985</b>
<b>Cognate Debate; Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date</b> .....	<b>2985</b>
<b>VEGETATION MANAGEMENT (REINSTATEMENT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL</b> .....	<b>2986</b>
<b>Second Reading</b> .....	<b>2986</b>
<i>Tabled paper: Letter to the editor in Queensland Country Life, dated 18 August 2016, titled</i>	
<i>'Premier not looking or listening'.</i> .....	2990
<b>PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>2997</b>
<b>Withcott, Road Infrastructure</b> .....	<b>2997</b>
<i>Tabled paper: Nonconforming petition regarding a lack of traffic and pedestrian crossing of the</i>	
<i>Warrego Highway in Withcott.</i> .....	2997

Table of Contents – Thursday, 18 August 2016

Battle of Long Tan, 50th Anniversary .....	2998
Battle of Long Tan, 50th Anniversary; Palaszczuk Labor Government, Wild Dog Fencing .....	2998
Nudgee Electorate, Events .....	2999
Coal Seam Gas .....	3000
Battle of Long Tan, 50th Anniversary; Lytton Electorate, Health Services .....	3000
Panama Disease Tropical Race 4 .....	3001
Gallipoli Barracks, Access .....	3002
Child Protection .....	3002
Child Protection .....	3003
<b>VEGETATION MANAGEMENT (REINSTATEMENT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL.....</b>	<b>3003</b>
<b>Second reading .....</b>	<b>3003</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Extract of media article from the <i>Courier-Mail</i> , dated 18 August 2016, depicting the Premier, Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk, and the Deputy Premier, Hon. Jackie Trad, with protestors. ....	3006
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Email, dated 26 May 2016, from Ms Jennifer Kellie to the Glass House electorate office providing images of a property at Woodford. ....	3012
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Media release, dated 27 June 2015, from the federal Minister for the Environment, Hon. Greg Hunt, to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment, Hon. Jackie Trad, and the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef, Hon. Dr Steven Miles, regarding new Intergovernmental Agreement and The Reef 2050 Plan.....	3015
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Photograph depicting a tree collapsed in a creek. ....	3016
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Front cover of a book titled 'The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines made Australia' by Bill Gammage.....	3017
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Nonconforming petition regarding the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.....	3021
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Bundle of maps from the Department of Natural Resources and Mines of various properties. ....	3034
<b>SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS .....</b>	<b>3035</b>
<b>Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner, Appointment .....</b>	<b>3035</b>
<b>Acting Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner, Appointment .....</b>	<b>3035</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Notice of appointment of Mr Mitchell Kunde as Acting Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner. ....	3036
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated 15 August 2016, from the Chair of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee, Mr Lawrence Springborg MP, to the Speaker, Hon. Peter Wellington, regarding the appointment of an Acting Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner.....	3036
<b>Photographs in Chamber.....</b>	<b>3036</b>
<b>MOTION .....</b>	<b>3036</b>
<b>Black Lung Disease .....</b>	<b>3036</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Answer to Question on Notice No. 176 asked on 23 February 2016.....	3038
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Answer to Question on Notice No. 240 asked on 24 February 2016.....	3038
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated 11 August 2016, from members of the Black Lung Victims Group to the Premier and Minister for the Arts, Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk, regarding black lung disease. ....	3041
Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to. ....	3041
Resolved in the affirmative.....	3041
<b>VEGETATION MANAGEMENT (REINSTATEMENT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL.....</b>	<b>3041</b>
<b>Second Reading .....</b>	<b>3041</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Article, dated 17 August 2016, from the <i>Brisbane Times</i> titled 'LNP environment spokesman questions human contribution to climate change'. ....	3060
Division: Question put—That the bill be now read a second time.....	3075
Resolved in the negative. ....	3075
<b>MINISTERIAL STATEMENT .....</b>	<b>3076</b>
<b>Correction of Record of Proceedings.....</b>	<b>3076</b>
<b>PERSONAL EXPLANATION.....</b>	<b>3076</b>
<b>Child Protection .....</b>	<b>3076</b>
<b>SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.....</b>	<b>3076</b>
<b>ADJOURNMENT.....</b>	<b>3076</b>
<b>Dalby, Small Business .....</b>	<b>3076</b>
<b>Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis.....</b>	<b>3077</b>
<b>Wide Bay, Infrastructure .....</b>	<b>3077</b>
<b>Algerie Electorate, Neighbourhood Watch.....</b>	<b>3078</b>
<b>Navua Sedge, Eradication .....</b>	<b>3078</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Nonconforming petition regarding the Navua Sedge weed. ....	3078
<b>Hagslea State School.....</b>	<b>3079</b>
<b>Nerang2020.....</b>	<b>3080</b>
<b>Diew, Mr J .....</b>	<b>3080</b>
<b>Cleveland Electorate, Road Infrastructure and Development .....</b>	<b>3081</b>
<b>Logan House Fire Support Network; Chalmers, Mr J .....</b>	<b>3081</b>
<b>ATTENDANCE .....</b>	<b>3082</b>

## THURSDAY, 18 AUGUST 2016

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The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

### PRIVILEGE

#### Speaker's Ruling, Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Minister



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 21 June 2016 the member for Cleveland wrote to me alleging that the Deputy Premier deliberately misled parliament in her points of order when she stated that it was untrue that she had held secret and closed meetings with the ETU only on North Stradbroke Island and that she had attended meetings on the island with the Electrical Trades Union.

I have circulated a ruling on this matter. I am not convinced, based on the evidence before me, that the Deputy Premier met with Electrical Trades Union members only as opposed to meetings with Sibelco workers. I have decided that the matter does not warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committee and I will not be referring the matter. I table the correspondence in relation to this matter.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 21 June 2016, from the member for Cleveland, Dr Mark Robinson MP, to the Speaker, Hon. Peter Wellington, regarding an allegation of misleading the House [\[1301\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 14 July 2016, from the Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment, Hon. Jackie Trad, to the Speaker, Hon. Peter Wellington, regarding an allegation of misleading the House [\[1302\]](#).

I seek leave to incorporate the ruling.

Leave granted.

#### SPEAKER'S RULING—ALLEGED DELIBERATELY MISLEADING THE HOUSE

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Members,

On 21 June 2016, the Member for Cleveland wrote to me alleging that the Deputy Premier deliberately misled Parliament in her points of order when she stated that it was untrue that she had held secret and closed meetings with the ETU only on North Stradbroke Island and that she had attended meetings on the island with the Electrical Trades Union.

In his letter to me, the Member for Cleveland stated that the points of order raised by the Deputy Premier were deliberately misleading because she did attend a meeting on North Stradbroke Island with members of the Electrical Trade Union, and evidence was provided by media articles reporting on the meeting.

I sought further information from the Deputy Premier about the allegations made against her, in accordance with Standing Order 269(5).

The Deputy Premier advised that her statements were not incorrect as she had attended a meeting with Sibelco workers, which included not only Electrical Trades Union members but other union members as well, and therefore she believed the Member for Cleveland's statements to be untrue.

I am not convinced, based on the evidence before me, that the Deputy Premier met with Electrical Trades Union members only as opposed to meetings with Sibelco workers. I have decided that the matter does not warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committee and I will not be referring the matter.

I table the correspondence in relation to this matter.

### TABLED PAPER

#### TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

#### MEMBER'S PAPER

The following member's paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Member for Nicklin (Hon Wellington)—

[1303](#) Nonconforming petition regarding restoring the laws that protect Queensland's forests

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Battle of Long Tan, 50th Anniversary, Motion to Take Note

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.33 am): Today we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, one of the largest battles fought by Australians in the Vietnam War. Since 1987, today, 18 August, has been designated Vietnam Veterans Day in recognition of the service of almost 60,000 Australians, with 521 of them paying the ultimate sacrifice.

The member for Mirani, as a former veteran, will be making a statement to the House today. Eighteen of those Australians killed in Vietnam were lost during the four-hour Battle of Long Tan. Another 25 were wounded. Most casualties were from D Company, 6th Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment.

The 6RAR was established at Enoggera in Brisbane in 1965. The 6RAR has a long and proud service history, including a number of overseas deployments, including Vietnam, East Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan. Just a year after its formation, 6RAR was deployed to South Vietnam. Within two months of arriving in Vietnam, the battalion was engaged in the Battle of Long Tan. The opposition leader and I will attend today's commemorations at the Gallipoli Barracks in Enoggera to be attended by the Governor-General and senior representatives of the Australian government. I was disappointed to hear overnight that plans for veterans and their families to commemorate the Battle of Long Tan today have been restricted by the Vietnamese government. I welcome that some veterans will now be permitted on the site today.

My sister's grandfather-in-law was Les Thompson, who was chaplain at the 6RAR base at Nui Dat on 18 August 1966. He toured the battlefield the next day and he later told author Les McAuley—

Dead bodies everywhere ... As you jumped off the chopper they were there ... I was glad I was the Chaplain, I was sorry I was there. I wouldn't have wanted to be anywhere else, but I wished I was a thousand miles away.

McAuley wrote in his book *The Battle of Long Tan* that Les flew by helicopter to visit the Australian wounded in hospital the next morning, 'then went back to write to the families of all the casualties'. Sadly, Les passed away last month.

For veterans of the Vietnam War, there was belated recognition of their service and the condition of post-traumatic stress disorder that many have endured as a result of their service. We must maintain national awareness of PTSD. Many veterans first develop PTSD years after their traumatic experience, but others might find their existing PTSD gets worse over time.

This morning my assistant minister, the member for Morayfield, along with the member for Noosa, will attend the Vietnam Veterans Day service in Anzac Square. As my assistant minister, the member for Morayfield has been working with my department to investigate opportunities to acknowledge the service of our veterans, such as extending travel concessions to those veterans who do not currently have access to other age or disability concessions. Just as the Minister for Housing moved to expand income eligibility for the Bond Loan and Rental Grants programs to include Veterans' Affairs disability payments, my government is looking at ways to recognise and support the valued service of our veterans. I move—

That the House take note of this statement.

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.37 am): I join with the Premier and all the other members of the House, I am sure, to take the opportunity to pause to commemorate Vietnam Veterans Day and the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan. Today is a day of solemn reflection as we remember the devastating loss of life during the Vietnam War, when 60,000 young Australian soldiers set foot on enemy soil and more than 500 lost their lives fighting for freedom.

We also extend our deepest gratitude to those who returned home with deep physical and psychological scars, who continue to suffer for what they had seen and we thank their loved ones who suffered alongside them. I am sure that there are many in this House who know, have friends or who have family who have suffered and have stories to tell.

The Battle of Long Tan was significant as it was the first major conflict involving Australian troops in Vietnam in 1966 at a time when the actions in Vietnam—the war in Vietnam—still enjoyed strong public support in Australia. On this day 50 years ago, 105 young Australian men from D Company 6th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment and three New Zealanders were ambushed by over 2,000

North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops at a rubber plantation not far from Long Tan. After fighting in torrential rain for almost four hours and in the most abhorrent and difficult conditions, our Australian troops were almost overrun and would have been if not for reinforcements that arrived just in time to save them. Those reinforcements themselves had to fight to get to the plantation. The odds were undoubtedly stacked against our troops. They were ill equipped and outnumbered at least 10 to one. Helicopter suppliers had to fly in ammunition so that they could continue their battle. However, despite extraordinary adversity, the Australians prevailed, marking one of the most extraordinary chapters in our military history.

The Battle of Long Tan was not our largest battle in Vietnam, but it was certainly one of the bloodiest. Eighteen young Australian men lost their lives and another 24 were injured during the ambush while hundreds of Vietnamese soldiers were also killed. Six Queenslanders lost their lives: Private Glenn Drabble, Private Kenneth Gant, Private Warren Mitchell, Private Douglas Salveron, Private Francis Topp and Private Maxwell Wales. We remember them today.

The Vietnam War was one of the longest wars Australia has ever been involved in and was the first war witnessed live on our television screens. For several years after, Australia's role in Vietnam ignited much reflection and debate on the merits of our country's involvement. Today is a day when we remember the people who served, not the conflict when they came back. Today is also Vietnam Veterans Day when we remember all Australians who served in that lengthy Vietnam conflict. Already this morning there has been a special ceremony at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra attended by the Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, and the opposition leader, Bill Shorten, with Governor-General Sir Peter Cosgrove laying a wreath at the Stone of Remembrance alongside other Vietnam veterans. Sir Peter Cosgrove, of course, served in Vietnam with 9RAR, commanding an infantry platoon for which he was awarded the Military Cross for his work during an assault on enemy positions.

Today it is also worth recognising the efforts of Lieutenant Colonel Harry Smith, who, after leading his men in conflict, in the best traditions of the Army continued to fight for their recognition back here in Australia for another 50 years. Lieutenant Colonel Smith's long and dedicated fight led to a decision just eight days ago from the independent Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal that 10 soldiers who fought in the Battle of Long Tan be awarded a military honour or have their existing honour upgraded. To Lieutenant Colonel Smith we say, 'We salute you,' and to those 10 soldiers, 'We thank you.'

Although we cannot erase the past or the pain inflicted on those who lived it, we must use days like today as a timely reminder that freedom must not be taken for granted. As Queenslanders we are incredibly privileged to live peacefully in the greatest state in the greatest country in the world. Sometimes it is easy to take this for granted but, put simply, we must not.

The LNP recognises the ultimate sacrifice made by thousands of young Australians and their families to ensure we could enjoy the individual choice and liberties we have been afforded today and particularly the liberties that we are afforded as representatives in this place. We can never repay them for what they have given us, but we can make the most of these opportunities and ensure future generations enjoy the same freedoms which came at such a great price for so many.

On behalf of my fellow LNP members I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our Vietnam veterans and urge all Queenslanders to take a moment today to reflect and to acknowledge those who came before us and who gave so much. Whilst on every Anzac Day we remember the service of Australians in all wars, it is again appropriate that we remember the survivors and the people who fought for us at Long Tan and all Vietnam veterans with the immortal words 'lest we forget'.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

### Beef Industry

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.42 am): My government is committed to supporting projects that will deliver jobs for Queenslanders and generate economic prosperity for our state. That is why in April the Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games and the Treasurer announced we would deliver a boost for our state's beef industry. My government is investing \$2.5 million to support the expansion of Oakey Beef Exports by upgrading rail sidings on the western line and reopening part of an old branch line that was closed in 1994.

I am pleased to announce today that work has started on this \$2.5 million project to upgrade rail infrastructure in South-West Queensland and support the company's multimillion dollar expansion. By upgrading rail infrastructure in the region we will ensure Oakey Beef can streamline its operations and move more cattle to Oakey. This injection of funds from the government will open up more economic opportunities for beef producers and allow them to put their stock on the rail line. According to the South West Regional Economic Development Association, my government's investment will allow the company to reinstate rail freight movements and unlock the economic potential for a \$1.3 billion uplift in activity around the region and support more than 4,300 jobs. This investment will generate significant economic benefits within Oakey and surrounding areas, delivering a major boost for regional jobs and bolstering economic confidence in this region.

This project reflects my government's commitment to invest in getting more freight on rail and to support jobs growth for Queensland. Over the coming months Queensland Rail crews will work to upgrade a rail siding at Mitchell and re-open a section of the old Cecil Plains branch line that has been out of service for more than 10 years. The upgrade will allow cattle services to operate from Quilpie, Charleville, Morven, Roma and Mitchell to Oakey, which is critical to allow Oakey Beef Exports to double its output. The works to re-open the Cecil Plains branch line will first involve removing the old track and completing earthworks before crews work to construct 1.3 kilometres of upgraded track, laying more than 1,900 sleepers.

My government supports Queensland's beef industry and understands it is a vital contributor to our state's economy, particularly to our regional economies. In 2014-15 cattle production generated more than \$4.2 billion for the Queensland economy, which is more than 27 per cent of Queensland's total gross value in agricultural production at the farm gate. Our state is a world leader in beef production, currently the fifth largest beef exporter in the world with total exports worth approximately \$4.9 billion during this past year.

**Mr Cripps** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Hinchinbrook, you are warned under standing order 253A for your interjections. They are not called for. If you persist I will take the appropriate action.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is why Queensland Rail will continue to work with Oakey Beef Exports to look for further opportunities to upgrade rail infrastructure on the western line to facilitate further growth for freight in South-West Queensland.

### Cross River Rail

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.45 am): The Palaszczuk government is continuing to work on Cross River Rail as we ready the project for market. Cross River Rail is the Queensland government's No. 1 infrastructure priority, not because it is a critical piece of transport infrastructure—though it is—not because it will mean thousands of construction jobs—though it will—and not because we need a second rail river crossing—though we do; it is our No. 1 priority because Cross River Rail will also fundamentally transform our city and our region. To ensure we seize this city-making opportunity, earlier this month the government announced the project would transition from the Department of Transport and Main Roads into my portfolio, the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning. This transition reinforces our desire to realise the transformational potential of Cross River Rail as an economic driver for the whole of South-East Queensland. Our next step in realising this transformation is to finalise a new Cross River Rail economic development strategy.

**Mr SPEAKER:** One moment, Deputy Premier. I apologise for interrupting. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, if you persist with your private conversations in the chamber you will be warned. That is my final preliminary warning.

**Ms TRAD:** This strategy will set out a 40-year blueprint to capitalise on the investment in Cross River Rail. At the core of the strategy will be an innovation and economic development corridor stretching from the Boggo Road ecosciences precinct to the Mayne rail yards. This corridor will establish nodes of major economic activity centred around Cross River Rail stations and linking to major sites like hospitals, universities, sports and entertainment venues and other commercial activities. We are also progressing the establishment of a delivery authority to lead the development, procurement and delivery of Cross River Rail. Establishing the delivery authority as a statutory body will ensure it can be provided with the powers needed to deliver the massive benefits of the project and will help cut out the

politics and deliver certainty to the project. Drafting of enabling legislation has commenced and an independent board will soon be established to lead the project. We have also allocated \$50 million in the 2016-17 budget to establish the delivery authority and to progress planning and delivery of the project. We have also announced an in-principle commitment of \$800 million overall to the project.

This is the largest commitment to the Cross River Rail project made by any government to date. That is a good start, but we still need other levels of government to put in their fair share. To that extent, I have had productive discussions with my federal counterparts, the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, the Minister for Urban Infrastructure and the Assistant Minister for Cities and Digital Transformation, about how the project connects with their Cities Agenda. The full business case for Cross River Rail has already been provided to Infrastructure Australia for review and assessment and we will continue to work with the Commonwealth agencies to ensure they have all the necessary information to facilitate a funding decision by the federal government.

In the meantime, we are not sitting back. The work on Cross River Rail continues. Detailed design work is now underway and the project team will soon submit a Request for Project Change under the existing environmental impact statement approval to the Coordinator-General, with full approval of the EIS anticipated by year's end. Readiness for market activities are also continuing and we are working to have procurement packages potentially ready for market in 2017. We are pushing ahead with the Cross River Rail Economic Development Strategy. Cross River Rail is a vital project for this state and we are doing all we can to see this project happen.

### Reparations Review Panel

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (9.49 am): From the late 19th century and for a large part of the 20th century, in this state governments exercised control over all aspects of the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. They were subject to protection acts that included control over their wages and their savings. We have previously recognised that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people suffered direct disadvantage from racially discriminatory government practices of the past, such as stolen wages. As part of that approach, to date more than \$5.8 million in reparations have been paid to more than 3,000 eligible claimants under the government's new \$21 million stolen wages reparation scheme.

Now, in a milestone for this state, we have established a dedicated reparations review panel to ensure that those who are eligible receive reparations. The expert panel has been set up in direct response to the community feedback received during consultation by the Stolen Wages Reparations Taskforce, led by then Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Mick Gooda. The five-member expert panel will reassess claims that were initially deemed ineligible due to a lack of verifiable government records showing whether or not there was government control of a person's wages or savings. The panel is not part of an appeals process. Rather, claims assessed and deemed inconclusive by the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships due to insufficient documentation will be examined by the Reparations Review Panel. This new process gives unsuccessful applicants an opportunity to present oral testimony about their personal experiences and other evidence to support their claims in the absence of formal documentation. Already the panel, which met for the first time earlier this month, has approved two claims as eligible by drawing on personal accounts from individuals, surviving co-workers and knowledge of community life. The Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships is working to fast-track those payments to both eligible claimants, who are now in their eighties.

Those are examples of genuine claims that, without the review panel process, would have otherwise sadly fallen through the cracks due to inconclusive records. Indigenous Queenslanders wronged by previous governments and protection acts should not be further disadvantaged by a lack of record keeping from years gone by. We ought to remove barriers and red tape that discourage eligible Indigenous Queenslanders from progressing their claims to ensure that no-one misses out on their rightful entitlements. This new method for reviewing claims is vital given that, for many Indigenous Queenslanders, there is little or no paper trail of their employment and mistreatment in this often undocumented era in Queensland's history. I believe the establishment of the Reparations Review Panel will deliver justice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders while acknowledging the injustices of the past.

### Mental Health, Services

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.51 am): I rise to update the House on the rebuilding of mental healthcare facilities for young people in Queensland. Yesterday the Department of Health undertook further consultation with families affected by the decision of the Newman-Nicholls government to close the Barrett centre without a replacement. A key outcome of that meeting is that the families agreed they would work with Health Consumers Queensland and Queensland Health in the ongoing planning of the new facility that will provide residential mental health care for young people.

Through this process, families will have the opportunity to be represented on various committees, finalising the clinical model and the building design alongside experts. That consultation and cooperation is extremely important, because the Barrett Commission of Inquiry report demonstrated that the Newman-Nicholls government did not listen to advice from families or experts, even when the government itself asked for it. The commission found that the Newman-Nicholls government created an expert clinical reference group in relation to the Barrett centre. In their final report, the experts recommended that a replacement facility should be built.

The commission found that the report was provided to the office of the then health minister, the member for Southern Downs. However, the member for Southern Downs gave evidence to the commission that he had not read the report and did not bother to read it until he was preparing to give evidence before the commission itself earlier this year. The commission also found that there was no evidence that anyone in the then minister's office had read it. As many members here would remember, on 22 August 2013 the then opposition leader, now the Premier, tabled the expert clinical reference group's report in question time in front of the member for Southern Downs. However, the member for Southern Downs's sworn testimony to the commission of inquiry was that he did not read that document, even when it was tabled in front of him in this House.

I have no reason to disbelieve the sworn testimony of the honourable member. However, I think it does show how the Newman-Nicholls government closed the door to advice, to the experts and to voices other than their own. I intend to keep the House fully informed of this government's actions in providing a replacement for the Barrett centre, a process that we are determined to get right.

### State Schools, Teachers

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (9.54 am): I am pleased to inform the House that the Palaszczuk government has opened four new professional learning hubs to train and support state school teachers in key locations across the state. This is all about ensuring we have the best teachers in our classrooms. We are investing \$800,000 to support those new hubs at schools in Ipswich, Rockhampton, Roma and Mount Isa to help attract and develop teachers in those areas. The hubs will coordinate and deliver professional learning programs relevant to each location to support teachers. That will be done through additional in-school professional experiences for teachers and preservice teachers. Experienced mentors will also be matched with teachers to participate in professional development workshops.

This year Queensland students achieved their best-ever NAPLAN results. Our year 3 students ranked first in the country for grammar and punctuation for the very first time ever. However, we recognise that there is more to do to improve literacy and numeracy standards across the state. To lift educational outcomes, we know that attracting, supporting and retaining quality teachers is vital and the professional support hubs will do just that. They support and develop the capability of preservice, beginning and experienced teachers in identified high-priority locations across Queensland. They will boost professional development support for teachers and help ensure every teacher in every classroom has the skills and know-how to deliver quality education for our students.

### Mining Industry, Exploration

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (9.56 am): The Palaszczuk government recognises the difficulties being faced by the exploration sector due to the global commodity downturn. The resources sector has historically been the workhorse of the Queensland economy and will continue to be a significant contributor for decades to come. Accessing finance and the declining demand for discoveries have placed considerable pressure on our exploration sector. That is why earlier this year I announced concessions

for mineral and coal explorers to deliver a possible 50 per cent reduction to the expenditure they are required to commit for mineral exploration over the next two years. It must be remembered that some of those exploration companies are mum-and-dad companies. They are hard workers for Queensland.

The Queensland Exploration Council, the Queensland Resources Council, the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies and mayors in local resource communities overwhelmingly support this very strong initiative. However, as we saw at estimates and again on Tuesday, the only one who is against this, the only one who wants to kill exploration in Queensland, is the member for Hinchinbrook.

**Government members:** Shame!

**Dr LYNHAM:** Shame on him! On his watch, exploration expenditure declined by around 70 per cent, but what did the honourable member do? Rome was burning and he did not even have the good grace to buy a fiddle. Someone give that man a toga! If he were still the minister for mines, the exploration industry would be at death's door. If there is no exploration, there is no future mining. This initiative provides relief to explorers who are hurting. This initiative enables us to keep explorers going so that they can roar back when the upswing occurs.

Last week I was in Cloncurry, where there definitely are signs of confidence in the industry and optimism about the future. That town is feeling the benefits of the nearby Ernest Henry mine and MMG's Dugald River project. In Cloncurry, I saw how our resources sector unpins regional economies well beyond immediate mine boundaries. The Cloncurry bakery is thriving, chiefly driven by demand from local mines. Cloncurry's baker is Fan Yu, who was born in China and trained in bakery skills by TAFE, which is another institution that they wanted to destroy. He is now employing half a dozen people, producing bread for the mines and a sensational pie that miners come into town to buy. That is what this government does: it continues to work hard to support our resources sector for the jobs in the bush and the business opportunities it provides.

### Vehicles, Offensive Slogans

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (9.59 am): I want to outline the strategies that the Palaszczuk government is developing to remove offensive slogans from Queensland roads. I, like many members of the House, have been disgusted by some of the derogatory, sexist and outright offensive slogans and cartoons on the side of some commercial Queensland vehicles.

As I reflected during our estimates hearing, I want to acknowledge the work of all political parties and all governments that have tried to deal with this issue over many years. I include in that the former leader of the opposition, the member for Southern Downs, who I know is genuinely passionate about this issue. I appreciate him offering his cooperation when he was leader. I appreciate those on both sides of the House who have written to me over the last 18 months raising this issue.

It was a problem that many MPs, community groups and parents in our community had been concerned about for years, but an easy solution was not forthcoming. I am delighted that we have found a way forward to take offensive slogans off the road. Thinking a little outside the box as to how we address this issue, we have built on discussions with other governments across Australia and overseas, and I have spoken to my New Zealand counterparts who are also seeking to deal with this issue.

We are the first government to act in this way. I am pleased that since my announcement we have been contacted by other jurisdictions that have indicated their interest in keeping abreast of our efforts and expressing their willingness to work with us.

I understand the level of emotion and community concern that these vulgar, crass and offensive slogans cause. Until now the operators of these vehicles have ignored findings against them by the Advertising Standards Board. One of the key aims in the way I have tackled this issue is to try to starve the operators of these vehicles of what they want most—free publicity. By targeting the registration of commercial vehicles, operators have two choices: get rid of the slogans or see the vans off the road where they cannot be seen and cannot cause offence and are unable to generate revenue.

It is important to note that this is not about whether you, I or any individual finds a particular picture or slogan offensive. This is about having an enforcement mechanism for the decisions of the independent Advertising Standards Board so that the concerns of the community, validated by the ASB, can actually have some impact. This provides input from the community as well as ensuring procedural fairness for advertisers or operators.

I want to thank my colleague the Minister for Main Roads and his department for the cooperative and innovative way we have worked together. What we are working to do with Minister Bailey is to amend the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 to introduce a process to allow the Department of Transport and Main Roads to issue notices and to deregister vehicles with advertising that has been found to be in breach of the relevant ASB standards. Between now and when the legislation is introduced I hope that operators will finally recognise that the time has come to take these disgusting slogans off our roads.

### Gold Coast Commonwealth Games

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (10.02 am): Earlier this month I was pleased to join Townsville mayor, Jenny Hill, the member for Townsville, local Indigenous leaders and the ever present games mascot, Borobi, to unveil a new Commonwealth Games countdown clock on the Strand in Townsville. The Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games is increasingly capturing the hearts of the Queensland community.

We will be front and centre stage when the curtain comes down on the Rio Olympics and the world's sporting attention turns to the Gold Coast. It will then be Queensland's time to shine. As one of our games event cities Townsville will have a big part to play. This surfboard shaped timepiece is set to become a tourist attraction and will allow Townsville residents and visitors to experience the journey to the Commonwealth Games and witness firsthand the countdown to 2018. Townsville's very own countdown clock signifies the crucial role the city will play in delivering the biggest sporting event Australia will see throughout this decade, including the generation of greater awareness of the games in regional Queensland.

As a long-time basketball player and fan, I am delighted that the basketball preliminary rounds will be played at the Townsville Convention and Exhibition Centre over the course of the games. To support this, up to \$1 million has been allocated for regional venue upgrades, including for Townsville, while Rydges Southbank Townsville has been contracted as the local athletes village. North Queensland has always had a proud tradition when it comes to basketball. I am very confident that the legacy the community will reap from the games will reinforce the region's reputation as a stronghold in the sport.

Speaking of pride in basketball, it would be remiss of me not to mention the tremendous achievement of the Australian Boomers team overnight in Rio. Taking out an almost 30-point win over Lithuania, the team ranked No. 3 in the world, the Boomers are displaying all the qualities of a team determined to secure Australia's first men's basketball Olympic medal. I know the House will join me in wishing Queenslanders Aaron Baynes and Cameron Bairstow and Torres Strait Islander star Patty Mills all the best for their games ahead. The world is taking notice of the Boomers, and the world will be taking notice of Queensland when the Commonwealth Games is held in just 594 days. While the Opals have not had as good an Olympics as the Boomers, Townsville Fire player Cayla George has been a strong contributor and will look forward to suiting up for the Opals on home soil.

I am confident the games will be strongly supported by the Townsville community. Just as this sports-mad city adopted the Japanese Rugby team when they were based there during the 2003 Rugby World Cup, I am sure locals will embrace the Australian and visiting basketball teams that will play there.

The Palaszczuk government is determined to achieve a lasting legacy from the Commonwealth Games. We want local communities and businesses to capitalise on the opportunities when it comes to tourism, trade and investment. In the big countdown to the games, the Palaszczuk government is working to make sure all people in Townsville and Queensland share the dream.

### Road Safety Week

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (10.05 am): Next week—22 to 28 August—is Road Safety Week. It is an opportunity for all Queenslanders to be directly involved in making our roads safer. I am delighted to announce that I will be officially launching Road Safety Week this Sunday with a new road safety campaign called 'My road toll'. I do not want to give too much away before the launch, but it involves Queenslanders who have been affected by road trauma sharing their harrowing and deeply personal stories. The ads are emotional and extremely powerful. I look forward to launching them this weekend.

This year's Road Safety Week theme is 'Speak up for road safety'. Schools, workplaces, community groups, individuals and families will be supporting road safety by hosting events, having conversations about staying safe, sharing personal stories, suggesting a safety tip or making a pledge to improve their driving behaviour. Events will be held throughout the state, including public road safety expos in Cairns, Townsville and Logan, an afternoon tea for grey nomads at the Rockhampton Caravan and Camping Show, a breakfast and school event organised by the member for Bulimba, a morning tea for emergency service workers organised by the member for Thuringowa and the CARRS-Q Community Engagement Workshop in Brisbane.

Road Safety Week is not just about participation and discussion; it is also about encouraging the community to challenge the road toll status quo. Let us stop accepting death and serious injury as part and parcel of using our roads. As road safety minister, I am shocked at the number of road fatalities still happening because a seatbelt was not worn. What I say to Queenslanders is buckle up every time; it will save your life in a crash.

The Palaszczuk government, through our Road Safety Action Plan, is committed to a vision of zero road deaths and serious injuries, but this ambitious vision will only be possible if everyone in our community plays their part. We cannot do this alone. It is only by working together that we can reduce the burden of road trauma in our communities. I would encourage all Queenslanders to speak up, be heard and let us all make Queensland's 2016 Road Safety Week an important event in our community's calendar to drive the number of road fatalities and crashes in our state down.

### Construction Industry, Subcontractors

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (10.08 am): I have spoken in this place before about the important issue of security of payment for contractors and how crucial it is to families around the state that action is taken to address this. Members of this government understand the dignity of work. Members of this government understand what a decent job means to Queenslanders and also what it means not to get paid. That is why in the lead-up to the 2015 state election we committed to review the issue of security of payment.

Since becoming minister I have met countless tradies, subbies and their families who have told me of the consequences of not being paid on time or not being paid in full and all too often not paid at all. People lose their life savings, their homes, their vehicles and their livelihoods. Families fall apart. Some people become homeless and, most tragically, suicide is not uncommon.

What has become clear through our investigations is that it is not just company collapses that lead to non-payment. A small number of rogue players seemingly devoid of any shred of decency are treating non-payment or late payment as their business model. This is having a detrimental effect on confidence in the construction industry. Only a few weeks ago I met with a subbie who told me that he has put off buying three pieces of equipment and hiring three new staff just so he has a buffer for the next time he does not get paid. Let me repeat that: that is for the next time he does not get paid, not in case he does not get paid.

It is clear to me that the community expects us to take action. I am pleased to inform the House that I have taken the next step in addressing this important issue. Late last month my department engaged Deloitte Access Economics to undertake comprehensive modelling on the options for improving security of payment. The Queensland construction industry is strong, it is sophisticated and it is also a necessarily complex industry. The work undertaken by Deloitte will investigate what the right mix of policies is to make sure that subbies get paid on time and in full every time.

We understand that it is incumbent on all of us in this place to give greater security to the tens and thousands of families to prevent tragedy and heartbreak and to build confidence across Queensland's construction industry. I look forward to further updating the House on our progress.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. I certainly look forward to your further updates, as other Queenslanders do.

### Racing Queensland

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.10 am): This Palaszczuk government is getting on with the job of building a stronger racing industry in Queensland. In the 18 months since the Palaszczuk government took office we have acted decisively to implement a series of racing reforms to benefit the entire industry following the live-baiting scandal. In line with the MacSporran commission

of inquiry's recommendations, we have already established a new stand-alone Queensland independent racing commission, QRIC, headed by highly decorated police officer Commissioner Ross Barnett. QRIC is enforcing the strictest animal welfare and integrity regime of any Australian racing jurisdiction.

I am pleased to inform the House that we have also delivered on a key MacSparran recommendation—namely, the creation of a new board for Racing Queensland. The Racing Queensland Board has been restructured to reflect Racing Queensland's new commercial focus and comprises seven members—four members independent of the racing industry and three members with relevant industry experience. I welcome Ms Sharon Dawson, Ms Susannah George and Mr Max Walters OAM FCA, who were appointed on 1 July 2016 as independent members, and Mr Mark Sowerby, who was appointed as an industry member. They joined existing board members Mr Steve Wilson AM, chair of Racing Queensland, along with industry members Ms Margaret Reynolds and Mr Dale Cartwright.

I am also pleased to announce that Racing Queensland's new Chief Executive Officer, Dr Eliot Forbes, will take up his new role next Monday. Dr Forbes, who is from Queensland, is an internationally renowned racing executive and qualified veterinarian who has held racing industry leadership roles in Australia and abroad, most recently as CEO of Tasracing. His appointment has been widely welcomed by racing industry participants. If the positive feedback I received from racegoers at Eagle Farm on Saturday is any indication, it confirms we are on the right track.

One of the board's key priorities will be to deliver a five-year commercial strategy for the racing industry in Queensland to improve its financial position and secure its long-term viability. The board will also be responsible for developing an annual racing infrastructure plan, which will identify a list of priority infrastructure projects aligned to its commercial strategy.

The new board, CEO and QRIC mark a new era for racing in Queensland. I am confident that together they can take racing in this state to a whole new level. I also look forward to attending the Queensland Thoroughbred Awards this Saturday night at Doomben. This is horseracing's night of nights in Queensland and a great chance to celebrate the tremendous achievements of the state's hardworking and dedicated thoroughbred professionals. I want to wish all of this year's finalists the very best of luck.

## MOTION

### Order of Business

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.14 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That general business notices of motion—House to take note of committee reports—be postponed for this day's sitting.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## COMMITTEES

### Membership

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.14 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That from Monday, 22 August 2016—

1. the member for Mount Ommaney, Mrs Tarnya Smith MP, be discharged from the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee and the member for Toowoomba South, Mr David Janetzki MP, be appointed to the committee; and
2. the member for Burleigh, Mr Michael Hart MP, be discharged from the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee and the member for Warrego, Ms Ann Leahy MP, be appointed to the committee.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## MOTION

### Referral to the Finance and Administration Committee

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.15 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

1. That the Finance and Administration Committee consider and report on how to improve health and safety outcomes for combat sports contestants in high-risk professional and amateur contests in Queensland, while considering at least the following options:
  - (a) continue with the existing combat sports industry self-regulation;
  - (b) implement a government and industry-initiated voluntary standard of practice to supplement the existing combat sports industry self-regulation;
  - (c) an examination of Queensland's existing legislative framework and whether this could be utilised to give effect to the health and safety outcomes being sought; and
  - (d) enact specific sports contest legislation with an associated statutory enforcement regime.
2. In undertaking the inquiry, the committee should also consider:
  - (a) the potential costs and benefits of the options to improve health and safety outcomes for combat sports contestants, including the cost/benefit of frameworks in other jurisdictions; and
  - (b) the current structure and governance of the combat sport industry, as it supports health and safety outcomes for combat sports contestants including effectiveness of the current governing body structure; and statewide service delivery and representation through existing governing bodies.
3. Further, that the committee report to the House by 16 December 2016.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

### Report

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (10.16 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 28 of the Finance and Administration Committee titled *Portfolio subordinate legislation tabled on 10 May 2016*. The committee did not identify any issues regarding the application of fundamental legislative principles to, or the lawfulness of, the subordinate legislation considered. I commend the committee's report to the House.

*Tabled paper:* Finance and Administration Committee: report No. 28—Portfolio subordinate legislation tabled on 10 May 2016 [1304].

## NOTICE OF MOTION

### Black Lung Disease

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.17 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House calls on the government to establish a commission of inquiry within 30 days of today's date into the re-emergence of 'black lung disease' in coalmining workers.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Mining Industry, Exploration

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (10.18 am): I would like to offer my thanks and gratitude to the Leader of the Opposition for giving way at such late notice to allow me to make a private member's statement. I wanted to do so in response to the ministerial statement made by the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines earlier today because he has attempted to create a view within the House this morning that the Palaszczuk government has bestowed upon the resources exploration sector in Queensland a benevolent policy that will save them from the brink of oblivion. I am happy to concede to the minister that the resources sector generally speaking and the

exploration sector in particular is suffering from a difficult period of time historically from low commodity prices which has been a challenge across-the-board for that industry, which is such an important pillar of the Queensland economy.

What is not truthful about the statement that the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines made this morning is that this is a benevolent policy that is in the best interests of the people of Queensland and the economy of Queensland. That is because of the particular arrangements that are put in place when resource exploration companies make application to the Queensland government, particularly through the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, to secure exploration tenure in this state.

When that is done, those applicants—those companies that seek to undertake that exploration activity—are required to demonstrate to the Department of Natural Resources and Mines that they have both the technical and financial capability up-front to undertake the resource exploration work necessary to look for new energy and mineral resources in the state of Queensland. So, fellow members, the companies making application must show that they have the capital and the technical work to do this work up-front.

The Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines said that these companies are mum-and-dad companies and that the exploration sector is desperately vulnerable. What the minister did not say is that there are lots of hardworking Queenslanders out there in the contracting sector and the exploration sector working on drilling rigs that are going to be compromised and left without work because the minister has allowed exploration expenditure relief of up to \$274 million over the next two years—

**Dr Lynham** interjected.

**Mr CRIPPS:**—which means it will not be available to employ those people who work in the exploration sector. \$274 million of investment in the Queensland economy is going down the drain because the minister does not understand how it works.

**Dr Lynham** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for State Development under standing order 253A. Member for Surfers Paradise, if you have a matter to raise with me, you know the appropriate way to do it.

**Mr Langbroek:** I did.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! That is a reflection on the chair.

### LNP Economic Plan

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (10.21 am): After 18 months there is no economic plan from the LNP. So far there is nothing but a blank page. The only opposition that we have seen to anything of any substance has been the Palaszczuk government's opposition to the federal government's thought bubble around GST changes. What we know is that we stand to lose hundreds of millions of dollars. If we saw a 50 per cent floor put in place, we would lose \$317 million this financial year. If it was a 75 per cent floor, we would lose \$720 million.

The Leader of the Opposition has not bothered to raise his voice. He has taken the lazy way out and he has said nothing, although I will say at least he was party to a submission in 2012 of Liberal states, but that was recommending a 100 per cent floor so who knows how much we would have lost out under that deal. He wants to stand for Premier but he will not stand up for Queensland. We expect that they will raise their voice. He has also said consistently that we only have three choices. How many front-line services would the Leader of the Opposition cut and how many front-line workers would he sack to accommodate the additional moneys that we would lose under the GST plan if they do not want to go into bat for Queensland, as the Palaszczuk government is doing?

Eighteen months have elapsed and there is no policy and no revenue plans. He made a few promises but he cannot say how they will fund them. I table an article from the *Sunshine Coast Daily* in which he was reported as making some promises on the Sunshine Coast.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Sunshine Coast Daily*, undated, titled 'Where's road funding: Opposition Leader calls for commitment' [[1305](#)].

The *Sunshine Coast Daily* reported—

Mr Nicholls couldn't confirm funding plans, saying it was time to question the Labor Government on how it would deliver infrastructure.

Yet again, they clearly do not read the budget papers. Our commitments are fully funded. They are fully laid out through the budget process—two years in a row, a \$40 billion infrastructure program over four years. We have boosted front-line services. We have investments in innovation and job creation. Our budget shows where the money is coming from. Those guys over there do not even have a plan. It is very concerning because they are supposed to be the alternate government in Queensland.

The Leader of the Opposition cannot say where he will get the money from because he does not know. He has certainly rejected revenue sources. He has rejected \$2 billion from the defined benefits scheme. There goes the State Infrastructure Fund. That is where that money was going. That is gone. \$2 billion of the surplus was going to pay down debt. We will be up for another \$800 million in interest repayments because they will not support that. He certainly did not support the contribution freeze that we put in place in terms of employer contributions for the defined benefits scheme—another \$2 billion over five years.

He rejects the three per cent surcharge on foreign buyers of residential property. Will he table the correspondence that he has written to Mike Baird in New South Wales criticising them for their four per cent policy? No, he will not, but that will add another \$90 million to the budget black hole that they are creating. When you throw in their rejection of the 3.5 per cent indexation policy, which was their policy, that budget black hole is up to about \$8 billion. They have to show where they are going to come up with the money, because right now they are showing that they are poor economic managers in government and they are very poor in opposition.

### Townsville, Crime

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (10.24 am): Sadly I rise in the House today to inform my colleagues that Townsville remains the crime capital of Queensland. Reports released this week with regard to car thefts tell us that since 1 January this year there have been 634 car theft arrests compared to 361 in the same period last year—a whopping 75 per cent increase in 12 months. Our police are doing their best to keep crime down in Townsville, but they are constantly frustrated that repeat youth offenders are using our courts and our detention centres as revolving doors. Is it any wonder that youth crime in Townsville is rampant when those who are eventually detained are allowed to commit the same crimes inside detention centres that they were convicted of on the outside? I table a newspaper report from the *Townsville Bulletin*.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Townsville Bulletin*, dated 16 August 2016, titled 'Soft approach no answer to young ratbags' [[1306](#)].

Reports this week tell us—and it was not the minister who advised us about this but the *Townsville Bulletin*—about a riot that took place in the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre last weekend. This is what they were guilty of. They disobeyed directions from the prison officers directly, like they do to the police when they are outside. They damaged property inside the detention centre, like they do on the outside. They used shade cloths as slippery slides and then they insulted and assaulted our hardworking prison officers by blowing smoke into their faces. I did not think smoking was allowed in youth detention centres anymore. All of this was without consequences. Our detention centre sources are telling us that the officers were instructed not to use any force in bringing these repeat youth offenders under control. They were corralled back into their rooms and assured that there would be no consequences if they went back to their rooms.

What have we heard instead? This is the government that rejected early preventative boot camps; it said that they were expensive and they did not work. Last week we heard their announcement that they are bringing in culturally appropriate adventure learning programs—politically correct names for politically correct programs. I can imagine them sitting around toasting marshmallows at the fire singing kumbaya while youth crime still runs rampant in Townsville. When is this government going to get serious about out-of-control youth crime in Townsville?

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Ms Jones** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Honourable members! Minister for Education, you will be the next minister to be warned.

## Renewable Energy

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (10.28 am): The Palaszczuk government is absolutely committed to renewable energy and a clean energy future for Queensland. What we inherited from the Nicholls-Newman government was a collapse of 1,300 renewable jobs over the three years of the Newman-Nicholls government at a time of massive global expansion of clean energy. Perhaps that is why we saw the highest level of unemployment in Queensland in 11 years under Tim Nicholls—a shameful record. He took the sun out of the Sunshine State when he abused solar users for being latte sippers and champagne drinkers.

Under the three years of the Newman government, they did not just sack 14,000 people; they did not get a single large-scale renewable project going in Queensland. How irresponsible, how 20th century, how absolutely anti jobs was Tim Nicholls as the treasurer under the Newman government! In contrast, the Palaszczuk government is not wasting any time getting a large-scale renewable energy industry established in Queensland in our first term of government.

Let me outline the construction that is underway at the moment: an 80-hectare, 25 megawatt Barcaldine Solar Farm; a five-megawatt Normanton Solar Farm in the north-west, in the member for Mount Isa's area; and 36 megawatts of power at Lakeland, with an innovative 5.4-megawatt lithium ion storage configuration. We have a power purchase agreement at Clare in North Queensland just below Townsville, and we have a power purchase agreement with Ergon for a wind farm behind Cairns that is big enough to power a city the size of Mackay. We are also seeing the short-listing of Whitsunday, Lilyvale, Collinsville and Forsayth as part of the ARENA project.

We are about to see a construction boom when it comes to renewable energy jobs in Queensland over the next 12 to 18 months. Under our Solar 120 program, we are tripling our renewable energy commitment to Queensland. That is something that the opposition in estimates was not even aware of. They had to ask questions about what it was. They are still not committed to renewables. In fact the comments from the shadow minister for the environment show they are still in the 20th century. He said—

There is no doubt that whilst climate change is real and has occurred over thousands of years, what has always been in scientific dispute is the extent of man's contribution.

He goes against a massive amount of scientific consensus on this, just like the member for Glass House, who said almost exactly the same thing when he was the environment minister. We still see hostility from the opposition on renewables. This government will make sure we deliver on renewable energy—clean energy—for the future for the Queensland.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Glass House, I would like to make a couple of comments. I would urge members to refer to other members by their correct title. If my memory is correct, I think I have made previous comments in relation to matters like using the term 'the Newman-Nicholls government'. I believe that is not appropriate. I believe you should refer to the person by their correct title. I would urge members to—

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** No. I think it is more appropriate to refer to him by his correct title. I am not going to have a conversation. I now call the member for Glass House.

## Moreton Bay Rail Link

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (10.31 am): I rise this morning to again draw the House's attention to the scheduled six-day closure in September of the Caboolture and Sunshine Coast railway line between Zillmere and Caboolture—all to allow for the integration of this government's failed Moreton Bay Rail Link project. The minister has asked Queenslanders, and South-East Queensland commuters in particular, to put their faith in him. He has told them that it will all be right, that it will all be okay for those six days of public transport chaos. He has told the public servants that they can work from home and that as a basis of that everything will be okay. He is telling us to have faith, but this is coming from the minister who told the people of Redcliffe that they would be catching the train to the Ekka. The Ekka has come and gone, but the rail line is not open. The people of Redcliffe have lost faith in the minister, and South-East Queensland commuters are very sceptical that this closure will actually work.

Let us look at the scale of this. If we use March's patronage figures, we see that 776,726 commuters used the Caboolture and Sunshine Coast railway line. If we do a straight deduction of that 31 days, it works out to be just over 25,000 movements a day. For six days, that will be 150,000 commuters—

**Mr Hinchliffe** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Leader of the House, if you persist with your interjections, you will be warned under standing order 253A.

**Mr POWELL:** That is 150,000 commuters who are facing chaos in getting to work. Think of all the buses that will be on the road. Think of all the extra traffic that will be on the road. Think of the extra time it will take. Commuters are not going to catch those buses. They are going to drive to Zillmere and create parking chaos around that station and stations further south. The minister wants us to trust him, yet the TMR officers briefing our members on this planned closure are doing little to instil confidence. They do not understand patronage movements, particularly around stations like Bald Hills and Carseldine in the electorate of Aspley.

The other day my kids came up with a suggestion. They said that the minister should consider phoning Sir Topham Hatt. Just in case members do not know who he is, he is the Fat Controller. He could call in Thomas the Tank Engine, and with his steam capabilities he could assist commuters. If the Fat Controller does not want to ring Thomas, maybe he could bring in Henry. Henry is a little bit vain but I am sure he would be willing to help out. If he does not want Henry, perhaps he could use Gordon. Gordon is a little grumpy but I am sure he will pitch in and help out. Then there is Edward. He is a lot like Thomas. He is keen and he is kind and he will help the minister get the commuters to work on time. The minister has asked us to have faith. Not likely. This closure is heading for disaster.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, members. It looks like it might be an interesting day today. We will now proceed to question time. Question time will finish at 11.35 am.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Minister for Housing and Public Works

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (10.34 am): My first question is to the Minister for Housing and Public Works. How does the minister respond to reported comments by the Mayor of Logan City Council, Councillor Luke Smith, with reference to the Logan Renewal Initiative that he is arrogant, argumentative and dismissive?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I ask whether this question is seeking the minister to express an opinion. If so, it would mean that it would be outside the standing orders.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I will allow the question.

**Mr Seeney** interjected.

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

**Mr de BRENNI:** I think those descriptions are not reflective of the relationship that I have with the Mayor of Logan City Council or any of the councillors I attended the meeting with yesterday.

### Minister for Child Safety

**Mr NICHOLLS:** My second question is to the Minister for Child Safety. It has now been two days since the minister told the House, 'I am happy to take that question on notice and get back to the member directly,' with respect to a question from the member for Moggill. When will the minister honour the assurance she gave this House and answer the member for Moggill's question?

**Ms FENTIMAN:** I thank the member for the question. A response to that question is currently being drafted. I anticipate the member will have it by the end of this week.

### Advance Queensland

**Mr PEGG:** My question is to the Premier. How is the government's \$405 million Advance Queensland initiative encouraging innovation and supporting future generations?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Stretton for that question because I know how much he values our Advance Queensland innovation agenda. As we have said very clearly, with the downturn in the mining sector and the downturn in commodities, we need to diversify our economy. That means looking at new innovations, supporting our start-up community and supporting our businesses right across our state. If we advance Queensland, we create jobs. I know those opposite do not like our government speaking about jobs, but we will stand up in this House and talk about jobs every single day that we are here.

We also know that this week is National Science Week and the Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy is doing an incredibly fine job in terms of making sure that our young people are focused on science. The Minister for Education is focused on STEM and making sure that that curriculum is embedded firmly in our state consciousness as we move forward. We have already spoken about the importance of coding and robotics being taught in our schools. Once again, Queensland is leading the way. We have also seen the TC Beirne Building in the Fortitude Valley become the home of start-ups. The Minister for Employment, the member for Brisbane Central, knows how crucial that is in that precinct, as we diversify and get people interested from right across Australia and right across the nation.

It was very disappointing to see that when those opposite were in charge of innovation and science, not much happened under their watch. It was very disappointing. In fact, the Minister for Innovation has given me figures that show very clearly when the LNP was in office from 2012 to 2015 their funding source for job creation in this field was a mere \$7.224 million. That is a very shameful legacy of a minister from whom I expected so much more at the time. It is very disappointing.

Already we have added \$25.589 million and some 327 jobs. The Minister for Science and Innovation, Assistant Minister Mark Ryan and I had the pleasure of attending a RedEye conference yesterday. I want to thank Wayne Gerard for organising that. The enthusiasm in the room was second to none. We know that innovation is the key. With the US Navy signing the agreement with the Queensland government, we know that advancing innovation and science through a new biofuels industry will lead Queensland to create more jobs. I can inform the House that the US Navy has signalled to me that they want to come back even before the end of the year to progress our biofuels—

*(Time expired)*

### Logan Renewal Initiative

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Housing and Public Works. I refer the minister to the terribly bad decision to cancel the Logan Renewal Initiative, which has cost Logan ratepayers \$700,000, without explanation, and I ask: is this another example of the government being arrogant, argumentative and dismissive?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I rise to a point of order. The member's question in its preamble contained a number of imputations. I suggest that the question should possibly be reworded.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I think the minister will be able to answer the question.

**Mr de BRENNI:** I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for the question. I refer to the comments made earlier that reflected on my conduct at a meeting yesterday and the suggestions that I was arrogant. Let me explain the responses that I gave to questions at that meeting and assertions that were made. When attendees of that meeting described public housing tenants as dirtbags, I rejected that out of hand. If those opposite think that that is arrogant, then I am happy to accept that.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I now call—

**Mr Seeney** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I do not need your assistance, member for Callide, or you will be warned.

**Mr Seeney** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** You are now warned under standing order 253A.

### Jobs, Trade

**Mr WILLIAMS:** My question is of the Deputy Premier. I ask: will the Deputy Premier update the House on the steps the Queensland government is taking to boost jobs through trade?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the honourable member for the question. Of course we on this side of the House understand that trade means jobs. We understand that a very healthy, vibrant trade and export sector means more Queenslanders have jobs. In fact, one in five Queensland jobs are supported by exports. We know that with the growing middle class in Asia, the demand for our goods, our merchandise and our services is only going to increase and Queensland needs to be ahead of this trend. That is why we have been determined to invest our time and our resources into growing the export sector here in Queensland.

First off the mark is the international education and training sector with an additional \$25 million invested by this government into expanding our international footprint when it comes to foreign students here in Queensland, ensuring that Queensland is at the forefront as a destination of choice for those middle class students who are looking for a western education experience. It is also why we are working on a new whole-of-government trade and investment strategy to continue supporting jobs for Queenslanders through trade and investment.

In fact, our focus is paying off. The latest ABS figures show that Queensland's exports increased by over \$1 billion in the year to June 2016. That is a \$1 billion increase in the year to June 2016. That brings it up to about \$47.6 billion and represents an increase of over 2.3 per cent. In contrast, nationally, there was a 4.4 per cent decline in exports for the same period. This shows that investing in trade pays off and that means more jobs for Queenslanders.

Unfortunately, this was not the case when we came to government. When we came to government we found that the current Leader of the Opposition, the former Newman government treasurer, had a cut and asset sales approach to trade and investment in Queensland. In the first Newman government budget delivered by the Leader of the Opposition, then treasurer, he delivered 20 per cent cuts to the trade budget. What happened? Exports fell by 16 per cent because of his cuts. Under Campbell Newman and the member for Clayfield, Queensland's export performance lagged behind the rest of the country. In contrast, goods exports are now \$3 billion higher than the last year of the Newman-Nicholls government because of the efforts of the Palaszczuk Labor government.

*(Time expired)*

### **Cleveland Youth Detention Centre**

**Mr WALKER:** My question is to the Attorney-General. I refer to the recently reported three-day riot at the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre in Townsville, and I ask: what damage was done to the facility, and how much will repairs cost taxpayers?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for his question. The Palaszczuk government is committed to building a youth justice system that adopts a balanced, evidence based approach to reducing youth offending. As was made clear when the shocking revelations emerged from the Northern Territory, Queensland's youth detention centres are not prisons, nor are they staffed by prison guards, despite the comments made by the shadow police spokesperson today. Queensland's system is administered under the portfolio of Attorney-General rather than through prisons and under Correctives Services. It employs specialist staff with an array of professional skills whose focus is to help address the wide range of issues that are typically faced by children who find themselves involved in the youth justice system.

Staff at the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre should be commended for successfully de-escalating the situation without the use of force and maintaining the safety and security of the centre. It was a smart way to resolve a situation that had the potential to become volatile. Rather than sending in the riot squads with shields and batons to fire canisters of tear gas, the situation was resolved without the need for physical confrontation. Taking a confrontational course may have resulted in potentially more property damage and maybe even injuries to staff or the children involved. It clearly demonstrates to the children, some of whom would have seen so much physical confrontation in their lives, that physical confrontation is not the only way to resolve a situation.

I can advise that no staff or young people were injured as a result of the incident. However, a small amount of property damage did occur. Youth Justice Queensland has always had a policy that force is used as a last resort. This has not changed. It means making young offenders face up to the consequences of their actions but in a way that rehabilitates rather than traumatises them. No detention centre will ever operate perfectly all the time. As with all such incidents, this one will be the subject of further investigation.

## Queensland Economy

**Mr RUSSO:** My question is of the Treasurer. After 18 months in office, will the Treasurer outline to the House the economic performance of the government? Can he advise of any improvement from previous alternative economic strategies?

**Mr PITT:** I thank the member for Sunnybank for the question. Yesterday it was a case of failure to launch for the shadow Treasurer when he put his motion to the House, but that is quite typical of those opposite. Their record in office was dismal and it is no wonder; it was based on a three-year relentless campaign of negativity to talk the Queensland economy down. They did that to try to convince Queenslanders that they had no choice but to sell assets in this state.

Despite their failure, they are at it again with a campaign of negativity that is now into its fifth year. It is interesting that when the former treasurer was shadow treasurer he said that the economy under the Bligh government was a basket case. Interestingly enough, under that former Labor government growth was higher and unemployment was lower than it was under the member for Clayfield's watch as treasurer.

Certainly since he became Treasurer, with all of his negativity and talking the economy down it essentially became a self-fulfilling prophecy in this state. When we add to that his irresponsible and reckless comments yesterday about the state being broke, it shows why he was not up to the job. If you look at the facts, it is very clear that the Palaszczuk government is getting on with the job of managing the Queensland economy in a prudent way. Talking about our financial and fiscal management, we are positively embracing Queensland's economic potential.

If we compare our economic and fiscal data to that of the previous government the contrast could not be clearer. Under the previous Bligh Labor government there was 5.8 per cent growth in 2011-12; under the Newman-Nicholls government in 2014-15 it was 0.8 per cent. The Palaszczuk government's final 2015-16 forecast is 3.5 per cent, moving to four per cent in the 2016-17 year. Under the Palaszczuk government a net 36,600 jobs were created, around 220 full-time jobs created each month, compared to 380 full-time jobs lost each month under the Nicholls-Newman government. With regard to general government debt, it is \$10.4 billion lower today than it was forecast to be under the previous government. Non-financial public sector borrowings—if they like that measure better—are \$7.9 billion lower in 2015-16 than forecast in the LNP's last budget in 2014-15. If we go further, it is forecast to be \$6 billion lower in 2016-17 than forecast in their last budget and \$5.1 billion lower in 2017-18. It goes on. The debt-to-revenue ratio under the Palaszczuk government is now down to 70.7 per cent in the 2015-16 year and is expected to go to 68 per cent by 2019-20, which is a fall of 15 percentage points.

The member for Nanango does not like facts, but they are all there in black and white in the budget papers. If a fall of 15 percentage points does not mean anything, the member should ask the former treasurer what it means because clearly when she was the assistant finance minister she had nothing. All of this was done without asset sales. All of this was done without savaging the economy. Those opposite have very clearly been asleep at the wheel during their time in office. Now they have finally woken up, and guess what? It is a nightmare because they realise they drove the state into the ground.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Surfers Paradise, I am informed that we have a year 12 coordinator and school leaders from the Lockyer District High School in the seat of Lockyer observing our proceedings from the gallery. Welcome!

## Princess Alexandra Hospital, Industrial Relations

**Mr LANGBROEK:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. I refer to the ETU taking strike action at the Princess Alexandra Hospital on 2 August 2016, and I ask: will the minister advise if any surgery had to be rescheduled or any wards closed as a consequence of this strike?

**Mr DICK:** No, I am not aware of any of those things occurring. Obviously the Metro South Hospital and Health Service is managing and dealing with those industrial organisations. That is what we do: Labor governments listen to workers and their representatives. We are not about to cut them out of the industrial framework in Queensland. We are not going to cut them out of the workplace. I made it very clear to hospital and health services, chairs, board members and chief executives that they need to work with their staff. That is what good governments do; that is what good industrial relations is about. We listen to staff and do not sack them—1,800 nurses and midwives and over 4,000 staff—from the health system. There was no consultation about that with their representatives. My

expectation is that we will work through these issues with industrial organisations. We reinstated consultative committees because if we work with staff we get better outcomes. That is why we are driving great performance in our hospital and health services across Queensland.

There were 100,000 people waiting longer than clinically recommended for a specialist outpatient appointment when we came to government. In 18 months that is now under 60,000, which is the shortest long wait for elective surgery since records began in 2002. There are 161 people waiting for elective surgery, which is the lowest number ever recorded.

**Mr Springborg** interjected.

**Mr DICK:** I take the intersection from the member for Southern Downs. When we came to government it was 324. What he did as minister was exclude children from the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital who were waiting; half the list that we inherited from the member for Southern Downs and those members opposite. We will continue to work with staff and industrial organisations to get the best outcome for our health system and to get the best outcome for staff.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Gladstone, I am informed that we have students from the Kedron State High School in the electorate of Clayfield in the gallery observing our proceedings. Welcome!

### Gladstone Hospital

**Mr BUTCHER:** My question is to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Will the minister advise what action the government is taking to upgrade regional hospitals in Queensland?

**Mr DICK:** I thank the honourable member for Gladstone for his question. As everyone in this House knows, regardless of on which side they sit, the member for Gladstone is a strong and vigorous advocate for his community and for rebuilding front-line services for that part of Queensland. Even before he was elected as the member for Gladstone he was championing the need for improved health services at the Gladstone Hospital. In government he has maintained that commitment, and he has pointed out to us consistently—and on occasions forcefully—that the Gladstone community is one of the fastest growing areas of the state and needs better hospital facilities.

Early this year I was delighted to join the Premier and the member for Gladstone when we stood at the hospital in Gladstone to announce that the Palaszczuk Labor government would build a new \$42 million emergency department at that hospital. I visited Gladstone again last week at the invitation of the member for Gladstone, and he pressed on me again how important it is that we proceed with that project. I am delighted to be able to report to the House that, thanks to the advocacy of the member for Gladstone, we will be fast-tracking construction of the new emergency department at Gladstone Hospital. The Department of Health is providing support to the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service to expedite the development of a business case for the new emergency department and to undertake community engagement, which is a very important thing. This is a government which is willing to listen to the community to get things right. We will be undertaking community engagement on the proposed design of the facility to ensure that the views of the community are heard and incorporated into the final design. Fast-tracking this project means that early work for the new emergency department is expected to start in mid-2017.

**Mr Springborg** interjected.

**Mr DICK:** I take the interjection from the member for Southern Downs, who did nothing for Gladstone when he was the minister for health. He certainly did not deliver a new emergency department, and of course it is always left to Labor to deliver for regional and rural communities. Fast-tracking the project means that early work for the new emergency department is expected to start in mid-2017. I am advised this is several months before what had originally been planned. We anticipate there will be 150 jobs in construction and that the new emergency department will at least double the number of treatment spaces from 11 to 22.

Labor delivers for regional and rural Queensland with the biggest investment in Roma for 50 years, in the words of the former mayor for Maranoa, rebuilding the Roma Hospital. The member for Dalrymple knows because we are building the new clinic at Dimbulah for his community. We are investing in Queensland and not ignoring the rural parts of Queensland, like the previous government did, but delivering for all Queenslanders. That is what Labor governments do.

### Industrial Relations, Commonwealth Games

**Mr BLEIJIE:** My question without notice is to the Premier. Premier, given the constant militant union action plaguing government worksites and now having confirmation that the state does have the ability to intervene in IR disputes at the Commonwealth Games sites on the Gold Coast, has the Premier instructed her industrial relations minister to do all that can be done, including legislative intervention, to ensure projects are delivered on time? What assurances can the Premier give that Queensland taxpayers are being protected from this union militancy?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for the question. I am advised that action is being taken under Commonwealth legislation and that it would be unprecedented for the state to intervene, but let me make it very clear that we are focused on delivering our Commonwealth Games facilities on time. Just the other day the minister for the Commonwealth Games and I toured the velodrome at Chandler, and what a great velodrome that is. It is ahead of schedule and due to be completed within the next couple of months.

The minister for the Commonwealth Games and I will be on the Gold Coast next week inspecting another site in relation to the Commonwealth Games that is due to be completed very shortly. Why are we supporting the Commonwealth Games? We know how important the games are not just for the Gold Coast and not just for the state but also for Australia.

In relation to the velodrome, I have asked for community feedback about whether that velodrome should be named after Anna Meares. I am looking forward to receiving some more community feedback. What a great, outstanding athlete she is. She was born in Queensland, raised in Queensland and trained in Queensland. What a fitting tribute it would be to name the velodrome after her.

I make it very clear to the House that we will deliver the Commonwealth Games on time. It is such an important event. We will definitely make sure it is completed on time.

### State School Students, Extracurricular Activities

**Mr STEWART:** My question is of the Minister for Education. Can the minister advise the House how the Palaszczuk government is supporting extracurricular activities to provide state school students with a holistic education?

**Ms JONES:** I thank the honourable member for the question. I know that, not only in his current role but also in his previous role as a longstanding high school principal in Townsville, he has been a strong advocate for Fanfare. Honourable members would recall that Fanfare is a biennial concert. State school students from right across Queensland come together to showcase the very best talent of our instrumental music students. Fanfare has been occurring in Queensland since 1985. More than 160,000 state school students from right across Queensland have participated in Fanfare since 1985. I was one of them. I had the opportunity to play such wonderful instruments as the timpani and the triangle! Very excitingly, the Pimlico State High School will be here today performing in the red chamber during the lunch break. I look forward to seeing the school's chamber ensemble—

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Ms JONES:** You want to see me play music? I can do that for you.

The chamber ensemble from Pimlico State High School will be playing in the red chamber. I am not sure if Kedron State High School has participated in Fanfare. I acknowledge its students in the public gallery. It is wonderful to see them here. We will always support them.

Not only do we have a real interest in instrumental music; we also understand that part of raising good citizens is having school students understand the responsibility we all have to the broader community. I acknowledge the wonderful students at Currumbin Valley State School, who have taken it upon themselves to write to all members of the Queensland parliament. I thank the honourable member for Currumbin for circulating this wonderful, quite moving note from the students from Currumbin Valley State School. The member for Currumbin's accompanying letter states—

The children from the Currumbin Valley State School have asked me to give you one of their handmade origami fish as part of their Great Barrier Reef awareness project.

Isn't it fantastic that we are seeing such action from young students at Currumbin Valley State School? I have my little fishy here. They must have known my favourite colour is pink. I thank them.

**Mr Dick:** They know that the reef should be protected.

**Ms JONES:** They understand very clearly that the Great Barrier Reef has to be protected. That is why I give the commitment to all of the students at Currumbin Valley State School that I will do everything in my power to protect the Great Barrier Reef. I will vote for all legislation that comes before this House to protect the Great Barrier Reef. Just like the young students and unlike those opposite, we have a real commitment and responsibility to protect the Great Barrier Reef. Why is it that the LNP will not listen to the Currumbin Valley State School students and their campaign to protect the Great Barrier Reef?

### Moreton Bay Rail Link

**Mr POWELL:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport. With regard to the Moreton Bay rail line, I table a critique by TMR of a briefing note from Queensland Rail.

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Rail briefing note, undated, for the Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games and Leader of the House, Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe, regarding Moreton Bay Rail Link signalling options [1307].

I ask: can the minister advise if Transport and Main Roads is right and Queensland Rail is wrong, or is Queensland Rail right and Transport and Main Roads wrong?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I thank the member for Glass House for the question. One of the fundamental issues that is the point of the member's question is what action I took and what the government knew when I took that action. Very clearly, advice to me across the course of December last year and right through to May was that TMR believed that the Moreton Bay Rail Link project was on track. Three things concerned me. First, the proposed date of the precommissioning closure was being delayed from the initial Christmas-new year closure to proposed dates in late May. I am referring to the precommissioning closure—a six-day closure that is required no matter what issues had occurred and that was required under the continuation of the plans and projects that were being overseen by the former minister for transport.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** In relation to your questioning about relevance, member for Glass House, the minister is relevant.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Second, Queensland Rail was indicating concerns with the ongoing progress of the signalling system in conversations outside of the project team briefings. Third, despite this, the TMR advice continued to say that the project was on track.

In order to formalise and get to the bottom of the concerns being raised, I ordered separate briefings from TMR and Queensland Rail. That request was made on 9 May 2016. I received those initial briefs and requested a meeting with the DG and the CEO. That meeting occurred on 17 May 2016. As a consequence of those initial briefs and the subsequent meeting, I instructed the department to provide Queensland Rail with all commercial and technical information requested in order to provide me with a final assessment of the status of the project. That was the advice Queensland Rail provided me with on 30 May 2016. That brief from Queensland Rail detailed the outstanding issues with the signalling system. That advice was shared with my local and federal counterparts—funding partners—and I announced that morning my decision for the line not to be opened until the CEO of Queensland Rail deemed it fit to be commissioned.

Let us be clear: the signalling system that is the cause of these concerns was procured under the former LNP Newman-Nicholls government.

**Mr SPEAKER:** One moment, Minister. I have allowed you latitude because it was all relevant and I think there is a lot of interest in that, but I am not going to allow you to engage in a debate in relation to the previous government.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Let me make it clear: because there was varying advice coming to me, I sought clarification about that advice. I looked at the comparative advice. I ensured that both sides got the full detail and information that was required for them to advise me. I was advised of significant safety and reliability concerns. I took the action that I thought was appropriate and necessary to make sure that this great piece of infrastructure will deliver, in an on-time and appropriate way, for the people of Moreton Bay.

*(Time expired)*

### Pelorus Island, Feral Goats

**Mr HARPER:** My question is of the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection, National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef. Will the minister advise the House what the Palaszczuk government is doing in response to community concerns about using wild dogs to control feral goats on Pelorus Island?

**Dr MILES:** I thank the member for his question. Many members have contacted me concerned about a bizarre plan from the Hinchinbrook Shire Council to release dingos on to Pelorus Island so that the dogs could hunt down feral goats.

**Opposition members:** 'Pelorus'!

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, members! I think we understand.

**Mr Costigan** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, member for Whitsunday. We understand.

**Dr MILES:** Apparently, the dingos have been surgically sterilised and implanted with time delayed poison pellets. The Queensland community has quite rightly reacted with alarm. Members of the public, the RSPCA and even some members opposite have opposed the plan. The member for Whitsunday has written to me to say the plan was inhumane and that it involved outright cruelty that should not be allowed. The member for Moggill has told me that Queenslanders were appalled and considered the situation to be as horrendous as the recent live-baiting greyhound scandal. It is good to see that there are some issues the member for Moggill and I can agree on. However, not all of those opposite are so enlightened. I am sure it will not surprise anyone that the LNP's environmental vandal in chief disagrees with his environment spokesperson.

**Ms Trad:** Who is that?

**Dr MILES:** The member for Hinchinbrook. He thinks it is a cracking idea. He reckons it is an innovative idea that is positive for the environment. The member for Hinchinbrook also asserted that critics of the plan—I assume he means his colleagues the member for Moggill and the member for Whitsunday—have a limited understanding of the challenges and constraints around dealing with feral animals and pests and weeds. I will leave it to the member for Clayfield to clarify whether he supports his environment spokesperson or his environmental vandal. The idea is not actually innovative. In the 1990s dingoes were placed on an island to eradicate goats which caused problems for shore birds. You see, the natural prey of the dingo is small mammals and ground-dwelling birds. The island currently has no significant predators to birds. These birds include a threatened species—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Dr MILES:** Mr Speaker, this is quite serious.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, members.

**Dr MILES:** These birds include a threatened species of ground-dwelling shore bird, the beach stone-curlew. This bird is only found in Australian waters and only lays one egg a year. The young cannot fly for many weeks and the adult birds defend their young by luring predators away from them. The breeding season of the beach stone-curlew is just a couple of weeks away. After taking advice, I have issued an interim conservation order over the island. I table the order, which directs that no further dingoes are to be released and that existing dingoes must be removed within 14 days. This order will effectively end the death row dingo plan.

*Tabled paper:* Nature Conservation Act 1992: Interim Conservation Order, dated 17 August 2016, relating to the beach stone-curlew [[1308](#)].

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 17 August 2016, from the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef, Hon. Dr Steven Miles, to the Mayor of Hinchinbrook Shire Council, Councillor Ramon Jayo, regarding an interim conservation order on Pelorus Island for the purpose of protecting the beach stone-curlew [[1309](#)].

### Electricity Prices

**Mr KATTER:** My question is directed to the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety, Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply. Minister, the high price of electricity is a significant problem for businesses in South Australia, yet since mid-2014 the Queensland time weighted average pool price has been higher in many quarters. This shows that Queensland energy intense businesses like Sun Metals zinc refinery have suffered more than South Australia, so how is the government using its ownership of the majority of electricity generation in this state to protect and drive Queensland industry?

**Mr BAILEY:** I thank the honourable member for his question and his interest in the issue. Of course, we are committed to better outcomes for residents and for businesses in the electricity market, and they are feeling the pinch after 43 per cent increases under the former government. That was an incredible record that has caused a lot of distress, but under the Palaszczuk government we are seeing prices stabilise in Queensland. Over the first two years of the Palaszczuk government we are seeing an average increase of only 1.2 per cent in the Ergon network. We directed our publicly owned companies—and we could only do that because they were publicly owned companies—to accept the determination by the regulator for better outcomes for Queenslanders.

We did that in stark contrast to other states that have privatised power companies. Those in New South Wales are again facing, despite having a brand-new five-year price path, double digit price increases as we speak because the privatised power companies down there have gained the system and have taken it to court to be able to increase prices and increase revenues, even after the previous price path allowed them to do so in a massive way.

This is obviously an incredible contrast to Queensland where we have a stable policy and we have acted because they are publicly owned and will continue to be so. This is in contrast to the stated position in only October of last year of the member for Clayfield, who said that in his view we should be the regulator—we should not have the so-called conflict—of these power assets. We know that his policy is to privatise. We know that is where he is going to go and we have seen the experience in other states where the privatised power companies gain the system to increase electricity prices for residents and for industry.

This year the fixed charges have come down for the first time in nine years, which is good news for those with lower consumption rates. They will be able to manage their bills a little better because the fixed charge has come down for the first time in nine years under the Palaszczuk Labor government. For instance, the average annual increase for the first two years under the Palaszczuk government for small business has been only 3.8 per cent, and that is in contrast to the increase of 21.9 per cent for small business under the member for Clayfield when he was the treasurer of this state in the previous government. That is the contrast—21.9 per cent versus an average of 3.8 per cent over the first two years. That is an incredible contrast in terms of outcomes for electricity in Queensland comparing the Palaszczuk government to the former government, of which the member for Clayfield and the opposition leader was a key figure—the right-hand man to the Premier.

Likewise, we see the disparities for large businesses being significantly different for the Palaszczuk government compared to the Newman government. Likewise in the agricultural sector, we see vast differences. We saw a 33 per cent increase when it came to electricity prices for agricultural customers under the previous government compared to about 6.2 per cent under this government. We hear a lot about the country from the LNP, but when it had the chance it put electricity prices up 33 per cent in the agricultural sector—a shameful record!

*(Time expired)*

### Seniors Week

**Ms BOYD:** My question is directed to the Minister for Seniors. Will the minister please update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is supporting Seniors Week celebrations?

**Mrs O'ROURKE:** I thank the member for the question. As the member for Pine Rivers is aware, this week is Seniors Week and it is an opportunity for all Queenslanders of all ages to acknowledge and celebrate the valuable contributions of older people. As the only child of ageing parents I do understand that there are challenges that do face some older people, but we must remember that their wisdom, experience and influence make them some of our most valuable assets in Queensland. This year Queenslanders have had the opportunity to participate in more than 500 events across the state and our government is a strong supporter of Seniors Week, and I am pleased to say that we have provided more than \$100,000 to support 113 of these events which range from expos to outings, concerts, lunches and exercise classes.

Seniors Week is coordinated by the Council on the Ageing Queensland and together we launched the week-long celebrations at a forum at Kangaroo Point on Monday. I also joined COTA on Monday night to take Brisbane's biggest elfie—or elder selfie—in King George Square. Brisbane City Hall and King George Square were illuminated in purple to mark the start of the week for the occasion as part of COTA's Face of Ageing Campaign which aims to challenge stereotypes of ageing. Yesterday I was also pleased to join in the Tech Savvy Seniors session at the State Library to mark the milestone that more than 7,000 seniors have now participated in these sessions across the state.

This week is important because it is also about celebrating age friendly communities, and this has been acknowledged in this year's theme, 'It's on for Young and Old'. Our government is dedicated to building more age friendly communities and earlier this year I launched our strategy, Queensland: An Age Friendly Community. This whole-of-government strategy looks at liveability through an older person's lens—from public transport, housing and opportunities for work and education to civil participation, engagement and access to services and public spaces. Above all, Age Friendly Communities considers that if policies are friendlier to older people they are friendlier to all. I encourage all Queenslanders, both young and old, to get out and about during Seniors Week and take part in events and activities across the state. Seniors play a vital role in our community and I feel privileged to have been working hard for them over the past 18 months as their voice in cabinet.

### **Logan Renewal Initiative**

**Mr MANDER:** My question is to the Minister for Housing and Public Works. I refer the minister to the Logan mayor's response to his decision to cancel the Logan Renewal Initiative, saying that the minister had been arrogant, argumentative and dismissive, and to Aunty Betty McGrady's observation that he is condescending and disingenuous, and I ask: why is the minister not listening to the people of Logan?

**Mr de BRENNI:** I thank the member for the question. As I have mentioned before, I and members of this government will simply not stand by and allow any member of the community, including public housing tenants, to be denigrated.

I said it yesterday at the council meeting and I say it about the member for Cleveland and the member for Burnett, who turned up at a meeting earlier this week to cheer on residents who said that they would not have people with disabilities, or people escaping domestic violence, or elderly seniors living in public housing in their street.

When I met with the Logan City Council and others, I outlined that we have a plan for Logan that will see revitalisation in more neighbourhoods. It will see more construction and more houses more quickly. I outlined that our plans are based on a partnership model that is tried, tested and proven.

I take a moment to address the matters raised in the correspondence that was tabled in the House yesterday. It referred to 1,500 houses being built under the opposition's program. What, in fact, is the case? I inform the House that, under the LNP's risky scheme, there was a net increase of just 500 social houses and a net increase of only 40 over three years.

Further, the letter referred to local businesses and a potential loss of jobs in Logan. The fact is that local businesses are already working on our projects in Logan. There are 75 companies already employing people with real jobs. These are Queensland companies employing people with real wages and not on work for the dole schemes. The reference to unpaid work in the correspondence that was tabled in the House yesterday is of serious concern to me and I am sure to all the other members of the government. I advise the House that today I will be referring the matter of unpaid work to the Fair Work Ombudsman.

On several occasions it has been made clear to me that several stakeholders involved in the LNP plan had real expectations of the ability to evict tenants at will. I referred earlier to the comments that were made yesterday about their attitude towards public housing tenants—referring to them as dirtbags.

Finally, I can advise the House that the person who signed this letter was told that it would be given directly to me, not the Leader of the Opposition, or the shadow minister, or any other member of the opposition. I can also advise the House that that person is not a tenant in public housing. In fact, she owns her own home. It appears that either she has been misled or the House has been misled.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Keppel, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, you are now warned under standing order 253A. Sometimes I wait until the minister has finished their comments before I name the person. I now call the member for Keppel for her question.

### **Building our Regions**

**Mrs LAUGA:** My question to the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. Will the minister please update the House on the status of the Building our Regions infrastructure program?

**Dr LYNHAM:** I thank the member for Keppel for her question. She is a great representative for her community. I was up there and, with her, looked at that fantastic foreshore redevelopment in Yeppoon. It is a wonderful initiative. The member can testify that the Palaszczuk government's \$375 million Building our Regions program is a success story for regional Queenslanders, supporting jobs and vital infrastructure.

Our accelerated round 1 of the program is funding 42 critical infrastructure projects, supporting almost 700 jobs. One project is finished. Construction is underway on 15 projects. Twenty-five more projects are at the design and tender stage. All of them are expected to be underway by the end of next month. Forty councils throughout the state are putting the finishing touches to their detailed submissions for round 2 and they are all due to my department by tomorrow.

We are getting on with the job. Unlike those opposite, when it comes to due process and responsible financial management we are not taking any shortcuts. To date, \$6.6 million of approved round 1 funding has been distributed to councils. Some councils claim at intervals as the project is delivered. Others wait until construction is complete. Apart from a small up-front payment, other moneys are paid in arrears following expenditure. This is a prudent grants management approach that protects public moneys whilst helping regions build much needed community infrastructure.

The contrast of that process to the process of those opposite could not be more stark. Despite the Auditor-General's scathing report about the LNP's dodgy Royalties for the Regions program, what has it done? It has rolled out the pork-barrel all over again—not once, but twice. I can hear the Auditor-General sharpening his pencil.

In April, the member for Southern Downs released his first economic policy, which was to reinstate Royalties for Regions. It was the same pork-barrel but with a new coat of paint. I table this document.

*Tabled paper:* Photograph, undated, from the Facebook page of the member for Hinchinbrook, Mr Andrew Cripps MP, depicting the member for Hinchinbrook and the member for Southern Downs, Mr Lawrence Springborg MP [\[1310\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Document, undated, titled 'Royalties for Regions: Ensuring regional communities get a fair share' [\[1311\]](#).

The LNP must have somehow found another airport in Callide that needed a bit of a touch-up!

It gets better. It is the same old policy that needs desperate revision. It is a policy of going back to the politicians deciding who gets the projects. We have an independent panel that is separate from us. The LNP's policy is going back to politicians deciding where the pork-barrel goes. Was there a revision? No. This policy is the same old policy of the member for Clayfield. All the member for Southern Downs has done is put his name on it.

*(Time expired)*

## Cross River Rail

**Mr MINNIKIN:** My question is to the Premier. It has now been 57 days since the Labor cabinet endorsed the Cross River Rail business case. Can the Premier today categorically rule out that Queenslanders will not be levied additional taxes on property to fill in the Cross River Rail black hole?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member very much for the question. As the Deputy Premier outlined today very clearly, we know how important the Cross River Rail project is for this state, especially the south-east. We also know that the former government had a proposal called the BaT tunnel, which also included value share.

When I talk about value share—or value capture as some people like to refer to it—let me make it very clear: it is coming from the federal government. The Prime Minister stipulates that, to put forward a business case about an infrastructure project of this scale, it must include value-capture proposals. If those opposite do not like the value-capture proposals, they should raise it with the Prime Minister of this nation.

Speaking of the Prime Minister, I will give credit where credit is due. When we raised the issue of building the second stage of the Gold Coast Light Rail, did we hear any words of support from those opposite? No, we did not. When the Prime Minister came up here and joined me for the announcement of the second stage, he said that what we expect to see from this future second stage of the light rail is the opportunity to have uplift on the stations that are going to be built.

The Deputy Premier and I give a firm commitment to the people of Queensland that we will do everything that we possibly can to secure the finance to build Cross River Rail, because it is absolutely needed. We need to know from those opposite are they going to support it or not? It is too important for the south-east part of our state.

### Drought

**Mr PEARCE:** My question is to the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries. Will the minister update the House on the efforts that the government has made to assist producers during the record drought?

**Ms DONALDSON:** I thank the member for the question. I know that the member for Mirani has seen the devastating effects of drought since his time in this House. In terms of the land area that is drought declared, we are indeed facing a record drought. Currently, Queensland's total drought declared area is 83.9 per cent, which is slightly down from the record high of 86.1 per cent.

In addition to the additional investment in wild dog and feral cat eradication, which I mentioned in the House yesterday, the Rural Assistance and Drought Package, which was announced in the state budget, introduces a range of additional measures intended to further help impacted producers and regional communities.

The drought assistance package is worth \$41.9 million in 2016-17. It includes \$24.7 million for the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme which provides freight subsidies, the Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate and the Home Rural Financial Counselling Service. In 2015-16 there were 4,372 claims for DRAS subsidies and rebates. We know that the effects of the drought are felt right across regional and rural communities and we recognise the need also to provide support for the mental health of those affected. That is why we are providing \$1.5 million for the Royal Flying Doctor Service Drought Wellbeing Service as well as \$4 million in the Community Assistance Package.

Our new \$36 million Rural Assistance Package is a whole-of-government response to reduce financial stress and improve financial sustainability in rural and regional communities. As part of the package, stamp duty is no longer payable on interfamily property transfers. This decision by the Palaszczuk government has been widely welcomed by industry and will make a real difference in assisting young people into primary production. We have also upgraded the low-cost loan scheme that helps producers to improve productivity and sustainability. The amount applicants may receive is rising from \$650,000 to \$1.3 million for a sustainability loan and up to \$2 million for a first start loan.

In total, we are providing unprecedented support for the bush with a \$77.9 million investment in practical initiatives that are making a telling difference. The Palaszczuk government is supporting our regional and rural communities, making sure that there is a strong, sustainable future for primary industries and producers in Queensland.

### Carrara, Commonwealth Games Venue

**Mr McEACHAN:** My question is to the Premier. I refer to comments by Hansen Yuncken that they are unlikely to meet the required practical completion date for the Carrara Commonwealth Games venue, and I ask: why did her government not intervene or investigate union stoppages at the Carrara site to ensure the principal contractor could deliver the project in the required time frame?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am advised by both the Minister for the Commonwealth Games and the Minister for Industrial Relations that the matter is before the courts. We have an understanding in this House that if matters are before the court we do not speak about them in this House.

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Yes, in the federal court. Perhaps you need to raise it with some of your colleagues in the federal government. As I said very clearly, my government has a very firm commitment to delivering the Commonwealth Games.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Minister for Industrial Relations, I would ask you not to provoke the opposition or you will be warned.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The \$320 million games venues program is an investment in sport and community infrastructure that is generating more than 1,000 jobs during the design and construction phase and will drive long-term economic benefits by attracting elite athletes and world-class events to Queensland for decades to come. It is about time we saw some positive indications from those opposite about whether they are supporting the Commonwealth Games or not. Honestly!

**Mr Pitt** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I will take that interjection. Once again they are talking down the Commonwealth Games. They talk down the Queensland economy. Is there anything that they have anything positive to say about?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, Premier. I do not want you to have a debate with the opposition. I think you have answered the question.

### Vocational Education and Training

**Mr CRAWFORD:** My question is for the Attorney-General and Minister for Training and Skills. Will the minister please update the House on the recognition of high-performing vocational education and training provided in Queensland?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for Barron River for his question. Over the past couple of months regions all across the state have been holding their regional finals in the lead-up to the state finals of the Queensland Training Awards which will be held on Friday, 9 September. I would like to recognise those members who attended these finals in their regions, including the member for Barron River who joined me in Cairns.

These awards, now in their 55th year, are a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the state's top training achievers. Across 12 categories the awards recognise individuals and organisations that strive for and have achieved success, best practice and innovation in the vocational education and training area. The awards showcase all that is great about VET in Queensland with categories for apprentices, trainees, school based apprentices and trainees, teachers and trainers, as well as training providers and employers.

A quality field of more than 660 nominees entered this year. Sixty-two were announced as the best in their region at seven exciting regional finals during July and August. I want to acknowledge all of those nominees and the successful winners at the regional awards. I wish them all the best as they head towards the state awards. I look forward to seeing the winners of those state awards join me at the National Training Awards later this year in Darwin.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Question time has finished. We will now proceed to the introduction of private members' bills. I am informed that we have another group of students from St Anthony's Primary School, Kedron, in the electorate of Stafford, observing our proceedings from the public gallery.

## LIMITATION OF ACTIONS AND OTHER LEGISLATION (CHILD ABUSE CIVIL PROCEEDINGS) AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction

 **Mr PYNE** (Cairns—Ind) (11.35 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Civil Liability Act 2003, the Civil Proceedings Act 2011, the Limitation of Actions Act 1974, the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act 2002 and the Personal Injuries Proceedings Regulation 2014 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Limitation of Actions and Other Legislation (Child Abuse Civil Proceedings) Amendment Bill 2016 [[1312](#)].

*Tabled paper:* Limitation of Actions and Other Legislation (Child Abuse Civil Proceedings) Amendment Bill 2016, explanatory notes [[1313](#)].

I would first like to commend the government and the opposition for their comments of bipartisan cooperation for the retrospective removal of civil statutory time limits for victims of child sexual abuse in institutions. This parliament has a responsibility to represent all survivors of child abuse and to ensure equal rights of access to justice. Access to justice should not be dependent on whether or not child abuse occurs within an institution, nor should it be dependent on whether the child abuse was sexual in nature or whether it involves serious physical abuse. Similarly, survivors of abuse who have been subjected to unjust settlement deeds, trapping them forever within time limits, deserve equal rights of access to justice. I thank the Leader of the Opposition and others who have spoken in this House against discrimination and in favour of legislation that creates equality for victims of abuse. The bill I introduce today creates that equality.

Many organisations and individuals have contributed to the development of the policy objectives of this bill—too many to name. Special gratitude is extended to: Hetty Johnston AM, founder and chair of Bravehearts; Carol Ronken, director of policy and research development and the executive research advisory panel of Bravehearts; the Queensland Child Sexual Abuse Law Reform Council; the Indigenous Lawyers Association—in particular their president Linda Ryle and members of the board; Dr Cathy Kezelman AM on the board of directors and the expert advisory panel of the Blueknot Foundation; Dr Michelle Meyer and the board of directors of Tzedek, a wonderful organisation working tirelessly to support victims and to prevent child abuse in the Jewish community; and to those individuals who have contributed and for whom this bill has been created but whom prefer their privacy, due to being survivors of childhood abuse, I say thank you.

On this matter, Hetty Johnston AM, the founder and chair of Bravehearts, which is probably the most recognised advocacy organisation in Australia representing the largest number of survivors of child abuse, is actively involved in both caring for victims of abuse as well as important child abuse prevention work. She has said—

Justice and equality has to apply equally to everyone; they are all victims, you can't treat one differently from the other.

The time limits defence has been used by institutions to bully and force victims in the past to accept meagre settlements from the church, and secret ones at that.

These are children who have been assaulted and harmed; give to them fair, just and equitable access to the law.

The bill puts forward important reforms that aim to create equal justice for survivors of childhood abuse and prevent any discrimination on the basis of context, type of abuse and past unjust settlements. The bill provides equal rights before the law to access to the court and to have evidence tested in the usual way. The rules of evidence are not diminished by this bill; a claimant must still prove their case. The bill means that whether you were abused as a child in an institution, by a family member or by some other individual under other circumstances, you will have an equal right to take civil action against the offender.

The bill is inclusive of children who have suffered serious physical abuse leading to long-term psychological injury. The bill recognises that the consequence of trauma and of severe prolonged physical abuse can be as damaging as sexual abuse. I thank the Leader of the Opposition and others for their comments in this House in support of legislation that extends the definition of child abuse beyond sexual abuse and to include serious physical abuse. The bill I introduce gives survivors of such abuse equal rights before the law.

Perhaps the greatest injustice that impacts the greatest number of survivors of child abuse is the barrier from an effective right of action for all the many victims of abuse in this state who are subject to a deed of release for the injuries arising from their shocking abuse whilst children. I have heard from numerous survivors and prominent survivor advocacy organisations that all tell me of similar experiences in relation to the so-called settlements. Those settlements are not true or just settlements at law. They were not made by equal parties on a level playing field. There was obvious and great asymmetry between the vulnerable and resourceless survivor of child abuse and the wealthy and powerful institutions that allowed that child to be abused.

The very law itself, now proven to be unjust by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, caused immense duress upon survivors of child abuse when trying to exercise a right of action. Survivors have told me of their experiences through these legal processes, legal proceedings that are the result of limitation of actions and personal injury proceedings legislation endorsed by this House.

One survivor, wanting nothing more than to get health care to heal the trauma and to become functional and productive in the workplace, took action against the institution responsible for the abuse. The institution never denied the abuse occurred and even made admissions as to having evidence of the abuse occurring. It is my understanding that strong evidence of the liability of this institution is currently before the royal commission. All that mattered to the institution was that the victim of the child abuse was now out of time.

Despite the cost of health care and education, and this person's obvious suffering and desire to get well, the institution offered zero dollars. The institution then offered an ex gratia settlement of \$15,000, only if the survivor agreed to sign a deed of release, releasing the institution from any future action for damages. The survivor tells me they wanted to refuse this offer because of the indignity it represented. However, they face the threat of having to pay significant legal costs to the institution

should they refuse to settle. As well, the survivor's own lawyer advised them to settle or otherwise be immediately liable for their own lawyers' fees of many thousands of dollars. The conduct of all the parties in this situation was lawful under the current legislation, but that does not make it moral or just.

I have shared with permission the experiences of one survivor of childhood abuse, but I am aware that their experience is a common experience shared by the majority of survivors who have found themselves subjected to those unjust settlements under the time limits legislation. Those of us fortunate enough not to have endured such terrible child abuse may not understand that even the act of confronting the institution and sitting in a small room with representatives from the institution, sometimes wearing the same religious clothing as their abusers, can be a significant psychological trigger. The power imbalance inherent in the acts of abuse perpetuated against those young children is replicated in the so-called negotiation process that led to those unjust settlements and combines with the time limits barrier to create substantial duress upon the claimant. Survivors of abuse have told me of the indignity of having their childhood abuse being bartered by men in suits arguing only about legal points, such as whether or not the claim was within time, and no-one in the room caring about the truth or caring about their suffering or practical need for healing.

This House must create a sensible framework for revoking those past unjust settlements. This House cannot in all fairness acknowledge the injustice of the time limits and yet fail to address the production of those time limits, which is those unjust settlements. I join the opposition in supporting legislation to remove the time limits for the survivors. I believe that any legislation that fails to revoke past settlements where those settlements are the product of the time limits defence fails to comply with the recommendations of the royal commission.

This bill puts forward a framework for allowing past settlements to be re-acted. This only applies to settlements that were unfairly impacted by the time limits. It will not apply to settlements properly tried on their merits or settlements heard within time or where the limits were not a factor in the settlement. These are sensible safeguards in relation to reacting past settlements.

In addition to the above, this bill offers two further reforms to remove unjust barriers that currently prevent survivors of abuse from accessing the court to have their evidence heard and tested. Survivors of child abuse were denied the right to a jury trial in 2003. That meant that all matters pertaining to injury from child abuse are heard by a single judge. In 2011, the Queensland Law Reform Commission stated—

Public participation in the administration of justice is a part of our legal tradition. Through the jury system, members of the public become part of the court itself. This ought to enhance the acceptability of decisions, and contribute to a culture in which the administration of justice is not left to a professional cadre but is understood as a shared community responsibility.

In the High Court of Australia, in *Kingswell v the Queen*, Justice Deane observed—

The nature of the jury as a body of ordinary citizens called from the community to try the particular case offers some assurance that the community as a whole will be more likely to accept a jury's verdict than it would be to accept the judgment of a judge or magistrate who might be, or be portrayed as being, over-responsive to authority or remote from the affairs and concerns of ordinary people.

In 2003, the removal of the right to a jury trial for victims of child abuse was an accidental outcome of the removal of a right to a jury trial for personal injury more broadly, such as adults suffering injury in motor accidents or through medical negligence. Given the unique circumstances of child abuse, where the personal injuries are not inflicted by accident but are inflicted by malicious intent and often are not a single isolated incident but are repeated assaults that occur within the context of broader psychological manipulation and abuse, often at a critical stage in a child's development, there is a far more sinister tone to the civil negligence for those matters and trial procedures should reflect that. Prior to 2003, survivors bringing actions for personal injury from child abuse had the right to be heard before a jury. This bill seeks to restore that right.

This bill seeks to address a so far unspoken and poorly understood barrier to victims accessing the court to have their evidence properly tested, and that is the question of the right of a defendant to stay proceedings. The right to stay proceedings, such as on the grounds of procedural unfairness, would occur to the defendant for a matter to be heard is a longstanding and sensible provision in our laws. A common reason cited is the passage of time. Usually this incorporates consequences of the passage of time such as witnesses growing old or forgetful or documents being lost or destroyed. However, where a defendant has acted intentionally to cause a delay in time, such as by concealing evidence, it is not just or proper that the defendant be permitted to profit from their sustained misconduct to evade responsibility for the initial child abuse. These are not isolated occurrences.

Since its inception in 2013, the Royal Commission into Institutionalised Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has conducted 44 cases, 11 formal papers, eight research papers, 5,669 private sessions and has received 18,598 written submissions. The royal commission has referred 1,619 matters to authorities including police.

Through these processes, the royal commission has heard extensive evidence on the actions of institutions to conceal crimes and the impact this has had on victims of abuse, including extending emotional trauma well into adulthood as well as obstructing justice by denying a right of access to the court. Given the widespread nature of this institutionalised behaviour and its significant impact on the community, it turns to this House to find a safe and sensible solution to deliver justice to vulnerable Queenslanders and to create a consequence for institutions of offending behaviour, as part of this House's duty to protect the community from serious offending.

This bill offers one possible solution to this problem; namely, by placing a restriction on the right of a defendant to obtain a stay of proceedings based on the passage of time, where that defendant is the cause of the passage of time. Further provisions are made to assist the court with interpreting such scenarios as where an institution has made an admission of fact, such as the fact of the child abuse or the fact of the institution's liability, that the institution can now benefit from a stay of proceedings based on a stated inability to now question the admitted facts.

As a safeguard to wider law and fair process, the provision is narrowly restricted only to cases of personal injury arising from child abuse. As well, this provision is restricted only to defendants that are institutions and not individuals. This provision has an exclusion for delays caused by the claimant.

The provision only applies to an institution that has caused a delay in commencement of the proceedings. It does not apply to an institution that has done the right thing—for example, reported the child abuse promptly, admitted the known facts and dealt honestly and openly with the victim or the victim's family. This legislative solution offered in this bill is measured and sensible.

Any argument against this reform, based on the potential creation of a procedural unfairness against a defendant, must be measured against the reality that the current system already creates and tolerates gross procedural unfairness against the claimant by denying them access to the court to present and test their evidence, in the circumstance where it is the defendant who has intentionally caused the very delay that permits the proceeding to be stayed.

I freely acknowledge that this proposed reform will quite rightly attract much scrutiny and debate, and well it should. At present a grave injustice is being perpetrated against survivors of child abuse around which there is no debate. The reform in this bill seeks to spark that debate.

This private member's bill is not an attack on our institutions. Quite the opposite; it is a means for institutions to take responsibility for the past and to begin rebuilding trust with stakeholders and the public. In fact, this bill will directly help many private institutions such as schools, churches, sporting and cultural organisations to act morally towards victims of abuse by delivering appropriate compensation without voiding their insurance policies.

I am proud to present a bill that focuses on the positives—on better enabling institutions to care for children as their first priority. I leave you with a real life example of what can be achieved and what has been achieved when an institution acts promptly on reported child abuse and puts the needs of the child first.

In 2007 and 2008, a teacher committed serious sexual offences against more than a dozen young girls in his classes at a primary school in this state. To protect the identities of these children I will not name this school. One of the girls, a victim of the abuse, attended a child protection presentation which was visiting her school. From this, she recognised that the teacher's conduct was sexual abuse and she bravely reported this to the police. The police believed her. They gathered evidence from the other girls and promptly arrested the offender. The offender pleaded guilty and was convicted and jailed.

The sexual assaults against the girls had been unquestionably traumatic. However there are elements of the institution's response to the reporting of the abuse which can hopefully lead to healing for these victims. Firstly, the victim were validated—they were believed by the adult to whom they reported. Secondly, the victims were able to see justice occur and see the offender punished. This reinforces in their developing minds that while the conduct of the one adult was harmful and wrong, other adults in their lives can be trusted and will protect them. Thirdly, the girls and their families were provided with immediate and ongoing counselling and care. It is well recognised medically that early intervention provides the best hope of full recovery.

The primary school and church in this case minimise the damage to the children and minimise the financial liability of the institution by ensuring the children were provided with prompt psychological care. By removing the offender, the institution ensured that further children were not abused. In so doing, they also naturally limited their future liability, such as from the victimisation of further children.

The scenario of prompt reporting, responsive care for victims and the timely punishment of offenders resulted in the most likely outcome of the best chance of healing for the girls, restriction upon the extent of offending by the offender as well as a minimisation of financial liability to the institution and restoration of stakeholder trust. It is possible. It can happen.

It is not a coincidence that this institutional response was the result of involvement in the matter by child safety advocates providing oversight and accountability. Consider the comparison of this scenario with the experience of abuse victims of the past few decades who were not believed, who were punished for reporting and who watched as their offenders were protected and promoted.

This bill creates financial consequences for misconduct and should act as a deterrent against misconduct and as an incentive for institutions to do the right thing. This bill aims to make child abuse more expensive than child protection and to motivate institutions to see child protection as an investment not as an expense. In doing this, the bill is an important pillar of child protection reform.

Finally, when any survivor comes forward to report child abuse, to seek medical and psychological health care and to hold the offender or the offending institution to account they should be met with dignity. They should be allowed access to a court for their evidence to be properly tested. The process will of course come with the inherent stresses which are unavoidable due to the nature of psychological trauma. However, where possible, this House should seek to reduce the trauma created by the administration of justice or by barriers to accessing justice. It is to everyone's benefit that the process of reporting child abuse and seeking justice should deliver healing and empowerment.

This bill goes further than other states or territories in responding to the shame that is child abuse in our community. This bill is an opportunity for Queensland to lead the nation on important reforms for child protection and equity of access to justice for victims of abuse. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading

**Mr PYNE** (Cairns—Ind) (11.56 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### Referral to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Crawford): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.

## LIMITATION OF ACTIONS (INSTITUTIONAL CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

## LIMITATION OF ACTIONS AND OTHER LEGISLATION (CHILD ABUSE CIVIL PROCEEDINGS) AMENDMENT BILL

### Cognate Debate; Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.56 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

1. That the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee consider the Limitation of Actions (Institutional Child Sexual Abuse) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Limitation of Actions and Other Legislation (Child Abuse Civil Proceedings) Amendment Bill together and report back by 1 November 2016;

2. That, in accordance with standing order 172, the Limitation of Actions (Institutional Child Sexual Abuse) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Limitation of Actions and Other Legislation (Child Abuse Civil Proceedings) Amendment Bill be treated as cognate bills for their remaining stages, as follows:
- second reading debate, with separate questions being put in regard to the second readings;
  - the consideration of the bills in detail together; and
  - separate questions being put for the third readings and long titles.
3. That, notwithstanding anything contained in the standing and sessional orders:
- the time limits and order for moving the second readings shall be: the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training—60 minutes, followed by the member for Cairns—60 minutes; followed by the Leader of the Opposition or nominee—60 minutes
  - the time limits and order for reply to the second readings debate shall be: member for Cairns—30 minutes, followed by the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training—30 minutes.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## VEGETATION MANAGEMENT (REINSTATEMENT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from 17 August (see p. 2948), on motion of Ms Trad—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (11.58 am): I rise to speak in favour of the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. The committee's task was to consider the policy outcomes to be achieved by the legislation, as well as the application of fundamental legislative principles—that is, to consider whether the bill had sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals, and to the institution of parliament. The bill amends the vegetation management framework to reinstate many of the provisions which were in the Vegetation Management Act 1999 prior to the changes made by the former government in 2013.

The bill prohibits clearing for high-value agriculture and irrigated high-value agriculture, reinstates protections for high-value regrowth to freehold and Indigenous land, extends the existing protections for regrowth vegetation in watercourses to the Burnett-Mary, eastern Cape York and Fitzroy Great Barrier Reef catchments, reinstates parts of the riverine protection framework under the Water Act 2000 and reinstates the reverse onus of proof and removes the mistake of fact defence for vegetation clearing offences. The bill also makes amendments to the Environmental Offsets Act 2014.

The bill attracted significant interest, with the committee receiving over 680 submissions and over 870 form submissions. Given the contentious nature of the subject and the level of interest, the committee consulted widely, including holding regional public hearings in Cairns, Townsville, Emerald, Bundaberg, Gympie, Charleville and Roma, concluding with a full day hearing in Brisbane. In total, the committee heard from over 140 witnesses. The bill polarised views among submitters—with environmental and conservationist groups supporting the bill and landholders and their peak bodies strongly opposing the bill. The committee also heard differing views from members of the public on the bill.

On behalf of the committee, I thank those individuals and organisations who lodged written submissions and those peak bodies and individuals who took the time to share their views with the committee at its public hearings. I also thank the landholders who kindly accommodated the committee on its site visits. The committee benefited greatly from hearing firsthand the issues landholders are facing and to see on-the-ground examples of the issues they tackle on a daily basis.

I also thank committee members for their work on the bill. Throughout the inquiry members engaged passionately on the many issues raised and discussed by submitters. In the interests of agreeing to a report, the committee has taken the approach of including separate government and non-government members' comments in the report, where there was disagreement. While not being able to agree to recommend that the bill be passed, the committee was able to agree to a number of sensible recommendations to improve the bill and seek further information from the responsible ministers for the benefit of the House.

In 2015, the Queensland government made a number of commitments—both election commitments and actions under the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan. These commitments were to amend the vegetation management framework to reduce impacts on the Great Barrier Reef and to lower carbon emissions. Core to these commitments was the reinstatement of provisions of the Vegetation Management Act 1999 and the Water Act 2000 repealed by the previous government. Since coming into office, the government has been working towards meeting these commitments.

On 13 July 2015, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines held a stakeholders' roundtable meeting on the future of vegetation management with participants from AgForce, the Queensland Farmers' Federation, Canegrowers, WWF, the Wilderness Society, the Environmental Defenders Office and the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland. This meeting included discussions about potential future vegetation reforms. Following this meeting, the department engaged Professor Allan Dale of James Cook University to liaise with key stakeholders on this bill. The aim was to build consensus on the best possible approach for the government to meet its vegetation management election commitment. The stakeholders consulted included representatives from agriculture and conservation groups, as well as natural resources management and Indigenous representatives. In late 2015, it became clear to the government that the process to be facilitated by Professor Dale was not going to reach a consensus and that urgent action was required to deliver on the government's election commitments.

To meet the Queensland government's vegetation management election commitment, in November 2015 the Deputy Premier announced plans to introduce legislation in the first quarter of 2016 to reinstate a responsible vegetation management framework for the whole of Queensland. From this time, the Deputy Premier engaged in extensive consultation with stakeholders, ministers and government agencies. The Deputy Premier met and spoke with the president and chief executive officer of AgForce multiple times during this time, as well as representatives from WWF and the Wilderness Society. The Deputy Premier also met and consulted with the Queensland Herbarium and representatives of a group of concerned Queensland scientists.

The government's election commitment was fulfilled with the introduction of this Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 into this House on 17 March 2016 and its subsequent referral to the Agriculture and Environment Committee. The government consulted key stakeholders including AgForce, the Wilderness Society, WWF and the Environmental Defenders Office prior to the introduction of this bill.

Following the introduction of the bill into parliament, the department undertook briefings with a range of stakeholder groups, outlining the proposed amendments and highlighting the opportunity for stakeholders to make a submission if they desired. These briefings included representatives from the agricultural sector, the urban development industry, resource industries, local governments and natural resource management groups.

The reinstatement bill was considered by the Agriculture and Environment Committee, which provided the opportunity for the public and stakeholders to express their views on this bill. The committee has published online the 688 submissions received for the inquiry. Public hearings and site visits were also held by the committee in Cairns, Townsville, Emerald, Bundaberg, Gympie, Charleville, Roma and Brisbane. The hearings did offer the opportunity for stakeholder groups and the public to have their say on this bill. The committee's report on the reinstatement bill was released on 30 June 2016. In summary, initial consultation occurred with key stakeholders on vegetation management prior to development of the bill, on the bill before its introduction into parliament and during the parliamentary committee process.

During the public hearing in Brisbane, the last day of our hearings, on 3 June we heard from Professor Stuart Bunn, Director, Australian Rivers Institute, Griffith University, Queensland Environmental Scientists, and his comments in relation to the science involved in this process. He stated—

One of the claims that is often made is if you clear vegetation and promote a good grass cover that is going to be beneficial in terms of reducing erosion. It is based on the observation that if people have a hill slope that has good grass cover, then that is going to yield less sediment from a run-off event than one that is bare, and that is certainly the case. But what we know is that in nearly every catchment that you look at, whether it is the Gulf of Carpentaria or from the Normanby all the way down to Brisbane, most of the sediment that gets into the channel, channel network and then out into the coastal zone comes from the channel network.

He went on to say—

The problem, of course, is that when you clear vegetation you increase amount of surface run-off that gets concentrated down into the channel network and increase the power of the stream to cause erosion. That is exacerbated when the vegetation clearing goes into those gully networks and the riparian zones as well. Not only do you decrease what they call the roughness, the slowing down of water in those landscapes, but you also reduce the resistance of the ground to erosion from that event. Those two things work in unison to create a greater erosion potential.

He also stated—

The other key thing is if we are really serious about tackling erosion and tackling the delivery of sediment and nutrients that are derived from that into our coastal zones and indeed into our water storages, then the solution to that is of course regrowing and revegetating up those sensitive areas. That requires us to protect and restore and allow the regeneration of vegetation in those sensitive areas.

He also stated—

I think the key thing to riparian management, and certainly all the guidelines that were developed 20 years ago in the national riparian program that was undertaken, is the recognition that these are important parts of the landscape that need to be managed differently.

With regard to some of the proposals that we saw on our trip—Olive Vale station, for example, in the Normanby—there are areas proposed for clearing that are at a very high risk of accelerating gully erosion there and ultimately out into the Great Barrier Reef catchment.

I will now move on to the government members' comments in the report that we tabled. Government members of the committee supported the proposed prohibition of clearing for HVA and IHVA. In reaching this view, we noted submitters' comments that the amendments would help protect remnant vegetation, improve water quality in the Great Barrier Reef, enhance biodiversity and reduce carbon emissions. Government members also understand that larger scale agriculture activities may still continue under the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971 or on Aboriginal land on Cape York Peninsula under the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act 2007.

Government members of the committee supported the reinstatement of the regulation of high-value regrowth on freehold and Indigenous land. We shared submitters' views that the amendments would provide major biodiversity benefits and that landholders may continue to manage and use their land where it is identified as proposed category C including the thinning of regrowth and grazing under the self-assessable codes.

We also understand that Indigenous landowners still have the ability to use their land. The government is committed to ensuring that Indigenous communities in the Cape York continue to have opportunities to benefit from ecologically sustainable development on their land. Since 2007, Indigenous communities have been able to apply to clear for a special Indigenous purpose in Indigenous community use areas under the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act 2007. Applications for special Indigenous purposes can be made to clear for agriculture, grazing, animal husbandry or aquaculture or for minor clearing such as subsistence farming on Indigenous land in the Cape York Peninsula. The special Indigenous purpose requirements ensure that economic development in the cape can occur when supported by appropriate scientific and economic assessment. The reinstatement bill will not impact on the ability of Indigenous communities to apply for clearing for agriculture under the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act.

Government members of the committee supported the expansion of the current protections for regrowth vegetation in watercourse areas to the Burnett-Mary, eastern Cape York and Fitzroy Great Barrier Reef catchments. Government members considered that the amendments would help minimise soil erosion and run-off into the Great Barrier Reef catchment areas and are in line with the recommendations of the Great Barrier Reef Water Science Taskforce report.

Government members also noted that the amendments would not prevent landholders from managing land which falls within the 50-metre buffer zone for proposed category R, in line with the self-assessable codes, or cultivating crops that are already growing in those areas. Government members of the committee noted significant concerns raised by submitters about the accuracy of the maps used as part of the vegetation management framework and the impact such inaccuracies have on landholders' ability to manage their land and comply with vegetation management legislation.

Government members of the committee noted concerns raised by submitters about the proposal at clause 6 to clarify that the defence of mistake of fact, established under section 24 of the Criminal Code, does not apply to the VM Act. Government members noted DNRM's comments that procedural fairness and natural justice for landholders is maintained with the removal of the mistake of fact defence provision due to the extensive information freely available to assist landholders to determine where they can or cannot clear and the rules they must follow.

Government members considered that the committee's recommendation No. 2 in relation to steps to ensure the accuracy of vegetation mapping is necessary to ensure that procedural fairness and natural justice for landholders is maintained with the removal of the mistake of fact defence.

Government members of the committee supported the reinstatement of the riverine protection framework, including the issuing of riverine protection permits, to the destruction of vegetation in a watercourse, lake or spring. Government members noted DNRM's advice that it would be reviewing and updating the relevant water regulations and associated forms and guidelines including exemptions from the riverine protection framework. Government members encourage DNRM to take into account the issues raised by submitters as part of its review.

Government members of the committee noted the concerns raised about the impact of the proposal to require offsets for any residual impact on prescribed environmental matters may have on housing, resources and development sectors. Government members noted DEHP's comment that stakeholders would be provided with a copy of a draft residual impact guideline which will define the term 'residual impact' for consultation prior to the second reading debate on the bill.

Government members of the committee supported the retrospective commencement of certain provisions of the bill and the associated transitional provisions. Government members considered that the provisions were necessary to deter what some submitters have referred to as panic clearing while the bill is being considered by this parliament. Government members noted DNRM's advice about the assistance packages previously provided to landholders in relation to earlier changes to the vegetation management framework.

While I have a few minutes left, I would like to thank the committee which travelled extensively, as was said before, particularly the deputy chair, Mr Tony Perrett, from Gympie. I would also like to thank the secretariat, who have done a lot of work on this bill, and Hansard who travelled with us across the breadth and width of Queensland. To all those people, I thank you very much for allowing us the latitude to get the report completed and tabled. Once again, I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.15 pm): On preparing for this debate, I am feeling extremely disheartened that we are again debating the vegetation management legislation. There are so many detrimental issues involved in this bill, but with the limited time that I have I will not be able to cover them all. Just a few years ago, at the end of 2013, the LNP government, and significantly then minister Cripps, implemented the most significant reforms to vegetation management legislation after more than 20 years of onerous Big Brother legislation enforced by Beattie-Bligh Labor governments. We wanted to boost food production and deliver jobs and economic benefits for all regional communities across Queensland. We wanted to support high-value agriculture projects and restore a long overdue balance to Queensland's vegetation management framework. Our laws did not—I say again; our laws did not—allow for the reckless clearing of native vegetation in Queensland and they did not threaten the health of the Great Barrier Reef.

As Queenslanders, we all care deeply about our reef. The reef is one of Queensland's greatest assets. It supports thousands of jobs and is vital to the economy of many towns and cities across the coastline. It is a Queensland icon. The LNP takes protection of our reef very seriously. We did in government. That is why we introduced the toughest ever laws to protect the reef from environmental vandalism. That is why we ended the Bligh government's plans to dredge 38 million cubic metres of material at Abbot Point port and to dispose of it in the marine park. We put \$8 million a year into the day-to-day operations of our reef. We conducted a strategic assessment of the Great Barrier Reef coastal zone, the largest ever for a natural system. We also developed the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan to guide the protection of our reef for the next 30-plus years.

It was the LNP government that invested millions in improving water quality including support for graziers and canegrowers to develop best farm management programs and adopt reef friendly practices. We also adopted a common-sense approach to land management for our primary producers, as we recognise our farmers are responsible stewards of our land. We empowered them to get on with the job of growing our food and our fibre through sensible, workable laws. I note that the agriculture committee specifically commented on the negative impact that frequent changes to this legislation are having to landholders and the wider ag sector.

When this detrimental legislation was introduced, I was contacted by many, many people across my electorate. I would like to thank the shadow minister for natural resources, Andrew Cripps, and the deputy chair of the committee, Tony Perrett, for taking the time to travel the state and for taking the time to visit my region. We held two vegetation management forums in Toogoolawah and Kingaroy where we had hundreds of people fill our local town hall to find out how they could help to stop Labor changing

these laws. They took precious time away from their businesses to attend. The introduction of these proposed changes came during my time as shadow minister for agriculture, and I was pleased to accompany the member for Hinchinbrook to forums in Beaudesert and Gympie where the same concerns were raised. There is a real air of desperation and a real feeling at every meeting we attended of 'Why are Labor doing this to us again?' It would have done the Deputy Premier some good to travel and listen directly to these people.

I note that the former candidate and mayor of Charleville, a Labor candidate, has taken the desperate step of writing to *Country Life* and having his letter printed: 'Premier not looking or listening'. I quote from this letter—

I am also very concerned that the iconic Great Barrier Reef is being mentioned in the same breath as the mulga lands. I hope this is not an intentional endeavour to link two very diverse and generally unrelated state assets.

I reiterate my plea to the Deputy Premier to take up my offer to come and have a look for herself at where she is being led astray.

The Deputy Premier would do herself a huge favour by allowing people who live in this area to educate her on the topic and not be hoodwinked by extremists.

I table that letter from the ALP member Mark O'Brien from Charleville.

*Tabled paper:* Letter to the editor in *Queensland Country Life*, dated 18 August 2016, titled 'Premier not looking or listening' [1314].

I would like to thank again everyone who attended those forums. In particular I thank people like Susan and Peter Mortimer, who had to travel to Emerald, and Narelle Black, who wrote to members of parliament sharing her personal story and pleading for the laws not to change again. I thank those who shared examples of their vegetation management records, which showed how their land will be impacted by new layers of colours, such as the proposed category R areas and the new category C areas. It is just incredible.

There are other examples, like the family from my electorate who bought extra land to extend their very successful blueberry orchard. The land was bought based on the premise it could be selectively cleared. They only need to clear about 20 to 30 trees so they could grow their business and produce more nutritious blueberries. However, these legislative changes have sparked an immediate concern, as they have so far made a half a million dollar investment in this new business. Surely these are the types of projects we want for Queensland—to grow agriculture in our state and support primary producers whenever we can. The Labor government must understand that these laws can and will stop this type of agricultural investment.

There are many negative and detrimental aspects of these legislative changes but, to be frank, the reverse onus of proof and the removal of the mistake of fact defence is unbelievable. The committee clearly stated in recommendation 3 that the reverse onus of proof in relation to vegetation clearing offences must be omitted. We wonder why the member for South Brisbane has brought this bill to the House without announcing that she has made this amendment. She has blatantly ignored members of her own party, and she has blatantly ignored groups like the Queensland Law Society, AgForce and the Local Government Association of Queensland. They all agree with the principle that a person is presumed innocent until they are proven guilty. The member for South Brisbane simply wants to take rights away from our farmers and make them criminals on their own land. I agree with the Queensland Law Society that, if this particular part of the bill goes through, it will be a travesty of justice for Queensland's landholders. It is an unjustified step backwards for our state. The same applies for the removal of the mistake of fact defence.

I need to move on because it is important to highlight the changes Labor is proposing to the Environmental Offsets Act. By their own admission, this Labor government undertook no consultation in relation to these amendments, which will require offsets for any residual impact on prescribed environmental matters, rather than imposing offsets only on significant residual impacts. What does this mean for housing, infrastructure, investment and development right here in South-East Queensland? The Property Council of Australia and the UDIA submitted to the committee that if you are buying a home it could add an extra \$197,000 to the cost of your home—and this is why. By simply removing the term 'significant', the proposed amendment means every impact will be considered and therefore it will obviously increase the compliance costs.

It is doing nothing to save the environment or the Great Barrier Reef. It is just simply creating more paperwork, red tape and lengthy delays. For example, if a developer has to make a very minor impact, such as the removal of just one tree, it will trigger a requirement for an offset. This will surely require many more government resources to deal with an increase in applications. I simply do not think the Deputy Premier has thought this section through. She could not have because she did not offer any

groups the opportunity to comment prior to these changes being introduced to parliament. If they had consulted, it would have been highlighted that land identified for urban development has already been through comprehensive planning processes, with the urban development ultimately identified as the best use of land. These changes adversely affect investment in the development industry and housing affordability. This is going to hurt not only the hip pocket of our young families but all families who are trying to purchase a home. It could perhaps even put their dreams completely out of reach.

I note the committee's recommendation 4, which asks the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection to engage with the property, resources and development sectors to assess and establish the full impact of the proposed amendments to the environmental offsets regime in Queensland. I also note recommendation 5, which asks the minister to inform the House of the outcome of this engagement, including any potential costs and if any actions will be taken. Sadly, the cart really has been put before the horse here. Labor has seen the opportunity and slipped this change in hoping no-one would notice. We have noticed and we call the Deputy Premier out on these underhanded changes.

The new laws will also amend the Commonwealth offset conditions, and this has raised eyebrows. The Property Council of Australia, the UDIA and the Queensland Resources Council have all expressed concerns. The UDIA said the amendments would allow the state government to double dip on environmental offset requirements, leading to added complexity, uncertainty and significant costs to the delivery of new communities.

What are the Labor government trying to do? Are they trying to make it so hard for new infrastructure and new development projects to get up? Are they trying to make it impossible for young people to buy their first home? Are they really trying their hardest to stifle growth in South-East Queensland? Altogether, we are just debating very bad amendments to legislation which does not need to change. Our farmers and our developers have been demonised and this must stop.

The LNP supports balanced and sensible vegetation management laws for Queensland that provide strong and appropriate environmental protections while respecting the commitment of our farming families to their land and the need for investment and development in this state. On their behalf, I wholeheartedly do not support this bill.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (12.25 pm): I rise to speak in opposition to this bill and in total disgust at those opposite who, in their desperate attempts to strike a deal with the Greens, have instead struck fear into the hearts of our hardworking Queensland farmers, the men and women on the land. In my role as shadow minister for agriculture, fisheries and forestry, I have talked and met with hundreds of farmers, graziers and landowners as well as industry representatives across the state. I have marched with them through the streets of Townsville and Brisbane, and I can say unequivocally that I stand shoulder to shoulder with them in opposing this draconian legislation currently being debated before this House.

When the Deputy Premier came into this place on 17 March this year, she was hell-bent determined to wreak havoc on our agricultural industry and ride roughshod over landholders in Queensland with her attempt to rush through this legislation without any consultation. I took phone calls from desperate growers in my electorate who were told by departmental officers to immediately stop any land clearing for which they had permits. Since March, farming and property development has been in limbo throughout Queensland. Any regrowth clearing and any new developments have been blocked. We saw five months of uncertainty leading up to this, and since March there has been another five months of chaos caused by this government which has blockaded development and brought our state to a standstill.

Let me be very clear: the LNP is united with our farmers on this issue. We have held forums across the state and we have been consulting with landowners, and the message is clear: our farmers are not going down without a fight. They might have their backs to the wall, but they are fighting for their livelihoods, they are fighting for their families and they are fighting to take this great state forward. As a proud North Queenslander, I can tell the House that we have big plans for development in the north, plans which sadly this government does not want to back, according to the Deputy Premier's malicious vegetation management laws.

I have spoken in this place previously about the importance of water infrastructure development in the north of the state and what this would mean in terms of agricultural development, and this bill before the House puts all that at risk. The hypocrisy shown by the environment minister and the Deputy Premier over this issue is breathtaking. This is a defining moment in Queensland's history. If these laws are passed today, it will see an end to agricultural development in this state and it will deliver a devastating, if not fatal, blow to our farmers. As they say, no farmers, no food. That is right. We need

our farmers to produce the food we eat, and this bill before the House should be seen for what it is—a blatant attempt by this government to shut down the agricultural industry in Queensland in return for a few Green votes at the next election.

According to the *North Queensland Register*, the parliamentary committee's report held few surprises and served only to fuel landholder angst across Queensland for the proposed changes. Five key recommendations are listed in the report, including that the reverse onus of proof in relation to vegetation clearing offences be removed, that the accuracy of vegetation mapping be improved and that an assessment be undertaken on the full impact of the amendments to the environmental offset regime in Queensland. Well, it needs to be much more than that. This bill should be turfed out of this place, never to return. The Chairman of Property Rights Australia, Dale Stiller, said—

The Bill is unjust, flawed and attacks basic tenants of legal protections.

If the government does omit the reversal of the onus of proof it is simply removing one stick amongst others that will be used to beat the families who produce food for this government to achieve cheap political gain.

I cannot agree with him more. AgForce General President Grant Maudsley said—I would like to commend Grant for his vocal representation on behalf of our farmers—

AgForce maintains that these proposed laws will drive up food prices and stifle regional development, and should be scrapped altogether not just tinkered with around the edges.

Furthermore, AgForce Far North Branch chair Peter Spies is also quoted as saying, 'These vindictive, punitive and perverse laws proposed here need to be either withdrawn from parliament or defeated.' He also said—

Most farmers are environmentalists. They live and work with the land daily, unlike many of the goat-cheese eating Chardonnay hippies who have ill-informed opinions.

Many would not know how their food is produced and how farmers are also custodians and defenders of the land. AgForce took its Fair Laws for Farmers campaign throughout the state where our farmers gathered in the hundreds, taking the unprecedented step of marching on the Treasurer's office in Cairns, the office of the member for Mundingburra in Townsville, Parliament House here in Brisbane and the office of the Minister for Agriculture in Bundaberg. They are angry, and rightly so. Many of our farmers have been farming their land for generations. Their relationship with the land reflects their commitment to ensuring it is managed in a sustainable and appropriate manner. This bill before the House will not only impact on our farmers. As AgForce's Paul Burke said—

These changes will effect entire townships, every person in rural Queensland will be effected by these changes these proposed changes.

At a time when our population in rural and regional Queensland is dwindling that should sound alarm bells. Rural Queensland is the backbone of this state. Our farmers provide the produce that not only feeds our families but generates jobs and income for Queensland. The slogan 'every family needs a farmer' could not be more true. Our farmers and landowners are not environmental vandals; they are not criminals. They deserve our respect and they deserve to be respected by this government who have shown from day one that they have no intention of consulting or listening to them.

Queensland agriculture has the potential to grow from \$17 billion per year to \$30 billion over the next decade, but this growth will be stifled if the Palaszczuk government's proposed changes go ahead. The grand vision of Queensland's food bowl expansion and all the jobs associated with this industry's growth will effectively be cast to the wind like tumbleweed. I am deeply concerned that we have an agriculture minister here in Queensland who is not supporting the very industry she purports to represent. When I asked the minister at budget estimates what her position was on the bill and the impact it would have on our farmers, what was her response? It was that she does not deal in hypotheticals. I say to the minister: this is happening here and now and so I ask her again: will she stand up for our farmers in the industry that she has been chosen to represent as their minister? If she had any decency, if she had any commitment to our farmers, she would be standing up in this place today backing our farmers and telling the Deputy Premier to go back to West End where she belongs.

Our farmers are out there having a go through drought, floods and everything nature can throw at them. The last thing they need is more red tape, which is already suffocating them. As Charters Towers graziers Noeline and Colin Ferguson told the public hearing in Townsville—

This opportunity is crucial to allow us to move forward ...

This small critical value-adding area will significantly increase the economic productivity of our property's enterprise without adversely affecting the adjoining natural environment.

The Fergusons want to boost their existing 18 hectares of irrigated fodder plot to 80 acres of irrigated lucerne and forage sorghum. That is right; they want to expand and grow their family business in a responsible and sustainable manner, and this bill puts those plans at risk. When talking about opportunities around high-value areas like the dryland farming project on Olive Vale station, Cook Shire Council CEO Tim Cronin said—

If we can get these areas up and running and productive, it is employment and economic development that will help Cook shire become viable. At the moment we are simply not.

An article quotes Cynthia and Pius Sabag from Tully as saying—

'It is not just about land, biodiversity, the Reef and endangered species,' Mrs Sabag said.

'It is about real people—ordinary hard working Australian farmers like my husband and me, with real lives, real hopes for the future and real plans for their farming businesses.

Brian Rowling said at the Lakeland rally, 'Our children's children will be paying for this for the rest of their lives if we stop the tree clearing and stop the development of the far north.' This state was built on the back of agriculture. I have lost count of the number of forums and conferences I have attended in the past 12 months which talk about the potential benefits this state could reap from the development of agribusiness. All that is now at risk for the sake of a few Green votes. I urge those members opposite to do the right thing by Queensland, to do the right thing by our farmers and to vote against this legislation here today. At the end of the day we need fair laws for farmers.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Crawford): Order! Before I call the next member to speak, I want to acknowledge the presence in the gallery of staff and students from St Anthony's School in Kedron in the electorate of Stafford.

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (12.34 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. Before I begin, I would like to thank my fellow members of the Agriculture and Environment Committee: the chair, the member for Gladstone; the member for Mackay; the member for Gympie; the member for Hervey Bay; and the member for Mount Isa. I would also like to thank the committee secretariat, Hansard and all of those individuals and groups who made submissions to the committee. While some of these submitters may have been passionate in their views about the bill, they were always polite and articulate.

The Palaszczuk government introduced the reinstatement bill earlier this year to honour a commitment made during the last election campaign to reinstate nation-leading tree-clearing laws. As the minister said in her first reading speech, after a few short years in charge of the state the Nicholls-Newman government wreaked havoc. The slash-and-burn mentality of the LNP set Queensland back 15 years and under its watch tree-clearing rates in Queensland escalated. So what did the LNP do about the increase in clearing rates? It made it easier.

The Statewide Landcover and Trees Study—SLATS—report released in November 2015 showed the rate of clearing of woody vegetation has been increasing since 2009-10, from about 70,000 hectares per year to about 296,000 hectares per year in 2013-14. That is an increase of over 300 per cent. In turn, this has increased carbon emission rates and risks to the Great Barrier Reef from sediment and pollutant run-off. Vegetation clearing has already caused serious impacts on wildlife, waterways and wetlands such as when vegetation is cleared for the purposes of development, mining and agriculture. Clearing, along with other pressures like excessive fertiliser use, can have serious impacts on water quality and the Great Barrier Reef.

The bill proposes to, amongst other things, reregulate clearing of the high-value regrowth native vegetation on freehold and Indigenous land. High-value regrowth is mature native regrowth that has not been cleared for more than 25 years and provides valuable habitat for wildlife, protects waterways and, most importantly, stores carbon. This important regrowth is identified on the regulated vegetation management map, which can be obtained free of charge online from the Department of Natural Resources and Mines' website. Vegetation management maps are prepared using satellite imagery and aerial photography to identify and help protect Queensland's valuable ecosystems.

The bill proposes to restore a responsible vegetation management framework that takes seriously the challenge of protecting the environment and the health of the Great Barrier Reef, as well as reducing carbon emissions while still allowing landholders to manage their land. In 2015 the Australian and Queensland governments developed the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan to reverse the decline in the health of the Great Barrier Reef. The Queensland government made several election commitments to protect the Great Barrier Reef including to reduce Queensland's carbon

emissions by reinstating nation-leading vegetation protection laws repealed by the previous LNP government and to reintroduce riverine protection permits to guard against excessive clearing of riverine vegetation.

Reversing the decline of the reef's health is supported by maintaining vegetation cover in the Great Barrier Reef catchments. The bill achieves the objective of reinstating the application of the riverine protection framework to the destruction of vegetation in a watercourse, lake or spring by amending the provisions of the Water Act 2000 to expand their application.

The bill prohibits clearing of high-value agriculture and irrigated high-value agriculture and reinstates protections for high-value regrowth to freehold and Indigenous lands; extends the existing protections for regrowth vegetation and watercourses in the Burnett-Mary, eastern Cape York and Fitzroy Great Barrier Reef catchments; reinstates part of the riverine protection framework under the Water Act 2000; and reinstates the reverse onus of proof and removes the mistake of fact defence for vegetation clearing offences. The bill also makes amendments to the Environmental Offsets Act 2014. As the minister explained in her first reading speech, at the same time as clearing was escalating the requirements to offset cleared vegetation were reduced.

Another component of reinstating the responsible vegetation management framework is meaningful environmental offset requirements to compensate for the loss of significant values such as threatened regional ecosystems. The bill will therefore introduce amendments to the Environmental Offsets Act to commence the reinstatement of offset requirements to ensure adequate conservation outcomes for all impacts of our state's significant environmental values. The policy objective will be achieved by amending the Environmental Offsets Act to: require offsets for all residual impacts on prescribed environmental matters rather than only significant residual impacts; and provide an ability to legally secure offset areas and make payments into Queensland's offset account for conditions required under Australian government approvals.

As stated by the report of the Agriculture and Environment Committee tabled on 30 June, the committee was unable to reach a majority decision as to whether the bill should be passed. The committee did, however, agree unanimously on five recommendations: (1) that the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines explain to the House during the second reading debate on the bill the consultation process that was undertaken on updated self-assessable codes, including details of who will be consulted; (2) that the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines during the second reading debate of the bill provide an update on the steps, including the associated time scales, that will be undertaken to improve the accuracy of vegetation mapping and proactively engage with landholders to provide them with updated property maps of assessable vegetation which correct any inaccuracies; (3) that the element of clause 6 of the bill that inserts new section 67A into the Vegetation Management Act 1999 which reverses the onus of proof in relation to vegetation clearing offences be omitted; (4) that the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection engage with the property resources and development sectors to assess and establish the full impact of the proposed amendments to the environmental offsets regime in Queensland; finally, the committee recommends that the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and Great Barrier Reef inform the House during the second reading debate of the bill of the outcome of the assessment of impacts, including potential costs of the proposed amendments to the environmental offset regime, and any other actions that will be taken.

As a member of the Agriculture and Environment Committee, I heard a lot of feedback from landholders indicating their concerns about the accuracy of the proposed mapping. Landholders who identified discrepancies between the department's maps and vegetation that they know exists on their land can apply to amend the map through a property map of assessable vegetation, known as a PMAV. Since 2004 over 10,000 PMAVs have been issued, locking in around 22 million hectares as category X, which is not assessable under the vegetation management framework. This bill does not change PMAVs that were approved prior to 17 March 2016. The ability to amend vegetation management maps has been in place since 2004 and is well-utilised by landholders. A regulated vegetation management map can also be requested via a property report from the department's website and is free of charge.

The bill was introduced on 17 March 2016. Since then there have been almost 30,000 vegetation management maps and property report requests, showing that the online approach is becoming the standard when assessing vegetation management maps. The government members of the committee noted the significant concern raised by submitters about the accuracy of maps used as part of the vegetation framework and the impact that such inaccuracies have on the ability of landholders to manage their land and, importantly, to comply with vegetation management legislation. The committee understands that the Department of Natural Resources and Mines is currently working with DSITI to

minimise inaccuracies in vegetation mapping. Given the significant impact that inaccurate mapping may have on landholders, the committee recommends that departments prioritise their work and that the minister provide an update on the progress during the second reading debate.

The committee also acknowledged the difficulty that landholders experience—particularly in remote areas such as Cape York, where the internet access is often unreliable and expensive—in obtaining information about the vegetation management framework, including maps and guidelines. Accordingly, the committee encouraged the Department of Natural Resources and Mines to investigate methods for ensuring that information about the vegetation management framework is available to all landholders and interested parties. As a result of this recommendation and public feedback, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines has undertaken a review to better define boundaries for proposed category C and high-value regrowth areas. This improvement exercise was undertaken by the Queensland Herbarium and other spatial scientists from the Department of Science, Information Technology and Information.

As the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines has advised, the department has been working proactively to improve the accuracy of the proposed regrowth mapping, and as a result this government recently released a new version of the proposed mapping which has focused on removing the majority of the obvious errors across the state. The department has also emailed landholders who have downloaded a map since the reinstatement bill was introduced on 17 March 2016 to inform them that an updated map should be downloaded to determine whether the mapping on their property has been corrected. While this process has greatly improved the accuracy of the regrowth mapping, there may still be some errors which are identified by landholders on their property. As is currently the case, landholders can apply for a PMAV to correct any error on the regulated map once it commences. Some clearing activities can be undertaken using self-assessable vegetation clearing codes. The codes apply to particular vegetation categories and regional ecosystems. On all but certain land tenures clearing in category X areas is exempt and does not require notification or development approval.

The government members of the committee acknowledged the concern raised by submitters about the limited consultation undertaken by the government on the bill, particularly given the potential significant impacts that amendments may have on landholders and agricultural resources and development industries more widely. Government members of the committee supported the reinstatement of the regulation of high-value regrowth on freehold and Indigenous land. As detailed in the committee's report, in essence environmental and conservation peak bodies supported the bill as they considered it will help address the adverse aspects native vegetation clearing has on biodiversity, hydrology and native wildlife and their habitats. Such submitters also considered the bill would help to reduce carbon pollution levels, land degradation, droughts, soil erosion and run-off, which ultimately impact on the Great Barrier Reef.

Government members of the committee supported the expansion of the current protections for regrowth vegetation in the watercourses to the Burnett River, eastern Cape York and Fitzroy Great Barrier Reef catchments. Government members also considered that the amendments would help minimise soil erosion and run-off to the Great Barrier Reef catchment areas and are in line with the recommendations of the Great Barrier Reef Water Science Taskforce report. Government members also noted the amendments would not prevent landholders from managing lands which fall within the 50-metre buffer zone for proposed category R, in line with the self-assessable codes, or cultivating crops that are already growing in these areas.

Government members of the committee noted the concerns raised by submitters about the proposal that the defence of mistake of fact, established under section 24 of the Criminal Code, does not apply to the Vegetation Management Act. Government members noted DNRM's comments that the removal of the mistake of fact defence still provides for procedural fairness and natural justice for landholders due to the extensive information freely available to assist landholders to determine where they can or cannot clear and the rules they must follow.

Finally, as Seqwater said in its submission—

Seqwater supports the government's pursuit of biodiversity, water and climate outcomes which align with water industry reform. In particular, Seqwater notes the alignment of a number of Acts to achieve the government's desired outcomes. It has been conclusively demonstrated that riparian vegetation is required to maintain stability of watercourses used for drinking water supply and Seqwater believes they should be protected in perpetuity.

I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Crawford): I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of school captains and staff from the Cleveland high school in the electorate of Cleveland.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (12.52 pm): I rise to speak on the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. It is becoming patently clear that this government has a serious problem with landowners. It demonises their activities and it intends to punish them with onerous, unfair, excessive penalties and regulations. It places greater burdens and expectations and threats of prosecutions on viable businesses and is slowly choking Queensland's great agricultural sector. The measures in this bill are extensive and aggressive, will apply a brake on investment and job creation, will shut down farm management and will have a negative impact on the agriculture, resource and property industries. This government should not indulge itself in making it even harder for significant industries to operate. The economics says it simply does not have that luxury.

Let us be very clear: this legislation is about demonising farmers and landholders so that the Deputy Premier can appease the onslaught of affluent green activists who live in inner-city concrete jungles. Its passage is directly related to the threat posed by the Greens and future preference deals. Its contents are shaped by green groups and their agenda. The Deputy Premier has become the Greens' representative in the cabinet room and does their bidding by pushing an unjust and flawed bureaucratic and regulatory burden on landholders.

How do we know this? We know this because, after extensive lobbying from green activists, the Deputy Premier grabbed control of this bill from the Minister for Natural Resources in December. We know this because the Deputy Premier tried to limit public consultation with those whose livelihoods would be severely impacted by this narrow, self-interested agenda. We know this because every time the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Environment have a chance, they spin an Armageddon-like threat that farmers pose to the future of Queensland. Only last week the Deputy Premier cited questionable clearing rates from a SLATS report to spin a doomsday scenario. Nowhere in that report was there any reference to thickening rates. If thickening rates are ignored, it cannot be a truly reflective report of the state of Queensland vegetation.

From the very start there has been a deliberate attempt to disrupt and limit consultation on this bill. The Deputy Premier originally wanted the committee to report by 15 April, giving only 19 working days and including the Easter school holiday period. That was overturned. As deputy chair I was able to secure an extra week of hearings throughout the state. This bill was rushed into the parliament without proper consultation and consideration of its damaging measures. It has had a chequered path.

Last year green activists sought to shut down consultation with stakeholders, refused to engage in a round table organised by the Minister for Natural Resources and another with the member for Cook, pressured the Premier to transfer responsibility to the Deputy Premier and spoke disparagingly about farmers at a public hearing. Consensus was never achieved because the roundtable consultation process was frozen after just one meeting. Environmental groups deliberately refused to engage without guarantees that the legislation would be changed. On 12 June last year the Minister for Natural Resources said changes would not be rushed because it is 'integral to landholders, farmers and their businesses and the jobs they support across the state'. In August, September, October and again in February this year, assurances were made in parliament that change would not be made without extensive consultation. On 15 September the minister said—

... a key element of achieving this commitment will be through thorough consultation with a range of stakeholders ... a vegetation management community roundtable process will be used to achieve this outcome through participation from representatives from the agricultural and conservation sectors, the natural resource management collective and Indigenous interests. Once I receive the report ... the government will carefully consider the recommended actions in the context of our election commitments.

Despite this backdrop of promised consultation, green activists disrupted the consultation process and pushed for the removal of the minister. In June 2015 Dr Tim Seelig of the Wilderness Society demanded—

It's time the Premier stepped in and told [Natural Resources Minister] ... to get a move on. Labor can't hide from this.

In August 2015 he launched a major email campaign through linked conservation groups, hammering the government saying—

... we have a stubborn Minister for Natural Resources, who prefers to hang out with the mining and Big Ag sectors rather than listen to the public's views. So, we plan to take the message directly to him in his electorate of Stafford as well as to Parliament. This week the crew from Queensland and the national campaign team are meeting in Brisbane to strategise and plot our next moves.

Pushing for action, he wrote to the Premier in September—

The Wilderness Society ... is disturbed by the complete lack of governmental action in restoring Queensland's nation-leading land clearing laws.

To date, we have not seen any positive action to either address the situation nor to fulfil your government's commitments.

...

In light of the above, and to be assured of Labor's commitments about vegetation management reform, we ask for a clear statement of intent about your government's delivery this term of the commitment regarding restoring strong tree clearing laws. We also seek swift action to suspend current clearing ...

In September he again wrote to the Premier, concerned that the government was taking a considered and balanced approach, saying—

While we have no issue with the government discussing the implementation of its land clearing commitments with rural stakeholders, the email's reference to taking "a considered and balanced approach to implementing protections that will promote sustainable agriculture while also addressing ... the long-term health of the Reef" suggests a much broader conversation, which is at odds with what the government has already promised to do.

On 18 September 2015 Dr Seelig said—

... it is way over time for the Government to be moving on this.

...

Why Minister Lynham is out there talking about compromises and softer solutions and, frankly, doing absolutely nothing in the meantime, beggars understanding.

This bill is about securing Greens preferences. On 29 March this year Sarah Elks wrote in the *Australian*—

Some in Trad's dominant Left faction want the issue to serve as a lightning rod to appeal for Greens votes. Late last year, Palaszczuk took responsibility for the vegetation management changes away from Natural Resources Minister ... a senior member of the AWU-led Right faction.

Cape York leader Noel Pearson alluded to this, saying—

I believe that too many decisions are arbitrarily taken in south-east Queensland for considerations other than proper environmental stewardship.

...

Our opportunities for our future generations to develop have been cut off at the past, so I just think this is an unfortunate agenda the State Government is pursuing here.

On 28 March this year, Queensland Greens campaign secretary Andrew Bartlett warned that Labor could lose Greens preferences if it did not prosecute changes, saying—

It is not a matter of some sort of a deal with the party—it's a matter of a core election promise and a key issue for Greens voters. If Labor backs away from those sorts of things, that makes Greens voters ... less likely to want to preference Labor ...

The committee hearings in Brisbane heard provocative and incendiary language from Dr Seelig about landholders, demonstrating his complete contempt for the issues they face. Dr Seelig said—

... I noted that a number of individual landholders have been paraded in front of the committee. I guess that is an attempt to try to personalise the effects of this bill.

Debate, on motion of Mr Perrett, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Withcott, Road Infrastructure

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (2.30 pm): I rise to make a brief statement about the Warrego Highway at Withcott, and I want to acknowledge Rod Coleman and two other residents from the Withcott Progress Association in the gallery. They have come here today because there is an issue that has been going on for a long time in Withcott, and it is how to get across the Warrego Highway into the Withcott township. Earlier in the week I tabled a conforming petition signed by 82 petitioners and I now table a nonconforming petition signed by about 600 or 700 petitioners which, I would imagine, would be most of the population of Withcott. That is how much of a concern this is.

*Tabled paper:* Nonconforming petition regarding a lack of traffic and pedestrian crossing of the Warrego Highway in Withcott [1315].

There have been promises from previous people about an underpass at Withcott. Unfortunately it was a Labor government. The assistant director at the time was Murray Peacock, an engineer working for Main Roads who was the director for the southern region based at Toowoomba at the time. An

underpass could actually work at Withcott and I think it would be the best, cheapest and most reliable option. I realise that there could be an issue with flooding, but surely bunding could be put around the top of the underpass to make sure it is safe for pedestrians. There would also have to be some fence management to ensure that people were funnelled into the underpass. Something like 25,000 vehicles use that stretch of road every day, including 3,000 heavy vehicles. At some parts a four-lane highway becomes six lanes or eight lanes, so it is important that the minister looks at how we are going to resolve this situation. The school is on one side of the highway and many of the population live on the other side. As I have said, almost the whole of the Withcott community would have signed or been involved with this petition because it really is important.

In terms of the promised underpass, Main Roads looked at it but these things just fall into the ether unfortunately, even though we have chased this up for a long time. These are some comments made by community members. Joanne Keiler said—

The highway is dangerous and it's only a matter of time before someone gets hurt and things need to be done.

It goes on. Alison Gavilan said—

I use the intersection nearly every day. It is very dangerous, especially at peak times.

Nicole Turner said—

My children and a lot of other children cross the highway to get to and from the bus interchanges at the school and it's very dangerous with this amount of traffic.

I am only highlighting the community's concerns and I fully support the fact that we really should have an underpass built there. I think that would be the cheapest and most viable option. Construction on the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing has already started, so we will end up with more vehicles during this construction.

*(Time expired)*

### **Battle of Long Tan, 50th Anniversary**

 **Mr PEARCE** (Mirani—ALP) (2.33 pm): Today, 18 August, is the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan where 18 of Australia's finest were killed. There were reports of more than 500 Viet Cong being killed in that same battle. This day is the day that has been set aside as the day when we not only honour those who lost their lives in that rubber tree plantation in the late evening of 18 August 1966 but we also pay our respects and honour to the Australians who courageously stood against the Viet Cong throughout the Vietnam War.

Leading up to the almost hand-to-hand fighting in the jungle that evening there were numerous contacts with an enemy that were passionate about the cause of ridding South Vietnam of the evil forces of Americans, Australians and New Zealanders. In all, over the time that Australia was in combat casualties were 521 dead and over 3,000 wounded. Today is an opportunity to remember those sacrifices: the 521 who died, of which 143 were national servicemen—20 year olds conscripted under a lottery type draw of birth dates. Today is an opportunity for Vietnam veterans to remember their mates lost in that country and the ones who made it back home who have passed on as a result of the consequences of war—their wounds and their illnesses and in particular mental illness, which has contributed to more deaths than those who died in Vietnam—not a very nice statistic. Today is an opportunity for us as Australians to, for just a minute or so, feel some of the pain and the suffering of the families who lost loved ones. They can never be brought back, but their family, friends and mates will always remember them.

In the time remaining I wish to pay respect to Long Tan Commander Harry Smith, who gave the past 50 years of his life fighting the hierarchy of the Australian Army to ensure his soldiers at the Battle of Long Tan were given recognition for their bravery on that day. Now retired, Lieutenant Colonel Harry Smith has never given up his campaign against the system—a system he claims was a shambolic system for military awards. Because of Harry Smith, 10 Long Tan soldiers are to be awarded the recognition they so deserve. I salute you, Harry Smith, and thank you for what you have done.

### **Battle of Long Tan, 50th Anniversary; Palaszczuk Labor Government, Wild Dog Fencing**

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (2.36 pm): I, too, acknowledge Vietnam Veterans Day and certainly pay my respects to those people who went to Vietnam and who have come home. It is a significant day in Western Queensland in Longreach and Emerald where they are remembering today.

Many members will have heard of the recent widespread rain in Western Queensland. It has been a great relief after four years of extreme drought. The psychological boost of seeing green after so many years is wonderful. However, members should be very clear that the drought has not broken. We need follow-up falls in spring and summer. We are still in drought and the effects of the extended drought have not dissipated and we still need help.

One thing that this government can do right now is hurry up and deliver the promised \$5 million in extra funding for wild dog check fencing. When this was announced with such fanfare in Barcaldine on May Day I thought it was timely. The initial grant to the Central Western Queensland Remote Area Planning and Development Board had been totally oversubscribed. RAPAD received 36 eligible applications by landholders wanting to protect their properties against wild dogs. Unfortunately, RAPAD only had funds for 17 cluster fences. When the May Day boost was announced I thought that if even half of that \$5 million could be applied to those eligible applications we would see fast, efficient results in the seat of Gregory.

After May Day nothing has happened. RAPAD could wait no longer and on 13 June it announced the 17 successful applicants. With increasing frustration, on 21 June I made formal representations to the Premier and the agriculture minister, Minister Donaldson, to try and get funds flowing. At the end of July I received a response from the Premier assuring me her wild dog fencing commissioners would meet early in the new financial year to determine how that extra \$5 million should be used. I sincerely congratulate landholders for every kilometre of fencing they construct. This fencing is our chance to re-establish one of Queensland's great industries—the western sheep and wool industry. I also want to pay tribute to the former minister for natural resources, Andrew Cripps, who was the instigator of cluster fencing in the south-west and has had great results, with lambing now in those areas going from 20 per cent to over 98 per cent.

For the fencing to work, the industry needs to reach a critical mass. If RAPAD could subsidise an extra 10 cluster fences, it would have a significant impact in the district. It is estimated that these additional fences would bring an extra 135,000 sheep back into the district. That would create more than \$1.6 million in shearing, crutching and lamb-marking wages for the region. What better way to directly address the government's stated goal of job creation in regional Queensland? I respectfully ask that the government urgently allocate that money to RAPAD soon.

### **Nudgee Electorate, Events**

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (2.39 pm): It is a pleasure to have this opportunity to update the House on some recent events in my electorate. Earlier this month, the Treasurer was once again guest speaker at my second annual Nudgee business breakfast, which was attended by local businesspeople and community members. It was wonderful to have a room full of businesses as diverse as the business and industry profile of the electorate. The Treasurer outlined the Palaszczuk government's second budget—a budget firmly focused on job creation through innovation, investment and infrastructure. These breakfasts continue to provide an opportunity to connect local businesses and inform them of opportunities to grow their businesses under our government's Advance Queensland innovation agenda. While in the electorate the Treasurer took the opportunity to visit an exciting innovative business, Sanofi Consumer Healthcare, to talk about its \$5 million expansion on top of a previous \$30 million investment at Virginia. That is locally made product and local jobs.

Following my business breakfast, I was proud to welcome the Premier and the education minister at Virginia State School, my former primary school, to announce Queensland's strong NAPLAN results. Since the beginning of NAPLAN testing in 2008, Queensland schools have demonstrated one of the greatest improvements of any jurisdiction. Compared with last year, we have improved in 15 out of 20 test areas in student performance in meeting the national minimum standard. Successive Labor governments have championed education reforms, including universal access to kindy and the introduction of the full-time prep year. The strong improvement that we are seeing, particularly in the early years, shows that our education reforms and investment in extra teachers are delivering results.

Last Friday, it was a pleasure to again welcome the Premier to the electorate to celebrate the St Joseph's Nudgee College Stella Fella Bow Tie event, where students wear a bow tie to show their opposition to violence against women and human trafficking. The transport minister and member for Sandgate and the councillor for Deagon also joined us to support the event. I commend those young Nudgee College men who participated for taking a leading role against violence, discriminatory attitudes and behaviours towards women.

Recently, the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Shannon Fentiman, also visited my electorate to officially open Wellspring, Zillmere, along with Micah Projects. The service will provide vital support to women and children escaping domestic violence in a safe and private space. I thank the minister for the investment in the Nudgee electorate.

Now, 18 months after our election, we are continuing to deliver on the promises that we made to Queenslanders—promises to diversify our economy through our nation-leading Advance Queensland innovation agenda; a promise to invest in front-line services, including our teachers and a commitment to tackle the impact of domestic and family violence across our community. We know that there is more work to do and we will work without exception to deliver on the promises that we made to the Queensland public.

### Coal Seam Gas

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (2.42 pm): I rise in this parliament to raise the issue of the residual negative impacts of the coal seam gas industry in farming areas. That is not to say to the House that the industry should not exist, although it is difficult for me to see the benefit. I live in the north-west minerals province, where there is no domestic gas policy. There is a monopoly on the supply of power in the north-west minerals province. The area is not on the national electricity grid and the people there are totally reliant on gas. When there is no domestic policy, that presents some very big barriers to us in terms of viability, but that is another issue. I will put that issue aside.

There are some residual issues with the landholders in that area that need to be resolved. The problem will always be that, individually, these people have to fund their own legal representation until the point at which they get an agreement. They have to run the gauntlet. If any problems or challenges arise, the matter could get tied up and the balance of the negotiating power always resides with the large gas companies. Those companies are experienced, they are battle hardened and they know how to handle it. Whilst there is the odd spurious claim from landholders, there are some very legitimate claims. I refer to the issues experienced by Kane Booth of Brentleigh, which were highlighted by *60 Minutes*. It is pretty clear to see that there is a clear case for someone to engage with the company for Kane Booth to receive justice. Unfortunately, so many of these issues drag out, much to the detriment of the bargaining power of the individual landholder.

It is essential that these large gas companies are held to account by the government so that they comply with the environmental authorities that they are given. There was a very perverse outcome at Brentleigh. The soil profile along that pipeline has been ruined completely. Overland flow for a potential farm has been completely destroyed. The road camber has been taken from 150 millimetres to 600 millimetres, which has stopped all overland flow on to that property. That can happen to a property owner, but that same person could be thrown in jail for knocking down a few trees right beside this environmental wasteland that has been created by the pipeline. It is a perverse outcome and it reflects poorly on the government.

The government has a responsibility to restore that balance between the coal seam gas companies and these individuals. Some residual problems need to be fixed. Although I understand that there was some activity in this space by the government, at the moment the job has not been done for some of these people. It is so easy for their situation to go unnoticed.

I am happy for the coal seam industry to exist. At the moment, I question the return that it is giving to the people of Queensland. At the very least, there needs to be a sense of fairness for these people when the pipelines are rolled out.

### Battle of Long Tan, 50th Anniversary; Lytton Electorate, Health Services

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (2.45 pm): I would like to acknowledge Vietnam Veterans Day. This being the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, I send my regards to the holders of the four commemorative events that are taking place today across my electorate. In particular, I refer to the unveiling of an obelisk at Hemmant Cemetery, which will be dedicated to all who served in Vietnam and in memory of those who gave their lives.

In the past, I have spoken in this place about the stripping of many services in the Lytton electorate by the former LNP government, including important front-line health services and the impact that that had on locals. A quick recap is that, during 2013-14, my community protested against the closure of the Moreton Bay Nursing Care Unit and the reduction in bayside front-line health services. My community campaigned so hard. Many of them stood up to fight for their community, to fight against these terrible cuts. Unfortunately, their protests fell on deaf ears.

In the 2015 election, baysiders made it clear that they were unhappy with the LNP's disregard for their community and sent a loud message that they deserved better. The Palaszczuk government listened to my community and the Hon. Cameron Dick committed to a new public health service centre to provide front-line services, create jobs and deliver important health services to my community, with an investment of \$13.6 million for the new Wynnum Health Service Centre and \$3.5 million for the new ambulance station, with a total injection of \$17.1 million.

I know how important it is to maintain all of our local health services and that these health services are sustainable and will meet the needs of our communities now and into the future. The new health centre, built to contemporary standards, will deliver an increased range of front-line services. Importantly, it will see the return of the 24-hour primary care clinic as well as a new ambulance station, which will be co-located on the site.

I am really excited about the new health service centre, which will ensure that the health needs of my community are met now and in the future. As I have said already, I look forward to the return of the 24-hour primary care clinic and the increased front-line health services on the bayside. This service centre is another example of the Palaszczuk government delivering on an election commitment and creating jobs.

I would like to talk about the wonderful preventative health forum that I held in my electorate last week that was attended by the Hon. Cameron Dick. At that forum, many representatives of various organisations talked to members of my community about important opportunities for people to engage in preventative health. I thank the minister for attending on that day. The forum was very well received. I am delighted to be hosting an event for dementia awareness in my electorate office tomorrow.

#### **Panama Disease Tropical Race 4**

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (2.48 pm): In March 2015, Panama disease tropical race 4 was identified on a property west of Tully. TR4 is certainly the most serious biosecurity threat that the Queensland banana industry has ever faced. The response by Biosecurity Queensland to this incursion is ongoing. It is not an exaggeration to say that, if TR4 is not contained, it will be catastrophic for the banana industry.

TR4 is a soil-borne fungal disease. Spores can remain viable in the ground for 30 years. You cannot see it until it expresses itself in infected plants. TR4 all but wiped out the banana industry in the Northern Territory, and in other countries it severely impacts on the productivity and profitability of their production systems.

I ask members to imagine if they were a banana-farming family with this level of uncertainty looming over them. The emotional stress facing the same families who have been wiped out twice in the last decade by cyclones Larry and Yasi now have a silent natural disaster threatening to consume everything that they have worked so hard for.

In the wake of the 2015 outbreak, financial support was provided to the Tully Support Centre to provide generalist counselling services to support farmers, industry workers and people in the local community affected emotionally and financially by the incursion of TR4. This service has been heavily utilised. Unfortunately, the Palaszczuk government discontinued this funding on 30 June this year and since then the Tully Support Centre has had to maintain these counselling services without any resources. The president and the manager of the Tully Support Centre wrote to the Minister for Communities on 12 July 2016 but are yet to receive a response.

While the Palaszczuk government has stated that it is committed to supporting the banana industry in terms of the biosecurity response to TR4, it appears the social and emotional wellbeing of the local community is less of a priority. This is unacceptable and irresponsible. The failure of the Palaszczuk government to maintain funding for this counselling service is contrary to the advice of its own social response group within the Queensland government, Panama disease task force, which recommended that due to the ongoing and significant social impacts on the local community there is a need for ongoing support.

While TR4 is a silent and invisible threat to the Queensland banana industry, it is a very real and present one. The confidence of the local community in the Tully district has been shaken by this incursion. The Tully Support Centre is a trusted and reputable provider of non-clinical mental health services to the local community, having done so with distinction following the severe devastation of Cyclone Yasi in 2011. The Minister for Communities has all the information that she needs and has had it now for over a month. I call on the Minister for Communities to act and act now.

### Gallipoli Barracks, Access

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (2.50 pm): All persuasions of government need to be mindful when making decisions of any unintended consequences of such decisions. One such decision made recently by a federal Liberal minister not from Queensland has led to significant traffic congestion each morning on Samford Road. The minister, and it appears the federal member for Ryan, have supported this move in restricting pass holders through the western entry gate, called the Wanimo Street gate. I am informed only ADF members and family who reside in Gaythorne, Mitchelton and Enoggera may use this entrance now, essentially pushing all previous pass holders onto Samford Road.

Recent doorknocking in Upper Kedron and Ferry Grove and also copious complaints to my office validates the fact that this change has resulted in what was once a 15- to 20-minute journey for defence personnel and their families being now anything up to 40 minutes. That is just from home to Gallipoli Barracks, with no comment in respect to the additional inconvenience to other commuters travelling beyond that particular distance.

In a *North-West News* article on Wednesday, 15 June 2016, the member for Ryan, Jane Prentice, says complaints have been received for more than four years about the inappropriate driver behaviour by users of the Wanimo Street gate. In addition, I have sighted an email from the member to a constituent in the seat of Everton stating—

As you may be aware, the Gallipoli Barracks and local Members of Parliament at all levels of government have been receiving complaints for four more than four years about inappropriate driver behaviour by users of the Wanimo Street gate.

On checking this through the appropriate channels I found that the Ferry Grove police in particular have sighted only one incident in 2011—only one in 2011. I have acted on this by the first time ever lodging an e-petition. I do not take petitions lightly but I felt on this occasion it was warranted. To date there have been 1,386 petitioners sign that e-petition online. With an increase of around 2,000 extra ADF personnel on the Gallipoli Barracks one should be looking at greater, not lesser, access and ways to mitigate the circumstances of not only entry to the base but also the surrounding areas and the community. This decision is a poor decision based on little or no evidence and made by people who do not use Samford Road to commute of a morning. I will not rest until this matter is fixed.

### Child Protection

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.53 pm): As I rise in this House today, I do so knowing that as of this morning more than 28,000 people have signed a petition calling for stronger laws to ensure children presenting at hospitals or at doctor's rooms with suspected abuse are not released until a full investigation has been completed. I want to say thank you to Alicia Duvall, who started this petition and who has been working tirelessly to effect positive change coming out of the recent tragic death of Mason Jet Lee. It disappoints me that the embattled Minister for Child Safety could so flippantly dismiss the voices of more than 28,000 people, but what is most concerning is the way the minister did it which shows she has no idea how the child safety system works.

In Queensland for an investigation into abuse to have commenced, Child Safety staff must first sight the child involved in the allegation. They must then make an assessment of whether harm has occurred. Once this has occurred, Child Safety may refer the matter to a suspected child abuse and neglect team, a SCAN team, which is a multiagency team that makes assessments of the ongoing care needs of a child who has been harmed or is suspected of being harmed. Why I raise this is because this minister claims that the SCAN teams are there to stop children leaving hospitals who present with signs of abuse or non-accidental injury. The minister's statement in *Quest News* on 17 August is wrong and she would do well to read her department's own child safety practice manual before she makes up stories to avoid scrutiny over past system failures. Even the health department's own education tool around reporting abuse and harm of a child who presents states SCAN teams only 'may' happen as a follow-up once a mandatory report is made. Where was the SCAN team for Mason Lee? Where was the SCAN team when he was discharged from hospital four months before his death? The minister needs to apologise to the thousands of people who have already voiced their concerns at the failings in the current system and correct the record.

Furthermore, we still have not had the minister categorically rule out whether her department is downgrading abuse notifications or if they have done so in the past 12 months. We know that five children have been murdered in the past 12 months and a further 16 deaths are being investigated due to suspicious circumstances. We know that a recent Galaxy survey found 80 per cent of Queenslanders believe the child protection system was under pressure or in crisis. The LNP have called for an independent coronial inquiry which would help restore public confidence in our child protection system.

The people of Queensland are demanding answers from this minister and Labor over its failed handling of the child safety system. Twenty-eight thousand people cannot be wrong and this minister better start listening.

### Child Protection

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (2.56 pm): I am very proud of my family and the contribution that they have all made to our community and our state over their lifetimes. My father worked for 45 years in the Queensland Public Service, many of those years with the department of family services, now known as the Department of Child Safety. My younger brother is an outstanding social worker who has worked with the Department of Child Safety and non-government organisations all over the world, including Doomadgee, Nepal and Melbourne. All of my life I have heard stories about at-risk children and families. All of my life I have seen the dedication of our child safety workers to their mission of keeping Queensland children safe.

When it comes to the safety of Queensland children and the wellbeing of families, we must always remain vigilant. After all, child safety is paramount. Child safety is everybody's business. If our Child Safety structures and frameworks and resourcing models need to be improved then we should improve them. If there are questions about our systems then we should have thorough reviews, find the answers and implement the solutions. If we have tragedies then we should do whatever we can to ensure that we prevent them from ever happening again. I am devastated by a recent tragedy in my area. We lost one of our own and we must leave no stone unturned in our investigations. We must do whatever we can to keep our kids safe.

The Queensland government is working with stakeholders and the community sector to invest in family support services and strengthen the safety net for children all over Queensland, including the Caboolture region. In the Caboolture region new local Family and Child Connect services and new family support services are providing direct support to an average of 258 families each month. In addition, a new intensive family support service is working intensely with an average of 74 local families each month. To strengthen our child protection system, more foster carers, more support and more and better trained staff are being rolled out in the Caboolture region. Already four additional staff have been allocated to the Caboolture Child Safety Service Centre since January this year and I understand that further additional resources and child safety supports will be rolled out in the Caboolture region in the near future.

I have always fought for more and better front-line services for the Caboolture region and I will always continue to do so. We must always do whatever we can to keep our children safe.

## VEGETATION MANAGEMENT (REINSTATEMENT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Second reading

Resumed from p. 2997, on motion of Ms Trad—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (2.59 pm), continuing: As I was saying before the adjournment, the committee hearings in Brisbane heard provocative and incendiary language from Dr Seelig about landholders, demonstrating his complete contempt for the issues they face. Dr Seelig said—

... I noted that a number of individual landholders have been paraded in front of the committee. I guess that is an attempt to try to personalise the effects of the bill.

I responded—

Excuse me: I dispute the fact that they have been paraded in front of the committee.

I also said—

Please explain yourself with regard to that, because that is an insult to every single person who has come before this committee. They have not been paraded. They have come here under their own volition and, in a lot of cases, put a very emotional perspective to what we are doing and what the government is proposing to do. I ask you to withdraw that, please.

Dr Seelig replied—

I withdraw the word 'paraded'.

This bill is not good policy. It is not based on environmental logic, but rather on political promises and what the government thinks is good politics. As true environmentalists and responsible custodians of the land, farmers should be allowed to continue to sustainably manage their land. To do otherwise makes poor business sense. AgForce said—

Unlike professional, career-driven environmental lobbyists we live, breathe and work in our environment every day ... are directly engaged in conservation activities such as biodiversity projects, nature refuges, tree planting and the voluntary retention of category X vegetation that could be cleared legally.

Growth of our agricultural industries can only be achieved with sensible land management laws. These proposals are anything but sensible. Prohibiting clearing of high-value agriculture and irrigated high-value agriculture land will restrict supply, drive up food prices, stifle regional development, make it harder for farmers to grow their businesses, accelerate the urban drift of young rural people and stagnate local jobs.

Indigenous communities will bear an unfair and disproportionate burden for the environmental wishes of city dwellers. The Cape York Land Council Aboriginal Corporation said—

Aboriginal people on Cape York are the Queenslanders most in need to actually use their land for economic development so that they can break free of welfare dependence ... Because of this unfair burden we do not support ... removal of the option for vegetation clearing for irrigated agriculture and high-value agriculture.

The re-regulation on high-value regrowth on freehold and Indigenous land is counterproductive.

Mapping of some of our most productive land as category C is simply a land grab that permanently devalues land that has been developed at major cost and reduces income. An Emerald witness said—

... the proposed ban on clearing category C high-value regrowth will lead to a loss of biodiversity and an increase in erosion and sediment washing onto the Great Barrier Reef. This is the opposite effect to what the laws are trying to achieve. ... contrary to the commonly held belief of many environmentalists, trees do not prevent erosion; rather, it is good ground cover, especially grass, that slows the flow of the water across the land and holds the soil together.

Basic sensible property maintenance dictates that landholders manage regrowth on their properties. One witness said—

The thickening of vegetation has choked out the grasses, causing erosion. Where we have improved the land sustainable for grazing, erosion has been reduced. The land we have developed needs constant maintenance to keep regrowth from taking over our grazing areas in order to keep it healthy and productive.

The one-size-fits-all approach does not work. Extending the protection of regrowth vegetation in watercourses such as the Burnett-Mary catchment will have a significant detrimental impact on my electorate. Serious questions remain about the science supporting this, as there is no science to prove that a 100-metre vegetation buffer is more beneficial to the Great Barrier Reef than a 100-metre vegetation ground-cover buffer of filtering sediments.

This bill uses unreliable mapping to trample on fundamental legal rights. The mapping has been described as 'woefully inaccurate', 'atrocious', 'thoroughly irresponsible and irregular' and 'consistently ... proved to be extremely wrong'. In one case, a lot of native woody weeds were showing up as some sort of vegetation resource, if not regrowth. Lantana was appearing as softwood scrub, which is endangered regrowth. Despite significant implications for legal prosecution, it is concerning that witnesses described having trouble seeking departmental advice, saying—

There are just no department people there to help educate landowners.

Recently, the government allocated \$7.8 million over four years and ongoing funding of \$1.5 million per annum to support aerial and satellite imagery to assess vegetation management compliance, which is code for a return to tree police.

As I wrote in the statement of reservation, common sense and good governance would dictate that a budgetary allocation be identified and used to correct and update inaccurate mapping. Therefore, yesterday it was surprising to receive email advice from the department that it has released more accurate mapping, asking recipients to submit a new request for a property report or vegetation maps. This advice is a measure that I proposed during the hearing process, comparing it to receiving a property valuation notification and at that time was surprisingly rebuffed by the department. While I commend the government for finally advising landholders, my personal experience gives me little confidence that the new maps are actually accurate, as the department has an appalling record with map accuracy. The maps can only be guaranteed after substantial ground truthing.

In one exchange with the department, I asked—

Tell me why the department does not inform landholders when there is change to vegetation mapping. ... In a lot of cases landowners do not have access to internet and ... devices to be able to go online. ... why ... not inform landholders when there has been a change to vegetation mapping on their property.

I also stated—

When a property valuation changes, that landowner is obviously notified of any change in valuation. ... The department mails each landowner individually, be it urban or rural, to notify them of the change and a challenge process. I put it to you that perhaps given the significance and the penalties that are associated with getting it wrong, it would be advisable for the department to consider a process where they could advise property owners, similar to the property valuation process, of any change to the vegetation mapping on those properties.

They answered—

Landholders are not notified directly.

They also stated—

We do not do direct mail-outs because of the logistics associated with doing that.

They further stated—

The department has obviously, through its responsibilities with managing titles, mailing addresses for all landholders, both electronic and written. I know the valuation mail-out annual cost is close to a million dollars to do that notification, so it is not an insignificant amount associated with manually notifying landholders.

I contest that that advice to landholders should be mandatory.

This bill will both remove and undermine basic legal rights. The proposals to reverse the onus of proof, to remove the mistake of fact defence and to make this law retrospective are unjust and draconian. Reversing the onus of proof means landholders will be guilty until they prove their innocence. They will have fewer rights and be treated worse than murderers and outlaw motorcycle gangs. The Queensland Law Society said there was no justifiable reason or proof provided to reverse the onus of proof, calling it 'a step backwards for justice in this state' and that—

... administrative convenience or prosecutorial efficiency ... does not justify erosion of the principle that a person is presumed innocent of an offence until they are proven guilty.

The Deputy Premier fatuously compared it to red-light cameras and speed offences, where people are deemed to have committed the offence. The Queensland Law Society pointed out that—

This ... might take a few points off your licence and might end up with a very small fine. The penalties which this act deals with is up to five years imprisonment. ... A conviction for this carries maximum penalties ... and fines sufficient to effectively bankrupt or take away the farms of people who are deemed by law to have committed offences.

They further stated—

The analogy that Minister Trad has used ... They have, generally, modest penalties. Environmental harm offences ... involve significant penalties. There is simply no equivalence between the two and, with respect to the minister, it is like comparing a grape to a watermelon.

This bill will also deny landholders the mistake of fact defence. To prosecute landholders on the basis of patently wrong and inaccurate mapping breaches any principles of natural justice. Without this defence, a farmer can be prosecuted because he acted on an inaccurate map provided by the department.

The Law Society described the mistake of fact defence as—

... simply good law ... it plays a very, very important role and ... in fact prevents injustices. Can you imagine a court fining someone or being asked to fine someone, taking away their livelihood and imprisoning them because someone did not do the map right and they cannot rely upon that as a defence?

How is that fair? How is that reasonable? Does it pass, quite frankly, what some people used to refer to as the sniff test, the pub test?

Finally, making these amendments retrospective to 17 March will create a minefield for assessing lawful clearing and the ability to defend any prosecutions relating to the transition period. This bill demonises farmers and landholders, is anti agriculture, anti resources and anti economic development. It does not consider that Indigenous or non-Indigenous landholders are better placed to say what is best for their land. It removes and undermines basic legal rights. It destroys trust between government, these agricultural, resource and property industries and individual landholders. It is driven by green activists who have demanded payback for preference deals and future support, disrupted meaningful consultation, dismissed the effects on landholders and want to remove sensible and sustainable opportunities for farmers and landholders to grow their businesses. For these reasons, this bill should be rejected.



**Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (3.11 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker—

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Mr SORENSEN:** That is typical of what you did yesterday. You stood up with a few greenies around you. Your arrogance—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): Order! While I am in no way condoning the reason for you making this response, could I ask you to direct your comments through the chair.

**Mr SORENSEN:** In today's *Courier-Mail* there is a photograph which shows Jackie Trad standing up between two ladies. One sign reads 'Restore the laws' and the other one reads—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Hervey Bay, could you refer to other members by their formal titles.

**Mr SORENSEN:** The Deputy Premier. The other sign reads 'No more dumb Qld please'. How arrogant is that? Anybody in Queensland who does not support this law is supposed to be a dumb Queensland. I take offence at that—I really do. Those opposite can laugh about it, but do they think that the 8,000 farmers who signed that document are dumb? Most of them are good businesspeople. I do not appreciate having farmers being told they are dumb. What about the Aboriginal people—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SORENSEN:** There it is. I take offence at that and being a part of it.

**Mr Power:** Table it.

**Mr SORENSEN:** I will.

*Tabled paper:* Extract of media article from the *Courier-Mail*, dated 18 August 2016, depicting the Premier, Hon. Annastacia Palaszczuk, and the Deputy Premier, Hon. Jackie Trad, with protestors [1316].

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Could we have one person speaking, please. This is not a conversation.

**Mr SORENSEN:** I would like to thank the members of the committee and Rob Hansen and his staff. I especially thank the Hansard lady for attending all of the community events during our regional hearings. She did a great job. She had to set up all the tables and the microphones. She did a wonderful job. Thank you very much.

I would also like to thank Grant Maudsley from AgForce for all the work he did to get people to make submissions in relation to the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. There are a lot of farmers in this state who work really hard.

Farming is a pillar of the Queensland economy and I will continue to fight against the Labor Party's unfair roll-back of the vegetation management laws. These amendments are antifarming vegetation management laws. I was talking to a guy before and he gave me an article which reads—

Commercial risks outlook report by accountants SV partners predict that 3,223 businesses across the state could fold within the next 12 months making Queensland equal to Western Australia and the second riskiest state after the Northern Territory.

Why are we introducing legislation like this to put farming businesses at risk? It is unbelievable. This is one of the pillars of our economy and yet we are putting it at risk with these stupid amendments to the law.

The LNP tried to develop a pathway for high-value agriculture and irrigated high-value agriculture to make farms more profitable. If they are more profitable and there are more export dollars coming into this country it will mean our state is more profitable and more financial. Instead we are bringing this legislation in to put the farmers at risk. It is really great economics at the end of day. It is unbelievable.

We are stripping freehold and Indigenous freehold landowners of their rights to manage vegetation. It is quite interesting to read some of the articles about this. I think the best one is an article in the *Western Times* titled 'Labor not listening'. Mark O'Brien, the Labor Party candidate for the seat of Warrego, slammed his own party over land-clearing legislation.

We cannot all live in the concrete jungle down here. We really need farmers. When we look at where most of the support for the Greens and the green movement comes from it is out of inner-city Sydney, inner-city Melbourne and also inner-city Brisbane. They do not care about the farmers.

**Mr Power:** We do, Ted.

**Mr SORENSEN:** You do not.

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr Rickuss** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Logan and member for Lockyer, we need to allow the member for Hervey Bay to speak.

**Mr SORENSEN:** Eric Rosendale of Bonny Glen station said—

The greenies are behind this and they don't care about my people ...

He is a stockman. He is wanting to make sure that Aboriginal people—

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr Rickuss** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I have asked the member for Logan and the member for Lockyer to cease having conversations across the chamber. The member for Hervey Bay has the call. Please allow him to speak.

**Mr SORENSEN:** Mr Rosendale goes on to say—

It was 'idiotic' that resource companies can mine the Palmer River for gold on the station ... but he can not clear the land.

He goes on to say—

The miners cause more damage, more erosion and the Palmer River flows into the Gulf and not the Great Barrier Reef.

We hear about the Great Barrier Reef, but the great divide goes through Queensland and it divides the river systems. Some rivers flow into the Great Barrier Reef but others flow into Lake Eyre and the Gulf of Carpentaria. We always hear about saving the Barrier Reef. We use this as an excuse every time. When a river flows into the Gulf of Carpentaria is it going to affect the Barrier Reef?

In Cairns we heard from the Cape York Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, who stated—

I would just like to add in relation to reducing carbon emissions that, yes, we are concerned about climate change but that does not mean that we in Cape York have to lay down and die to protect Australia's commitment and allowing future development of southern areas. Also the Indigenous people are less responsible for climate change, but the most impacted ... From my opinion, who was once a devout Labor supporter, I believe the views of the south and in one electorate should not dictate the future of the north and particularly the future of Indigenous people.

I think that is a very true statement. Why should Indigenous people in Cape York be burdened with the responsibility of what we are doing in Brisbane? It is a little unfair when the greenies in the inner city want the Indigenous people on Cape York to take responsibility for carbon emissions and all the rest of it. Is that right? Currently, there is no compensation for taking clearing rights away from Indigenous people. Some of it is freehold land and some of it is native title, but they have a right to develop that land and to run businesses on that land like everybody else. We give them native title but we put all of these restrictions on it. What is it really worth for those people at the end of the day? In their submissions they state that they want to get away from relying on social security and things like that. They want to be able to give jobs to their people, but we put that many restrictions on them—red tape, carbon credits, offsets, you name it.

The reinstatement and reversal of the onus of proof means that landowners will be considered guilty until proven innocent. It is ridiculous. Who is next? Who you will pick on next? It is the farmers this time, but it will be somebody else next time, believe you me. As the head of the Law Society explained to us at a committee hearing, if you come back from holidays and found a dead body in your back yard, you would be charged with the murder of that person and you would have to prove your innocence. The head of the Law Society, Bill Potts, said that to the committee.

Another issue is the removal of the mistake of fact defence. In Roma we heard from a farming couple who went through this because the mapping was wrong. I think it cost that farming family \$370,000 or \$350,000. As we know, you might go to court and you might win but you are never going to get all of the costs back. Who can fight the government? That is what they say out there. The government have all of this money to throw at paying legal fees, and they can make an example of anybody if they want to.

**Mr Rickuss:** Ask the McKays.

**Mr SORENSEN:** Yes, anyone like that. If you are a farmer in Queensland, you should be nervous about some of these laws. It is just ridiculous.

In terms of the offsets, I was talking to a lady recently who wanted to subdivide her property. They wanted \$927,000 to plant trees somewhere else because their small block of land is in a koala habitat area. How can anybody develop a block of land with those sorts of offsets? In Cairns, we heard from one lady who wanted to develop their farm. She quoted figures of \$3.5 million to clear about 16 hectares of land. How can anybody develop their land with those sorts of offsets? They cannot. At the end of the day, they cannot do it. I bet that, if this law gets through, at the next budget the Treasurer will say, 'We have plenty of money in the offset budget,' and they will flog a few dollars out of the offset budget to balance their budget. It is just a big money grab which they will never spend. They will stack in there and use it for something else.

**Government members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): Order! Could members on my right please allow the member for Hervey Bay to have his say?

**Mr SORENSEN:** It just goes to show how arrogant this government is. We visited a property at Clermont. What will happen when you have a fire or a flood on your property and the vegetation changes because of it? We saw a situation where a fire went through vegetation after a header that was heading grain caught on fire. It was a bad day and the fire went straight through the vegetation and killed every tree that was there. When they fly their satellites over their property and they pick up that the land has been cleared by a bushfire and they get their environmental calculator out and send the farmer a hefty fine, he will have to defend himself. These are real situations out there.

We heard firsthand how these amendments will reduce the value and the productivity of properties. This will have a devastating effect on people's livelihoods. Someone said to us—

It means more farm management and costs controlling noxious weeds, feral animals and maintaining fences, and we are still required to pay council rates on part of that land and now it is rendered useless. To date, council rates are currently level, having cost us approximately \$8,000 on the affected native vegetation land.

A lot of this land will be totally useless, yet the farmers still have to do all of the management on their properties, and for what? To pay the rates? Just to own the land? Who is going to buy it at the end of the day? You would have to have rocks in your head to buy it because it is valueless because you cannot make anything out of it. We are giving farmers a hard time.

I do not think the UDIA has realised the effect that this will have on some of the land developments around the place, especially with the environmental calculator and the financial calculator. When they get those two calculators going, the UDIA is going to find it very difficult to develop some of the land around cities, especially if there are some endangered species in the area. It is like I said earlier about the koalas, where they wanted \$927,000 to plant trees because their land was in a koala habitat area. What is the cost of the land? At the end of the day, it is going to cost a lot of people, especially young families. They will have to buy more expensive properties because of this legislation. I do not believe that the UDIA have their head around this at this point in time. It is going to make a huge difference to the price of land and land values for people who are wanting to buy their first home. It is going to make it horribly expensive.

I am not sure what the figures were that the UDIA quoted, but it was somewhere between \$60,000 and \$160,000 per lot. It all depends on where the land was. Just think of how much money young people in the future will have to fork out for all these offsets. It is going to cost, because the environmental red tape that you have to go through is going to cost the end producer. It does not cost the developer. He has to pass on those costs to somebody. Homes will get more and more expensive for future generations. I cannot support this legislation. It is a sad day for a lot of rural people.

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (3.30 pm): I rise to speak to the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. I, too, would like to thank my fellow committee members for the spirit in which we worked through this bill. I also thank our parliamentary secretariat. Their support was invaluable.

The policy objectives of this bill are to reinstate a responsible vegetation management framework to more effectively manage vegetation clearing in Queensland, thereby reducing clearing rates and consequential carbon emissions; to guard against excessive clearing of riparian vegetation, especially in the Great Barrier Reef catchments; to amend the Water Act 2000 to reinstate the application of the riverine protection permit framework to the destruction of vegetation in a watercourse, lake or spring; and to amend the Environmental Offsets Act 2014 to reinstate environmental offset requirements that ensure adequate conservation outcomes for prescribed environmental matters.

The Palaszczuk government made several 2015 election commitments to protect the Great Barrier Reef. This bill meets those commitments to the Queensland community. The Agriculture and Environment Committee travelled throughout the state to hear opinions from landholders, Indigenous groups, developers and environmentalists. We also held public hearings in Brisbane and sought departmental briefings.

The main consensus from the information gathered is that Queenslanders want to preserve the natural beauty, ecosystems of flora and fauna of our state and protect the Great Barrier Reef. The sticking point, however, is how this is best done to meet the interests of each group. The community wants to see legislation that will be constant and not changed with the changing of government. Each group wants certainty into the future so they can plan their businesses. This bill will provide that certainty.

A constant complaint from landholders is the PMAV, a map used to show the categories of land use. As a committee, we were presented with a number of maps with wrong information. The DNRM accepted that inaccuracies have occurred in the mapping. The department explained that for those with obvious errors if there is no native woody vegetation present then it does not affect their activities. There is no total prohibition in those areas.

They also advised that inaccuracies in the regulated vegetation management map or the proposed vegetation management map may be addressed through the PMAV process. DNRM stated that, if there are obvious errors—for example, pasture shown as high-value regrowth—they can be fixed for free. Applicants who disagree with the PMAV may apply, free of charge, to DNRM for an internal review of the decision. If dissatisfied with this outcome, they can apply to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal for an external review.

The sugar industry in Mackay is already in a reef catchment area. Mr Kealley, the Senior Manager of Environment and Sustainability for Canegrowers, appeared before one of our hearings. I asked if there were any ill effects on sugar farmers already farming in a reef catchment area. Mr Kealley quoted Paul Schembri—

... the drivers of the environment and economics are aligned. You cannot have a successful business or profitable business unless you manage those two things effectively. The cane industry has its Smartcane BMP, best management practice program. We now have 58 per cent of the area under cane benchmarked in that program in just over two years. I think that is a pretty good outcome. Almost 100 growers are accredited in that program which demonstrates their social silence but also productivity profitability.

The challenges we face is continued water quality and the impact on the Great Barrier Reef. Managing our vegetation is part of that, as well as managing our farm inputs and production on farm and chemicals and fertiliser use. Riparian zones are all part of our BMP program. There are things in place to manage that.

In terms of adverse effects, it comes back to how you manage the edges of your farm. If a farm is cleared it is managed for cane, but then you have your riparian areas. It is how you manage that. Some of the challenges we face coming out of these areas is managing pigs, weeds and those sorts of things. That management is for the public good. It does not necessarily get recognised in the community the benefit growers put back into the community.

The protection of regrowth vegetation along watercourses in the Burdekin, Mackay and Wet Tropics catchments have been in place since 2009. This bill will extend the protection of regrowth vegetation along watercourses in all reef catchment areas. New areas will extend to the Burnett-Mary, eastern Cape York and Fitzroy catchments. Canegrowers in the Mackay-Whitsunday area have successfully worked to protect the reef and manage their farms with high production on their land.

During our travels we heard a lot from farmers. There was a lot of emotion, and they spoke of how they care for their land. The committee also held hearings in Brisbane and had an expert briefing from eminent professors who are world leading in their area of environmental expertise. Professor Bunn, Professor Catterall, Associate Professor Maron, Professor Possingham, and Dr Reside represented a group of 28 senior environmental scientists from institutions across Queensland. They collectively represented a group of 14 professors, three ARC laureate fellows and directors of eight research institutes and centres that are focused on environmental science around terrestrial, marine and freshwater ecosystems, carbon accounting, remote sensing, conservation and natural resource management. Associate Professor Maron believed—

The aim of the Vegetation Management Act is to protect native vegetation biodiversity, manage ecosystem processes, avoid land degradation and reduce carbon emissions, but instead the current version of the act is seeing over 100,000 hectares of native ecosystems being cleared each year including endangered ecosystems. Run-off from terrestrial land uses is reducing water quality and increasing the stress on the Great Barrier Reef. Biodiversity is continuing to decline and opportunities for the recovery of threatened species and ecosystems are being foreclosed.

Professor Catterall was able to explain the use of the SLATS report. The SLATS report was widely quoted at regional hearings and at the Brisbane hearings. SLATS is the Statewide Landcover and Trees Study. Professor Catterall questioned whether the information that was being bandied about was being interpreted correctly. She said that it would appear there is an increase of about 500,000 hectares of wooded vegetation. She pointed out that this information was scientifically false information. She stated—

It does not necessarily represent any increase in the amount of wooded vegetation. The reason is that the way in which the SLATS data is obtained is through a very technical and complex process involving satellite imagery and its analysis, which is described in about 10 pages in the SLATS report in its full detail. The bottom line is that when you have some wet years you get an increase in the growth of grass and herbs and weeds as well as an increase in the foliage density of existing trees, so a little spindly tree can become a tree with lots of leaves. That gives what is essentially a false reading of increased vegetation cover.

She explained that she would need to go into a lot of data to be able to show that the SLATS data could not be argued as an increase in vegetation.

Many landowners argued a case that it is better to have grass instead of trees to reduce erosion and soil run-off. I want to quote from Professor Bunn, whom the member for Gladstone also spoke about. Professor Bunn stated—

... in nearly every catchment that you look at, whether it is the Gulf of Carpentaria or from the Normanby all the way down to Brisbane, most of the sediment that gets into the channel, channel network and then out into the coastal zone comes from the channel network ... 'most' is greater than 90-95 per cent of the sediment load.

...

... when you clear vegetation you increase amount of surface run-off that gets concentrated down into the channel network and increase the power of the stream to cause erosion. That is exacerbated when the vegetation clearing goes into those gully networks and the riparian zones as well. Not only do you decrease what they call the roughness, the slowing down of water in those landscapes, but you also reduce the resistance of the ground to erosion from that event. Those two things work in unison to create a greater erosion potential. What we see then is the generation of increased channel erosion, further concentration of the flow into the channel network ... slope gullies or alluvial gullies. Certainly when you look at where the big erosion problems are across the Queensland coast, these are usually in places where those events, gullying and channel erosion, have occurred.

The silt build-up downstream equates with the first of the land clearing and the first recorded major floods. The solution is to regrow and revegetate sensitive areas.

Farmers at our public forums in the region spoke about their care of the land and the clearing of paddocks for pastures and cropping. The landowners kept some clumps of trees and kept some paddocks virtually uncleared. Landholders in general have put a lot of effort into keeping their properties as much as possible clear of weeds and in good condition for cropping and grazing. The farmers were very emotional about their farms and they have poured a lot of their life into them.

Dr Reside reported that we also need to look after the biodiversity of our ecosystems. Queensland has the highest number of endemic animals of any state in Australia—animals found nowhere else on the planet. We are still finding and describing new species every year, species that have never been seen before. These are geckos, frogs, skinks and lizards. Many of these are in North Queensland. This remarkable biodiversity is under threat from tree clearing. Dr Reside did not say to stop clearing all land but to regulate to protect our biodiversity. Some of these species are found only on private land. We need intact ecosystems—the systems that are most likely to withstand climate change. Intact ecosystems are essential.

Professor Possingham left the committee with some thoughts. He said—

It is a fact that extinction rates are 100 to 1,000 times the background rate. Triple-bottom-line sustainable eco-systems would mean that ultimately everything should be stable—the economy, social issues and the environment—and they should all be going flat or up ... At the moment we are losing on the biodiversity side. The fact is that we are losing species at 100 to 1,000 times the normal historical rates.

Land clearing is the biggest threat to rural communities and a big threat to agricultural profitability. This bill gives balance to our sustainable ecosystems and agriculture. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (3.44 pm): I rise this afternoon to support the shadow minister and oppose the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. At the outset, I encourage constituents of the electorate of Glass House, and Queenslanders in general, who want to gain a full understanding of this piece of legislation and how it gets the balance wrong to read two things. The first is the speech delivered last night by the shadow minister, the member for Hinchinbrook, Andrew Cripps MP. The second is the committee's report, and particularly the statement of reservation put in by the deputy chair, the member for Gympie, Tony Perrett MP, which starts on

page 61 of the report. Unfortunately, the 10 minutes that I have been allotted this afternoon do not allow me to do similar justice to this bill. Instead I will focus on some of the aspects that relate particularly to the Glass House electorate.

Let me say that I support environmental protection. I am very proud of the legacy of the three years I served this state as the minister for environment. I am proud of the purchase of land that we made, particularly that Labor is now claiming credit for, in aggregating protected area estates around the state. I am proud of the land we bought in South-East Queensland to rehabilitate for koalas and also protect other endangered species and to get the best outcome possible in those blocks of land. I spoke previously of one of those—the 126 hectares at Crohamhurst, which I visited Monday week ago, which we are protecting for not only koalas but also Coxen's fig parrot, glossy black cockatoos and the Richmond birdwing butterfly. I am proud of the fact that a couple of weeks ago I was able to stand with two constituents and celebrate 10 years of the Glass House Mountains being listed on the national Heritage Register.

I say to the people of Glass House, to the people in this chamber and to the people in all of Queensland that I want to eat Australian beef—no, Queensland beef. I want to use Queensland sugar in my cooking. I want to eat Queensland strawberries and Queensland pineapples. As our population grows, I do not want to import more and more foodstuffs. I want us to be able to feed ourselves, and we can. We can if we have sensible, well-balanced vegetation management laws. If we do not, if we go over the top and get the balance wrong, we will cruel our agricultural industry and end up importing produce from nations with far poorer environmental standards. I would prefer the sensible clearing of regrowth in Queensland to allow for sugar production, rather than the hypocrisy of buying sugar from Brazil produced through clear-felling of virgin, remnant Amazonian rainforest.

Sensible, well-balanced vegetation management laws are what the LNP achieved when in government. All remnant vegetation remained protected unless it was subject to a small list of exemptions, such as building a house, or was assessed and granted a permit such as for high-value agriculture or for routine management under a self-assessable code. A key element of our reforms was the new permit for high-value agriculture to sustainably grow Queensland's agricultural sector. I stress that there was a robust process established, including detailed soil and financial assessments, to ensure we got those permits right. The LNP did deregulate regrowth vegetation that had previously been cleared on freehold land but did not include leasehold land, which covers two-thirds of Queensland.

Having established that, let me turn to the Palaszczuk Labor government's bill and raise some very serious and very genuine concerns. There is a suggestion, first of all, that this is somehow a reinstatement of vegetation laws; it is not. The fact that these are being applied retrospectively is equally reprehensible. For the first time ever, regrowth on the Burnett-Mary catchment is being included, so people who live in Kenilworth, Kidaman Creek, Obi Obi, Mapleton, Flaxton, Montville, Maleny, North Maleny, Balmoral Ridge, Witta, Reesville, Curramore, Booroobin, Bellthorpe, Elaman Creek, Harper Creek, Conondale and Cambroon are going to wake up tomorrow, if this legislation passes, and discover a whole world of green hurt being imposed by this legislation.

If we turn to page 5 of the explanatory notes we look at the concerns around the reverse onus of proof. It is as simple as this: you are not innocent until proven guilty, but rather you are guilty until proven innocent. Then there is new section 128 and the proposed regulated vegetation management maps. This is where I get particularly worked up because in 2009 the then Labor government did it to my constituents when they included macadamia farms as critical koala habitat, and they have done it again. Let me refer to just two examples. The first is Mrs Jennifer Kellie of Woodford. A *Caboolture News* article of 1 June this year states—

Jennifer Kellie was set to lose control of up to 80% of her property under proposed vegetation protection laws map—a map the government has admitted was wrong.

...

... Ms Kellie wouldn't be able to slash the grass she had been cutting on a weekly basis for years, because it would be classed as protected.

'You can't mow under a tree if you follow the new law to the letter. If I chop trees I can get fined on my own property that I've worked a lifetime for,' she said.

'I specifically purchased the land because it had no protection act on it ... it was an ex-dairy farm, so it was all pasture and I mow it like a golf course—it's the best maintained yard in the area.

If honourable members want proof of that, I table the photographs of her property that show very clearly a white picket fence and mown grass lawns.

*Tabled paper:* Email, dated 26 May 2016, from Ms Jennifer Kellie to the Glass House electorate office providing images of a property at Woodford [1317].

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr POWELL:** Certainly no koalas. Furthermore, if members look they will see that some 80 per cent of her property is now covered by these outrageous maps. It gets better because we can then talk about Mr Damien Mee of Mount Mee. He acknowledges that on his property he has a beautiful part of remnant vegetation but the rest of his property was cleared and indeed was an avocado orchard. What do we now have? Apart from a small cut-out area, the property is covered under these 'do not clear' regrowth zones. An avocado orchard is being classed as native regrowth and cannot be cleared. How can it be so wrong? It is through haste to appease the political deals that this Palaszczuk Labor government has established with the Greens. If honourable members want proof of that, they can look at the support the Palaszczuk Labor government is getting. First of all there was the WWF, who put out outrageous statements that under the LNP government we cleared vast amounts of koala habitat that was protected. Even the Deputy Premier had to be careful which words she chose because the truth is that under the LNP the koala was protected as vulnerable federally but not so outside of South-East Queensland at the state level. That means there is no such thing as an essential habitat map for koalas in the state of Queensland outside of South-East Queensland. Therefore, those claims by the WWF are nothing more than fabrication.

Then we have the SLATS report. Again, I refer my constituents to the contribution of the member for Hinchinbrook. I add that Labor and the Greens consistently and conveniently ignore key facts that are spelt out in the SLATS report. In 2012-13 more than 260,000 hectares of vegetation was cleared in Queensland under laws put in place by the Bligh Labor government. The Palaszczuk Labor government is now seeking to restore these very same rules, claiming they will protect the Great Barrier Reef.

The Deputy Premier and the Minister for Environment have also been caught out fudging the figures to suit their political agenda. For example, they deliberately failed to differentiate fodder harvesting in severely drought-affected areas and selective thinning to maintain tree densities from other vegetation management activities, instead classifying them all as broadscale clearing. That is inappropriate and inaccurate; it is completely and utterly false. Importantly, 62 per cent of all vegetation management activities in 2014-15 involved regrowth on previously cleared land. The report makes it clear that the total area of vegetation management represents just 0.15 per cent of the entire area of Queensland.

Let's take the hysteria out of this debate. Let's take the mistruths, the half-truths and the false reporting out of this debate. Let's debate this legislation on its merits. Let's debate it on fact. When I do that, I cannot support it. I am for the environment. I am for Queensland farmers. I am for balance. The LNP achieved that in 2013. This legislation does not.

 **Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (3.54 pm): I rise to support the comments made by my colleague the shadow minister for natural resources and member for Hinchinbrook, to add my concerns and to outline the reasons I will not be supporting this bill. The legislation that was introduced by the LNP in 2013 was common-sense, workable legislation that allowed farmers to manage regrowth and develop and increase productivity of their farming operations. Is it any wonder that there are 689 official submissions to the committee that considered this bill? Aside from the obvious issues and ramifications that this bill has for our hardworking primary producers—and they have been well elaborated on by those on this side of the House—I want to concentrate my contribution to the debate on two particular elements that fall under my responsibilities as shadow Attorney-General and shadow minister for justice and planning.

Firstly, in that regard I draw the attention of the House to the commentary of the Queensland Law Society on this bill. Some would ask: what does the Queensland Law Society have to do with managing agricultural land? Of course, there are provisions in this bill that rightly and deeply offend their well-grounded belief in protecting the rights and liberties of individuals particularly to natural justice. We have glossed over this a number of times. The issues in this bill that relate to the reverse onus of proof and the mistake of fact issues are fundamental issues that go to the rights of Queenslanders who do not happen to live close to where we are standing now. I think the genesis of these—and this really gets me riled—is in the explanatory notes. The starting point for this comes under the heading 'Estimated cost for government implementation'. There is a little hidden paragraph that states—

There is likely to be a reduction in compliance costs by reinstating reverse onus of proof and removing mistake of fact defence provisions.

That boils down to this: the government is saying that if people live so far from Brisbane that it is going to be a bit hard to capture the evidence and really get what is necessary to put before a court to convict them, they will be second-rate citizens in this state. Instead of going out, getting the evidence and proving the case, we know how we will be able to get convictions: we will turn it around the other way. They are going to be found guilty unless they can prove themselves innocent in a court. What is more, if they have made an honest mistake of fact in what they have done, that no longer will be a defence. These are things that are founded in our Criminal Code and have been since Sir Samuel Griffith wrote it over a century ago. They are important factors within our justice system and the way in which we approach guilt and innocence in our society.

How would honourable members feel if the onus was on them to prove their innocence rather than on the state to prove their guilt? That is a fundamental part of our justice system. How would they feel if they had honestly made a mistake of fact but that was going to be of no assistance to them in the court because the law took away their right to rely on that? I am sure that if the same rules were being introduced to a bit of law that happened to apply to South Brisbane and Councillor Sri got on the phone to the Deputy Premier about that and said, 'This is a bit tough. I don't want my people to be subjected to this,' there would be a change of heart very rapidly. Because the people about whom we are talking live far enough away and are so far out of sight and, therefore, out of mind that their rights do not matter, they are going to find themselves on the wrong side of this legislation. It offends so many principles. It offends the fact that the state should uphold this status as a model litigant. It does not do that if it changes the rules in this way.

There is the proposed retrospective application of amendments to 17 March 2016 and they have the potential, as was pointed out in the Law Society's submission, to create significant complexity for determining clearing activities that were lawfully undertaken and landholders' ability to defend any prosecution in relation to the transition period. The committee which reviewed the bill recommended that the onus of proof provision not proceed and yet the government has refused to act on that recommendation. It is going to be interesting to see how the members for Gladstone, Mackay and Ipswich West vote on this provision because it is clear what their view is given the content of the committee's report.

The Law Society has been very strong in its comments. Some of them have been quoted today, but I want to quote them again because they are important to hear. A Queensland Law Society media release dated 3 June 2016 states—

Society president Bill Potts said the Palaszczuk Labor Government's planned changes of its Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016, introduced by Deputy Premier Jackie Trad, were unjustified and a step backwards for justice in the state.

"Queensland Law Society has a long-standing commitment to evidence-based policy, and there is simply no evidence to support the radical changes to prosecution," said Mr Potts.

...

"The government's justification for these changes is, quite frankly, feeble and is based on administrative convenience," he said.

...

"Einstein famously said that the definition of insanity was doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result; I think there might be a lesson in that."

There are significantly offensive provisions in this legislation that go to fundamental parts of our legal system, and the House should not allow those provisions to go forward.

The other provision that I want to concentrate on is that which relates to planning. Although we have—quite rightly—been looking at the significant impact that this legislation is going to have on agricultural pursuits in this state and the effect that will have on our economy and our ability to trade with the world, it is also going to have a significant effect on urban development. The Property Council of Australia put out a statement yesterday setting out the issues that are still of great concern to the property sector and, in turn, to those who want to buy a house, live in a house and live in a community that has been well recreated. The Property Council points out there are significant areas of native vegetation that were exempt from assessment prior to 17 March 2016 which will require approval to remove vegetation as they move from category X to category C and that, while some urban areas will continue to benefit from the existing exemptions within the sustainable planning regulations, concerns remain that the current exemptions exclude many urban developments in areas where the underlying zoning under the town plan is not considered as urban in a local planning scheme. The term 'significant' is proposed to be removed from the Environmental Offsets Act and this has created widespread uncertainty as, until a new guideline is developed, it is unclear what the level of impact on native vegetation is that will trigger the requirement to provide an environmental offset.

Those factors are technical ones which are of concern to the property sector, but they flow through to a very important outcome and that is that greenfields development is going to become more uncertain, more difficult and therefore more expensive. This brings us to a classic pincer movement by this government which enforces, as it should, the South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009. As I pointed out in the House the other day in another context, that document requires local governments to arrange their planning schemes so that they provide for the additional dwellings that are going to be needed within the period of that plan until 2031. In Brisbane, for example, the council has to organise things so that it provides for 156,000 extra dwellings; on the Gold Coast, 143,000 extra dwellings; on the Sunshine Coast, 98,000 extra dwellings; in the Moreton Bay region, 84,000 extra dwellings; and in Logan, 70,000 extra dwellings. Where we get to uncertainty for the industry, and therefore the community, is that whenever the development industry tries to do this by way of infill and density everyone runs for cover. We have just seen the Deputy Premier propose to call in an issue in her own electorate because of density. In his first speech to this House the member for Mount Coot-tha railed against development. We have heard the member for South Brisbane also rail against density in that part of the state where, if anywhere is able to accept density, it is there.

We have a government which runs for the hills whenever density is mentioned, and it is now trying to ensure that the other option—instead of going up, going out—will become more difficult, more uncertain and therefore more expensive, which means that our young people will not be able to buy houses. The point is that the Deputy Premier has to remember that she is the Minister for Trade and Investment and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning and she is not the minister against those four things, and yet this is exactly what the effect of this bill will be—

*(Time expired)*

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (4.04 pm): It has taken us 18 months but we have nearly finished reversing the damage done by the Newman-Nicholls government to environmental protections in Queensland—almost. Tonight we have a chance to finish that job. We can consign the Newman-Nicholls approach to our environment to the history books. We can turn back what might be the worst thing the Newman-Nicholls government did to our environment.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker made a ruling this morning with respect to how to speak to people in this chamber, and I notice that three times in his one-minute contribution the minister has deliberately disobeyed the ruling of Mr Speaker this morning.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Linard): To which ruling are you referring?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** On three occasions in the last minute the minister referred to the Newman-Nicholls government, which is in direct contradiction to Mr Speaker's ruling this morning that that ought not happen.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I have sought clarification from the Deputy Clerk. Minister, you have the call. Please do not use that title and reference.

**Dr MILES:** I know that is a big call—they did a lot of bad stuff in three years—but native forests are so important to our environment. The hundreds of thousands of hectares of clearing that they oversaw has been catastrophic. It is time for Queensland to again take its responsibility to future generations seriously. The SLATS report released a fortnight ago revealed that Queensland's current land-clearing rates are edging closer to levels seen 10 years ago, before broadscale clearing was banned in 2007. On current trends, land is being cleared at an average rate of over 800 hectares a day, or almost 300,000 hectares per year. We know that land clearing causes habitat loss and puts our native animals at risk of extinction. We are already a global extinction hotspot and the LNP has only made it worse.

Currently the Species Technical Committee is considering raising the classification for 21 species, many found in areas where clearing is occurring. That is why I have asked the Species Technical Committee to report back specifically on the impact of tree clearing on our native wildlife. We also know that this land clearing is directly linked to declining water quality in the Great Barrier Reef. Loss of trees destabilises soil, causing erosion and creating the fine sediment that runs on to the reef, smothering and killing coral. The costings report that I released on Thursday last week revealed that this is the most costly problem facing the reef. If we are going to protect the reef, we need trees in the ground holding the soil together and preventing the sediment run-off that blocks sunlight and suffocates the coral. Have no doubt: if we fail to implement this component of the reef plan, we put the reef's World

Heritage status at risk. The decision those opposite are making here is to put the reef back to where it was when they were in office: at risk of losing its World Heritage status. The ramifications of that for jobs and the Queensland economy will rest at the feet of those opposite.

There are other consequences. A little over an hour ago the *Guardian* Australia published a story in which Australia's biggest environmental philanthropist, David Thomas—a man who has donated \$30 million and bequeathed another \$30 million to environmental causes in Australia—said that the drive for private investment in reef water quality projects would be unsuccessful if these laws did not pass. Water quality is not the only issue here. We also need more trees if we are going to address the most serious long-term threat to the reef: climate change. The Great Barrier Reef has just come through the worst coral bleaching event on record due to warmer oceans. This is a wake-up call. At a time when the world has agreed to lessen emissions and keep global warming to below a two-degree increase, Queensland is clearing 360,000 Rugby League fields worth of trees every year. On the national front, we are now responsible for 90 per cent of Australia's land use emissions. It is not good enough.

The Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 will return responsible land-clearing restrictions to Queensland. It was a key commitment in our Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan, endorsed by UNESCO's World Heritage Committee, that we would strengthen vegetation management laws to protect remnant and high-value regrowth native vegetation, including in riparian zones. This is the same plan the LNP claimed credit for when the Deputy Premier and I convinced UNESCO to leave the reef on the World Heritage List. Then the member for Glass House, the member for Southern Downs and even the member for Callide were falling over each other to claim credit for the plan. In fact, I note that this morning the member for Nanango went off script and was still claiming credit for the plan. Now that it does not suit their political purposes, they have turned their backs on it.

These tree-clearing laws are an essential component of the Queensland and Australian governments' bipartisan Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan. I table a joint release issued by former minister Greg Hunt, the Deputy Premier and me emphasising that the plan itself has legal effect.

*Tabled paper.* Media release, dated 27 June 2015, from the federal Minister for the Environment, Hon. Greg Hunt, to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment, Hon. Jackie Trad, and the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef, Hon. Dr Steven Miles, regarding new Intergovernmental Agreement and The Reef 2050 Plan [1318].

We are obliged to implement these laws. If we do not and the reef is delisted, the LNP will be to blame. I guess when your environment spokesperson disputes the science of human induced climate change it is probably no surprise the LNP has such an ignorant position on this issue.

**Dr ROWAN:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find the minister's comments misleading and personally offensive.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Linard): You are not in your chair. Member for Moggill, are you in your assigned chair? You are not in the correct chair so I ask that you make your point of order from there. You have made a point of order. Minister, the member has requested that you withdraw the comment.

**Dr MILES:** I withdraw.

**Miss BARTON:** Madam Deputy Speaker, with respect to the member for Moggill, at the time the shadow minister who had carriage of the bill was not in the chamber and clearly the member for Moggill was acting in his capacity as a shadow minister and had carriage of the bill so it was entirely appropriate that he be in that chair.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I have sought advice. I have made a ruling. Thank you, member for Moggill, for complying with that. The minister has withdrawn his comment.

**Dr MILES:** In fact, I invite the member for Moggill to meet with some actual scientists to learn more about just how settled the science of climate change is.

**Dr ROWAN:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Again I find the minister misleading and I find his comments personally offensive, as I met with scientists.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member has taken offence at the comment, Minister.

**Dr MILES:** I withdraw. Those same scientists can probably tell him how his party's land-clearing laws are harming the reef. There is no doubt that global temperatures have risen dangerously in the past few years and there is no doubt that human activity is the cause. There is no doubt that broadscale land clearing is one of those human activities.

I thank the Agriculture and Environment Committee for its constructive comments and recommendations, especially on the environmental offset components of the bill. I would now like to report on how those recommendations have been implemented. These amendments were introduced to re-establish a responsible and effective offset framework that ensures unavoidable clearing of important vegetation will again require an offset to replace what is lost.

Recommendations 4 and 5 were that the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection engage with the property, resources and development sectors to assess and establish the full impact of the proposed environmental offset amendments and report back to the House. Since the bill was introduced on 17 March 2016, my department has met with the property, resources and development sectors on numerous occasions and has listened to and addressed their concerns. Contrary to their initial concerns, these amendments will not have a major impact on resource and property development including future housing affordability in South-East Queensland. Guidance criteria supporting this amendment have been drafted and circulated to key stakeholders for comment. Broader consultation on the guidelines will occur over the coming months.

One proposed change is to the threshold for requiring an offset when clearing of endangered vegetation is unavoidable, from five hectares to 0.5 hectares. This is a modest change to ensure that the thresholds at which offsets are triggered reflect the importance of the environmental values being impacted. Assessing this impact can be undertaken by examining the current extent of endangered vegetation with the Queensland Treasury's detailed modelling of future residential land supply in South-East Queensland. It indicates that this endangered vegetation occupies only two per cent, or less than 180 hectares, of the sites identified for potential future residential development within the next 10 years.

Other proposed changes involve realignment of offset triggers to the existing thresholds in the state development assessment provisions under the Planning Act which were put in place by the previous LNP government. This logical change will ensure clearing proposed above the threshold is appropriately offset.

Further, I am pleased to clarify that, with regard to the amendments enabling Commonwealth offset payments to be paid into the Queensland environmental offset account, it is not intended for this bill to allow the state to require additional payments in relation to a Commonwealth offset, as raised by both the property and resource sectors. With regard to the agricultural sector, the proposed amendments to the Environmental Offsets Act have no impact on clearing permissible under self-assessable codes and in category X areas because these activities do not trigger offsets under the act.

Finally with regard to the proposed amendments to the Environmental Offsets Act, I can also confirm that there is no retrospectivity for these amendments, and any concerns about the availability of land for offsets are also unfounded given that it is the landowner who chooses how to best use their land. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (4.16 pm): I rise to make a few brief statements about the vegetation bill. I have seen numerous vegetation bills come before the House. The problem is that it is really about ideology over fact. There is ideology on one side and fact on the other. I happen to be one of the few riparian landholders in the House. I own probably a kilometre of the Lockyer Creek bank. I table a photo that depicts a large tree collapsing into the creek and taking probably 500 tonne of silt with it. It shows that large gum trees have also gone with it.

*Tabled paper:* Photograph depicting a tree collapsed in a creek [[1319](#)].

It really is disappointing that those opposite do not realise that it is not just about trees. I have here Lockyer's log. He was the first white man up the Brisbane River. I will read from the book particularly for the member for South Brisbane to encourage her to get a bit of understanding about what things really were. For 2 October 1825 the entry states—

I ... found a large open country with scarcely any wood of consequence to impede cultivation on it—the trees chiefly blue gums, being at least an acre or more apart and more ornamental than otherwise. The natives had lately set fire to the long grass, and the new grass was just above ground making this plain appear like a bowling-green; the soil rich beyond any idea, and from its being easily flooded, it would be particularly adapted for the cultivation of rice, sugar cane, cotton and coffee. I saw plenty of kangaroo and wild turkies.—After traversing this fine piece of land, which was at least 6 to 7000 acres in extent, I returned to our encampment.

That was at the end of the Lockyer Valley. That is what those opposite do not get.

**Mr Springborg** interjected.

**Mr RICKUSS:** As the member for Southern Downs said, Cunningham and Leichhardt observed the same. The Indigenous did manage the country with fire. What sorts of comments are we hearing from people like the Cape York Land Council's Ritchie Ah Mat? He says, 'This mob don't get it. This mob just don't get it.' Mark O'Brien—a real right-wing conservative from Charleville—does not support it. Those opposite just do not get the fact that it is not just all about trees. They just do not get it. I also table a page of a book that I would encourage everyone on that side of the House to read, *The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia*.

*Tabled paper:* Front cover of a book titled 'The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines made Australia' by Bill Gammage [\[1320\]](#).

I urge those opposite to read a bit. I know the minister did have that book, but I do not know whether or not he has returned it to the Parliamentary Library yet. Let us face it: this is straight out of the log from Lockyer, who was the first white person to see some of the country. Let us be realistic here. It is not about trees per se. It is about how they and remnant vegetation are managed. They are a renewable resource. To give the House a classic example, Fraser Island was sustainably logged for over 100 years and it is still regarded as pristine World Heritage rainforest. This is what this mob opposite do not get. They just do not get it. They talk about agriculture and the fact that we are going to feed Asia with our exports. We cannot do it without land, and that is the problem. The Deputy Premier was aghast at the IFED proposal right from when it was put forward by one of her own colleagues, and I think it was De Lacy. She was aghast at it in 2010, 2011 and 2012. She really struggled with the concept that the water from that area would run into the gulf and not on into the Great Barrier Reef. That was a foreign concept to her at one stage I thought.

It really is disappointing that those opposite do not seem to realise that this can be managed. This is about regrowth. If you talk to older people, since the Second World War fire has not been used anywhere near as extensively as it used to be because once dozers and machinery of that size came in they could be controlled. Fire is a lot harder to control. You would go to burn off a 1,000 acre block and you would burn off 10,000 acres and have all of the neighbours wanting to shoot you. What has happened is we have not controlled the regrowth and we have not managed the vegetation anywhere near as much. The Indigenous were doing a better job with two fire sticks than we are doing with D9 dozers. That is the problem: those opposite just will not accept that trees are not the solution to some of these problems. We have to manage some of the remnant vegetation and we have to manage some of the regrowth, but let the land's custodians do their job properly. That is what it is about. Let the custodians of the land do their job. Those opposite are trying to impoverish the Indigenous in Cape York for the rest of their lives and keep them downtrodden. It is just a real shame.

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algerst—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (4.22 pm): I rise to support the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Labor went to the last election with a commitment to reinstate a responsible vegetation management framework. I am pleased that my Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation, DSITI, is supporting the delivery of that commitment by providing the best available science. Our government is having to take this course of action because of the LNP's irresponsible, reckless and destructive approach to climate change and land clearing. It was the former LNP government that wound back Labor's nation-leading vegetation management laws. Under the watch of those opposite, land-clearing rates doubled and those responsible for this outcome should be ashamed of the negative impact on our state's environment that resulted.

The Statewide Landcover and Trees Study, SLATS, report for 2014-15 was recently published by DSITI and it shows that our state's reputation for land management continues to be seriously damaged by the actions of the former LNP government. Using Landsat satellite imagery, the report shows that total annual woody vegetation clearing rates are similar to the previous years at 296,000 hectares per year, with 91 per cent of the cleared land converted to pasture. While much of this clearing was undertaken under permit and exemption, the overall clearing rate continues to be high and incidents of unexplained clearing are still occurring. Just to illustrate how high the clearing rate is, the 2014-15 woody vegetation clearing rate is nearly four times the 2009-10 clearing rate of 78,378 hectares. In comparison, the New South Wales woody vegetation rates measured with SPOT satellite imagery show 23,000 hectares had been cleared of woody vegetation for pasture, crops and thinning over the three years to June 2013. I know that the way these figures are collected differ between our states, but it demonstrates the scale of clearing in Queensland by comparison. What is also alarming is that about one-third of clearing in Queensland occurred in Great Barrier Reef catchments—about 108,000 hectares in 2014-15. That is an increase of 46 per cent since 2011-12.

A further concern outlined in the report is the increased rate of the clearing of remnant woody vegetation, with an additional 14,000 hectares per year cleared as compared to the 2013-14 study period. The implications of all of this are far reaching. They include loss of native species, including threatened species, as well as contributing to higher greenhouse gas emissions and increased risk to land condition in reef catchments. As well as monitoring woody vegetation clearing, the department's vegetation and remote-sensing scientists have been working collaboratively with the Department of Natural Resources and Mines to improve the accuracy of mapping used in vegetation management. Mapping is central to the efficient application of Queensland's vegetation management framework. DSITI supports vegetation management mapping through its existing programs for regional ecosystem and wetland mapping, as well as data and advice underpinning the protection of essential habitats for threatened species. More recently, DNRM has utilised DSITI's mapping expertise to improve the accuracy of mapping for proposed category C areas on freehold and Indigenous tenures, removing areas that do not contain high-value regrowth.

Self-assessable codes can enable efficient vegetation management regulation. However, an independent review of Queensland's codes undertaken in 2015 by environmental consultants Cardo Pty Ltd identified some significant issues. DSITI scientists have been assisting DNRM in its review of the self-assessable codes to ensure that they are consistent with current science and with the purpose of the Vegetation Management Act 1999. Further, the department's scientists have been collaborating with their colleagues in DNRM by providing scientific information to support briefings to the parliamentary Agriculture and Environment Committee; developing and operationalising a new satellite based early detection system to proactively detect and reduce unexplained land clearing; extending and refining the classification and mapping of Queensland's regional ecosystems which are a foundation for our environmental management and regulation across the state; and providing technology to deliver maps and supporting information online, including property specific vegetation management maps delivered to thousands of Queenslanders per month. As a government we rely on these scientific activities to provide evidence that helps to inform sound policy decisions.

Labor recognised in 1999 that tree-clearing rates in Queensland were unacceptable, so we took action that produced real results. We are once again trying to take action on this issue on behalf of all Queenslanders, not just for today but of course for generations ahead because that is what Labor governments do. I put on record my sincere gratitude to the incredible scientists that we have in DSITI, across the state government and across our state. We have some incredible scientists who have dedicated their lives to ensuring that good science informs good policy. I put on record my absolute gratitude for their long hours and hard work. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (4.28 pm): I rise to address the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. Queensland farmers take a responsible attitude and approach to vegetation management. In fact, Queensland farmers can be trusted to be some of our best environmentalists, given the right assistance and the appropriate incentives within a sustainable legislative framework. It can be said that the responsible care and due diligence with respect to the land of which farmers are custodians means that it is in the interests of such farmers to ensure the protection and long-term sustainability of such lands that they own and manage. The Palaszczuk Labor government has no shame in demonising farmers and graziers to acquiesce to an extreme left-wing Greens agenda.

Both Queensland and Australia are facing a crisis of sensible and reasonable policy discussion as a result of the centre left's baseless rhetoric and Marxist driven agendas. The centre left abuses those who want to discuss sensible immigration policies. The centre left accuses such people of being bigots or racists. If you support women who choose to stay at home to look after children, the centre left brands you sexist. If you support sensible vegetation management strategies and sustainable farming practices, the centre left brands you an environmental vandal. This is outrageous and scandalous. The sinister elements of the Palaszczuk Labor government seek to silence, isolate and destroy, often in collaboration with blatantly biased, left-wing journalists of some media outlets whose analysis is insidiously manipulative and professionally corrupted to meet their predetermined outcome. That is certainly the case with respect to this legislation.

The environment minister and the energy minister believe that climate change is exclusively, only, 100 per cent due to mankind and human endeavours. As such, they want to stop all progress, lock up everything and return us to prehistoric times. Their agenda is fanciful and unrealistic. Whilst humans have contributed to and do contribute to climate change and this must be managed, the LNP will always achieve a balance between progress and sound environmental protections. For the environment minister to suggest that the LNP members do not care about water quality, catchment

areas and the Great Barrier Reef is truly shameful. We may not agree on the best way to do it, but I know that everyone in this House cares about the future of the Great Barrier Reef. The ongoing politicisation of the Great Barrier Reef by Labor is also shameful. In 2013, the LNP, when in government, introduced sensible vegetation management laws and practices. Graziers and farmers were able to maintain fence lines and pull fodder to feed stock.

With respect to vegetation management, food production and supply and our state's agricultural exports will be affected by Labor's draconian proposals. The Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef, the Hon. Steven Miles MP, has no credibility on this issue. The member for Mount Coot-tha's misleading statements on land-clearing rates are aimed at ensuring that he continues to receive Greens preferences for his electorate at the next state election. The minister's selective use of data and manipulation of the recent SLATS report for political purposes is extraordinary, biased and unfair.

Labor's proposed legislation will destroy jobs, destroy rural families, increase suicide rates in rural communities and destroy our agricultural sector. Labor's laws will put the economic prosperity of Queensland at risk. As such, the myopic approach being taken by the Palaszczuk Labor government will have significant rural and economic ramifications for many communities across Queensland.

As I have said, this legislation is about protecting green preference deals in the future as this shambolic Labor government lurches from one crisis to the next, asleep at the wheel, with no credible vision or plan for economic growth, wealth creation, or infrastructure investment in our great state of Queensland. We are seeing a vindictive Labor government that is beholden to unions, the Greens and other third parties with an ideologically, unbalanced and sinister agenda that fails to recognise and manage our agricultural sector within a framework of environmental sustainability. This Labor government should hang its head in shame. It is no wonder that the Tree of Knowledge is dead, rotten to the core as the Labor Party has abandoned its rural roots in Barcaldine, in Western Queensland and right across Queensland.

The Deputy Premier's allegations that the Commonwealth government's recent actions in Queensland with respect to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 are related to vegetation clearing in Queensland are false and untrue. The Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 impugns many property rights and the significant scope and magnitude of the bill will have many long-term unintended ramifications and consequences far beyond the Labor government's intent. Labor's legislative agenda is a direct attack on individual property rights and an attack on rural and regional communities. Basic civil liberties are denied in this legislation and the included reversal of onus of proof provisions are unfair and unjust.

Under this legislation, landowners will no longer be able to apply for high-value agricultural permits that allow for the clearing of vegetation for cropping and horticulture. That means that cattle growers will not be able to clear new land to grow hay and feedstock, particularly in times of drought. The Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 will damage rural investment, devalue property prices and reduce agricultural productivity. As I have said, this legislation is aimed at demonising farmers and is being implemented as a result of a backroom deal between the Deputy Premier and the environment minister with the Greens to secure their preferences not only at the last state election but also at the next state election.

This bill should not be supported as it has the potential to detrimentally affect food security, house and land prices in Queensland, as well as urban development. That was clearly articulated in the submissions to the bill by the Queensland Resources Council and the Property Council of Australia. As the Liberal National Party shadow minister for natural resources and mines, Andrew Cripps MP, has articulated on many occasions, this legislation is the most anti farmer, anti agriculture and anti rural document ever presented to the Queensland parliament. However, this legislation is also significantly anti development and will impact on all home owners in Queensland.

I have grave concerns about the impacts of this legislation with respect to environmental offsets. The significant impact test is currently understood and, whilst not absolutely perfect in all senses, at least it is understood and used in various pieces of environmental legislation. The Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 has reached beyond just amending the Vegetation Management Act to revising the Environmental Offsets Act 2014. By removing the materiality test, by removing the term 'significant' from the legislation, it will mean that every action and every impact will need to be offset. As such, not only the resources sector but also many other vital industries will be adversely affected. Housing affordability, particularly in urban and regional Queensland, will also be negatively impacted.

There is the real risk of the duplication of environmental offset requirements for development projects at both state and Commonwealth levels. As such, Queensland's state based environmental offsets framework could become a tax by stealth and be a metrics driven process as opposed to being outcomes focused for the environment. How these proposed changes will be practically implemented, let alone monitored, has to be asked. Perhaps the Palaszczuk Labor government may be angling for another sneaky union jobs plan. There is no doubt in my mind that ordinary homebuyers in my electorate of Moggill and across Queensland will be the ultimate bearers of higher costs associated with the impact of the changes in this legislation on the Environmental Offsets Act 2014.

I urge all members of this House to vote against Labor's proposed vegetation management legislation as well as the Palaszczuk Labor government's Marxist ideological and socialist political agenda. What is needed in Queensland is a government that can balance competing interests, a government that can drive and create economic prosperity and a government that can create real jobs whilst also delivering sustainable environmental protection. This is what the Liberal National Party will always be able to achieve when in government, unlike those members opposite. I do not support this bill and, in doing so, I encourage all members to read the LNP's statement of reservation with respect to this legislation.

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (4.37 pm): I rise to speak in support of the government's Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 and congratulate the Deputy Premier and the Palaszczuk government for bringing this bill forward for debate. This bill is vital to protect Queensland's greatest natural asset, the Great Barrier Reef, to tackle climate change, to stop the destruction of our precious old growth forests, to prevent soil erosion and to improve reef water quality. I could not think of better reasons that this bill should be passed.

This bill delivers on a key election commitment—let me say that again, a key election commitment; I campaigned very heavily on this issue in my electorate—to reinstate the vegetation management laws that were repealed by the Newman government in 2013. Let every member in this House be very clear: it was a big issue in my electorate at the last election. The bill also reintroduces riverine protection permits to guard against excessive clearing of riparian vegetation.

I want to quote a couple of people. Firstly Robert Krulwich, who writes—

If our future is to continuously degrade our planet, lose plant after plant, animal after animal, forgetting what we once enjoyed, adjusting to lesser circumstances, never shouting, "That's It!"—always making do,

I do not think that that is much of a future. That is exactly the situation that the previous government's laws were going to put us in. I also quote Jared Diamond, who wrote the bestselling book *Collapse*. He talks about Easter Island being the clearest example of a society that destroyed itself, committing what he terms ecocide by clearing all trees until the whole forest was gone. He warns that Easter Island's fate could one day be our own. How much have we not learnt in regard to the practices of the past?

Let us not forget what the LNP's changes to vegetation management laws did. They allowed broadscale clearing for high-value and irrigated high-value agricultural development. An increase of an incredible amount of hectares of tree clearing happened during their time.

**An honourable member:** How many?

**Ms GRACE:** 300,000 hectares.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Ms GRACE:** A year!

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Millar): Order! Members, I would like to hear the minister speak. Thank you.

**Ms GRACE:** They removed high-value regrowth vegetation clearing protections on freehold and Indigenous land and removed compliance and evidentiary provisions that were inconsistent with fundamental legislative principles. These changes have taken their toll on Queensland's environment which is why urgent action is required. Importantly, our proposed measures also support the joint state and Commonwealth government Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan. Protecting the reef should be beyond politics, yet hardly any speeches that we have heard in this House talk about the reef. All those opposite talk about are different rights; not one of them mentions the reef. We can rely on the member for Moggill to espouse every rhetoric in the book when he gets up to speak. Those opposite are willing to risk the health of this spectacular marine paradise. Sadly, the environment always comes last under the LNP.

Make no mistake, without the passage of this important legislation the Great Barrier Reef is at risk of being listed as in danger by UNESCO. That is what we are leaving our kids and our kids' kids. It is a disgrace. It is a completely unacceptable outcome for all Queenslanders to put our environmental heritage at risk, along with thousands of tourism jobs. Such an outcome would also pose unacceptable risks to regional economies that rely on reef tourism.

I want to address one of the major misconceptions being promulgated by those opposite about this bill. The suggestion that the bill goes far above and beyond previous legislative restrictions on land clearing could not be further from the truth. In fact, the proposed reforms will reinstate generally the same regulations that were in place prior to the LNP's reckless changes in 2013 after they said there would not be any. Back in 2004 these regulations were supported by the member for Caloundra, the member for Currumbin and the member for Surfers Paradise. In fact, the member for Surfers Paradise was particularly glowing in his praise for the Beattie government's vegetation management legislation which subsequently became law until it was repealed by those opposite. Speaking of the proposed laws in this chamber back in April 2004 the member for Surfers Paradise said—

This is a policy that ensures the sustainability of the environment. In doing so, the sustainability of industry is also assured and western Queensland industrial centres can continue to function. Lack of support for this bill would not strike that same balance. While industry would thrive even more so, the benefit to industry would be disproportionate compared with the detriment to the environment.

The member for Surfers Paradise then went on to boast about the then Queensland Liberal Party being a party that looks at the big picture. Haven't things changed! The very same members, once fulsome in their praise of strong vegetation management legislation, now cynically oppose our sensible and workable reforms, reforms Queenslanders voted for at the state election. I call that hypocrisy. I also want to make it clear that our bill does not impose a blanket ban on land clearing in Queensland. The self-assessable codes will be retained which will still allow clearing to occur for a range of purposes, including managing fodder, thinning of thickened regrowth vegetation and control of weeds and pests. All this doom and gloom that is painted by those opposite could not be further from the truth. They are exaggerating what this bill will do. When they come into this House, they do not believe the science and they do not rely on facts—it is all doom and gloom.

Our proposed reforms have strong support from key environmental stakeholders, including Dr Tim Seelig from the Queensland Conservation Council. Dr Seelig has written to me expressing the council's support for the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. He says the land-clearing legislation represents 'a sensible, moderate approach to regulating the clearing of native woodlands in Queensland'. He also notes that previous times of stronger laws have seen better times for farm jobs and recent times of weaker laws have seen poorer agricultural employment. This is despite the job scare campaign being run on this issue by those opposite. I have seen them running around the state causing hysteria, exaggerating the issue, trying to rally the troops based on nothing more than false pretences and not concentrating on the facts. This is in contrast to the rapid rise in clearing rates Queensland witnessed as a result of changes to the Vegetation Management Act made by the LNP.

This bill is about the long-term health of Queensland's environment. It is about the future and about what we pass on to the next generation of Queenslanders. The bill gives us a chance to right the wrongs of the past and to build a brighter future for all Queenslanders. In addition to reducing run-off of pollutants and sediments into watercourses which flow into the Great Barrier Reef, our bill will also provide benefits for biodiversity and carbon emissions. These are the outcomes Queenslanders voted for at the state election. They expect their elected representatives to deliver them. Let me tell members a secret: every Queenslanders wants to protect the Great Barrier Reef. Not one of them wants to see anything that will harm the jewel in the crown of this state. I urge all members to think about the future of the reef, to think about the future of our climate and, most importantly of all, to think about the future of their children when they vote on this bill. I am very proud to support this bill. I commend the bill to the House and I urge everyone to do likewise.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (4.47 pm): I oppose this bill because it is fundamentally unfair: unfair to landholders, unfair to farmers and unfair to all people who live in areas where economic opportunity depends on the land. I table a petition from landholders in the Beaudesert electorate which would have been part of the petition of Mr Cripps except for a mishap with Australia Post along the way.

*Tabled paper:* Nonconforming petition regarding the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill [[1321](#)].

Imagine for a moment you are driving a car along a road; you see a speed limit sign with the number 100 on it so you drive at a speed of 100 kilometres per hour thinking, quite reasonably, that the speed limit on the road is 100 kilometres per hour. However, some way down the road, and without any

notice of a change in the speed limit, you are then pulled over by a police officer and given a fine for driving over the speed limit even though you never went over 100 kilometres per hour. The police officer informs you that the speed limit is actually 80 kilometres per hour, that Main Roads had put up the wrong sign and that you were receiving a fine for speeding even though you never had any idea or any chance of having an idea that you were breaking the speed limit.

This example demonstrates why this bill is so unfair. There are dozens of stories about vegetation management maps produced by the department being simply incorrect and wrong. If a landholder obtains such a map, sees that part of his property can have vegetation management because it is free of restrictions on the map, but the department subsequently discovers that its maps were wrong and the vegetation management took place on the land in an area that was restricted by the new map put out by the department, the landholder is defenceless. Like the motorist in the example earlier who had no idea that the speed limit was 80 kilometres per hour because there were 100 kilometres per hour signs up on the road, it is unfair in the most basic sense for a landholder to be deprived of a defence for mistakes in departmental maps.

The legislation specifically removes this defence, which is available to everyone else charged with offences under Queensland laws, including members of criminal bikie gangs and other criminals. It is true to say that under this bill criminals have more rights in court than do our farmers. It is why the Queensland Law Society has objected to these laws which, in addition, are taking away the defence I spoke about earlier—that is, the mistake of fact defence. It also reverses the onus of proof. If the government thinks that landholders and farmers have broken the law, those landholders and farmers will need to prove their innocence; the government will not have to prove their guilt. This fundamental reversal of how our justice system works is targeted squarely at farmers and landholders, and it is impossible not to think that this is just a political get square aimed at farmers in rural and regional areas. The Deputy Premier compares this to the system for red light cameras and speed cameras. Let us be honest about this: the fines for running a red light or speeding are nothing compared to the fines and other consequences under the Vegetation Management Act. In fact, that comparison trotted out by the Deputy Premier and her friends in the green movement is an insult to all our farmers and landholders across Queensland.

My electorate of Beaudesert has a very rich history of agriculture. We have been feeding the people of Queensland for over 100 years. This has been achieved through the clearing of land for farms. In fact, in Australia everywhere that produces food does so on land that has been cleared. This legislation reinstates heavy restrictions on the management of regrowth vegetation, meaning that when trees or saplings spring back up on land that was cleared generations ago, it is possible that that vegetation may not be removed in order to begin primary production again. That is an unfair element of the bill and an important issue for a couple of reasons.

Firstly, in some areas good productive land can fall into disuse for a long period, perhaps for economic reasons such as times being tough in the market or due to drought. Should that good land be locked up forever and not be used again? This is happening at a time when people in the cities of Australia are seeking more and more to buy food that is locally produced. They are seeking fresh, clean, Australian produce that you get from places such as my electorate—dairy and all types of food. We should not be putting in place a system that will lock up huge parcels of good agricultural land that has regrowth vegetation on it. That is unfair, but it is also simply bad policy.

The second reason why this is important and unfair is that it will impose huge costs on landholders who will have to keep their land cleared at all times to ensure that regrowth does not occur so that vegetation cannot be considered regrowth, meaning that the land would not be able to be used productively. We all know that the costs imposed on farmers such as water, electricity and other costs already make it difficult for many to make a living. Many simply will not be able to afford to undertake the constant management of land to keep it in production. That is unfair and it is also bad policy from a terrible government that has absolutely no idea how to support agriculture in Queensland.

Do members know what sector has been growing in recent times in Queensland, as many other sectors have gone backwards? Agriculture, especially agricultural exports. A lower dollar, combined with reasonable rainfalls and good markets in many crops have driven agriculture forward, especially in the export sector. However, this bill is a kick in the guts for agriculture and for those farmers who for generations have consistently underwritten the economic growth and future of our great state. It is time for Labor to stop kicking the farmers in the guts. It is time to stop the unfairness. It is time for this government to support fair laws for farmers, because with no farmers there is no food.

Earlier I mentioned the fact that vegetation maps are notoriously unreliable and wrong. They include references to types of vegetation that landholders and locals in particular areas know to be wrong. That notorious unreliability leads to great uncertainty about what activities people can and cannot carry out on their land. Uncertainty leads to a lack of confidence. I have seen the human side of that lack of confidence.

Shortly after this bill was introduced—shamefully brought before the parliament in the dead of night on a Thursday—reintroducing retrospective restrictions, combined with an attempt by the Deputy Premier to see this legislation rammed through parliament in less than a month, with precious little consultation, I was visited in my electorate office by a young woman from Beaudesert. She and her husband owned about 52 acres of land just south of Beaudesert. When I saw her, she was shattered. It was obvious that she had been very upset prior to attending my office and the reasons why became clear when she told me her story. She and her husband had purchased their block about three years ago. They knew that it had some remnant vegetation that they would not be able to remove. However, the vegetation map for their property—that is, prior to the implementation of this bill—showed that a good deal of their property was free of restrictions. The vegetation was regrowth because the land was previously farmed. It surrounded their house. However, now vegetation maps of restrictions cover their entire block. The young lady had big plans for her property. They wanted to improve the quality of vegetation on it and remove the dangerous trees. Now they can do nothing with it. They are absolutely gutted. Their dreams have been shattered.

Along with the dreams of that couple, the vegetation management bill before us today shatters the hopes for growth in agriculture in many parts of this state. In the south-east, the issue I see is primarily about regrowth restrictions. However, when we look to the north of the state, where economic development opportunities of the past have not been afforded to those communities, hopes and aspirations for economic growth are being shattered. The bill also adds uncertainty to all development. If people are uncertain, they just stop doing things, which is what the greens want. If an activity is regulated, for months or even years the government can tie people up in approving activities on their land, imposing compliance and regulatory costs on people who are required to procure expensive reports and to jump through the government's regulatory hoops. It is as if the government does not trust farmers to look after their land. In fact, people will often simply throw their hands up in the air, despairing at being put through the wringer again and again and again, and they will stop working their country. That is unfair and it is bad policy to impose such tight regulations that can absolutely deprive people of their livelihoods.

This bill is unfair and this bill is bad policy. It is bad policy because it will drive up the cost of housing for all Queenslanders. The Property Council has been quite vocal in opposing these laws. AgForce has been very vocal in opposing these laws. I commend them, especially President Grant Maudsley, whom I understand may be watching the debate from the gallery, for leading the campaign against these laws. The parliament should reject these laws. This bill is bad policy and, fundamentally, the bill is unfair for farmers, it is unfair for landholders and it is unfair for all Queenslanders. It should be rejected.

 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (4.56 pm): I rise to speak in wholehearted support of the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. This bill will reinstate the vegetation management laws repealed by the Newman government in 2013 and reintroduce riverine protection permits to guard against excessive clearing of riparian vegetation. This is a reinstatement bill and, unfortunately, the Palaszczuk government has had a lot of reinstating to do since we won government 18 months ago, because the Newman LNP government wreaked havoc on Queensland and Queenslanders wanted us to fix it. We had to reinstate workers' rights. We had to reinstate transparency and accountability in our political processes. We had to reinstate doctor, nurse and teacher positions. We had to reinstate a fair and equitable TAFE system. We had to reinstate the rights of our community organisations to advocate on behalf of their constituents. We had to reinstate the trust that Queenslanders should rightly have in the government of the day that their opinions will be respected.

We have had to reinstate many things and now we come to this bill, which will allow us to reinstate tree-clearing laws that had been in place for over 13 years before Campbell Newman and the LNP came to power. Those laws were in place until Campbell Newman and Tim Nicholls passed legislation that has compromised Australia's ability to meet its commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. That legislation has meant that

Queensland now generates some 36 million tonnes of carbon emissions every year by land clearing alone. It has meant that Queensland contributes 90 per cent of Australia's carbon emissions from land clearing. It has allowed an area the size of the Ekka to be cleared every 40 minutes.

That legislation has allowed 300,000 hectares annually to be cleared, with over one-third of it in Great Barrier Reef catchments. In fact, let us be clear: in Queensland, land-clearing rates doubled under the Newman LNP government. Therein lies the tragedy, in this case at least, that is behind the concept of reinstatement, because while it means that you are putting things back in place by no means does it enable you to put the genie back in the bottle and undo the damage that has been done. It is just like we cannot give back the jobs of the 14,000 people whom the LNP sacked when they first came to government. Neither can we undo the damage that has been done by this large-scale clearing that has been trashing Queensland since the LNP brought in their legislation in 2013.

What is this damage? Let us talk about the Great Barrier Reef. I know those opposite do not want to talk about the Great Barrier Reef but we need to do it. I do not need to give detail about what the Great Barrier Reef is except to say that it is an incredible natural wonder which supports 69,000 jobs and generates nearly \$6 billion for the economy. It is absolutely precious to all of us. It is part of our DNA in Queensland and we are its stewards.

Under the LNP government's legislation we have not been good and faithful stewards. Under that legislation land clearing in the Great Barrier Reef catchments increased by 46 per cent to 108,000 hectares annually. The irrefutable science shows us that the level of tree clearing is damaging the Great Barrier Reef and that without decisive action on tree clearing and climate change the entire Great Barrier Reef faces decimation by the end of this century.

We know that we actually cannot restore the damage that has been done to the Great Barrier Reef. All of us and every generation after us is going to have to wear that. It is what happens from now on that is critical. That is why I am entreating those opposite to think about what they are doing and the legacy that they are leaving for future generations of Queenslanders.

In my support for this bill I mean no disrespect to the agricultural sector at all. Labor has always had a commitment to agriculture and this is not an attack on farmers. We believe there are real opportunities for government and the agriculture sector to work together to tackle climate change. I believe there are many good examples of that. This is not about taking sides—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Millar): Members, I would like to hear the member speak.

**Ms FARMER:** This is not about taking sides with the Greens or with the farmers. The LNP is entitled to defend their constituents, but what they are ignoring is the fact that the current legislation is wreaking irreparable damage. They simply cannot look at the cold hard facts of this matter and just pretend that they are going to go away. They cannot read the extraordinary document titled 'Scientists declaration: Accelerating forest, woodland and grassland destruction in Australia' from the Society for Conservation Biology Oceania where 254 scientists are calling on Queensland to do the right thing and not do this. They are entreating us to pass this legislation. They simply cannot look at the facts they present and the myriad other facts that have been talked about on this side of the House and pretend that it is all going to go away. They also cannot pretend that this problem does not exist by trying to deflect attention from it with accusations of a conspiracy or a secret deal or something between Labor and the Greens and the Wilderness Society or some other environmental group.

This legislation will single-handedly cause UNESCO to question our management of the reef and once again consider listing it as in danger. If UNESCO declared the reef is in poor health, it would not only reflect an environmental catastrophe, but also have a significant impact on our economy and our tourism industry. These are the people who talk about how much they care about regional jobs. That is how much they care about it.

In this debate we have heard lots of talk. We have heard many members ask the Deputy Premier to come out with them to their patch. The member for Nanango wanted the Deputy Premier to come to this, that and the other place. The member for Hinchinbrook wanted the Deputy Premier to come out to a whole lot of places starting with 'B'. I have to say that it was a quite clever alliteration.

Let me give the member for Hinchinbrook some alliteration of my own. I want the member for Nanango and the member for Hinchinbrook to come out to these places. I want them to go the bowls clubs in Norman Park and Camp Hill. I want them to go doorknocking in Barton Road, Hawthorne. I want them to go to the students at Balmoral State High School, to the parishioners of the Bulimba Uniting Church, to the hardworking members of Beelalong community farm. I want them to explain to

those people in my electorate how they can so resolutely decide to trash the Great Barrier Reef. The members opposite can hear firsthand from inner-city people about whose views they are so disparaging. Earlier this year when we were debating the timing of this legislation the member for Callide talked about those people who 'sit over there in the West End cafes'. Those in the LNP should know how much people in my electorate care about the environment, about the Great Barrier Reef and about climate change. I do not need to ask the members for Clayfield or Indooroopilly, who are conspicuously absent from the speaking list, what their constituents would think—

**Miss BARTON:** I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. It is a longstanding convention of this House that one's absence from either the chamber or potentially a speaking list is not referenced when making a contribution.

**Ms FARMER:** I withdraw. The members for Mansfield and Mount Ommaney have certainly got up to defend the destruction of the Great Barrier Reef. I presume that they are the sacrificial lambs from the LNP so they can say that some city members have actually talked about the bill and are defending the reef. I would like to hear from the member for Surfers Paradise, who made a very spirited speech—and the member for Brisbane Central referred to this earlier—in favour of Labor legislation when it was introduced. He said—

It has been my view that this policy is the best policy for a sustainable triple bottom line in Queensland ...

He said that the Liberal Party put it up. He said that they were the main proponents. He continued—

It may very well in part be due to the surprising success of the Liberal Party in that by-election—

He refers there to the then Surfers Paradise by-election. He went on to say—and I know the member for Brisbane Central talked about this this morning—that he thinks it is pretty good for the National Party constituency. He said—

This is a policy that ensures the sustainability of the environment. In doing so, the sustainability of industry is also assured and western Queensland industrial centres can continue to function.

Labor went to the last election promising to take strong action to help save the Great Barrier Reef. That included reducing Queensland's carbon emissions by introducing nation-leading tree-clearing laws. I went door to door to talk to people about it. I am very clear about what they thought which is why I am supporting this bill tonight. I can tell the LNP right now that whichever candidate is endorsed for them in my electorate if they vote against this bill tonight I will make absolutely sure that every single voter in the Bulimba electorate understands who they stand for. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (5.07 pm): There we have it—the stark difference between the LNP and the Labor Party. With all the bitumen driveways and concrete floors we wonder why they would talk about vegetation management.

While this government is pushing ahead with its draconian laws, I want to give real examples in my own electorate of issues that were permitted under changes to the VMA in 2013, things that had been prevented previously by their out-of-touch laws, including by the agriculture minister who blindly followed the Deputy Premier and her disciples. There are real consequences and real people are destroyed.

A local pineapple farmer in Moore Park was desperate to clear a small section of vegetation. The property was already intersected by irrigation channels. He has now expanded his production, providing jobs and opportunities. A pineapple farmer in Bucca wanted to expand his operations. This man had a contract with Golden Circle. In 2013 they tripled production and he can now utilise his large property, keeping his family together on the same farm.

A sensible boundary alignment in Agnes Water was permitted which allowed someone to put a trigger referral in that was previously banned to allow a landowner to better use his lots. Labor's laws that they claim were wonderful and fine and they claimed allowed Queensland to prosper were a basket case. They want us to go back, as we have just heard from those opposite, to more bureaucratic nonsense.

In Childers, a rural residential estate was not progressing under those opposite; now it is a successful development providing jobs and opportunity. The property was zoned 'rural residential'. Under the Isis Shire Planning Scheme, it had vegetation management status. Remnant vegetation was of least concern. The overall development had to be cut back from 119 lots to 42 lots under those opposite. Thank goodness common sense prevailed in 2013.

Another issue was where remapping was done which introduces or reclassifies remnant vegetation over properties without any notification to the landowner. We have been seeing that happen since March under this government. This also happened with the Parklands estate near Bundaberg, but fortunately the mapping was able to be proven incorrect at a monetary and time cost to the owner which is obviously of no concern to those opposite.

Vegetation offsets are too complicated, onerous and expensive for landowners and they did not achieve the purpose of the VMA. They were more often than not piecemeal and relatively insignificant. Definitions need to be watertight and not open to interpretation. The current framework and legislation, which is being ignored, allows clearing to happen for irrigated high-value agriculture. The process to actually get a permit under the current legislation is very rigorous. Land suitability has to be demonstrated. Where NRM has soil mapping, this is used. Elsewhere, land suitability studies have to be carried out in accordance with land evaluation frameworks. This is very intensive and specialist. It is very complicated. Only suitable land can be applied to be cleared. It is not a case of just clear anywhere.

The clearing occurring is not broadscale. In my region, the areas are relatively small, ranging from two hectares. For smaller businesses, two hectares is worthwhile being able to clear so they can expand their business. The media has focused on the broadscale clearing that has happened predominantly out west and up north; it has not happened around my area. Clearing for high-value agriculture in my region has been minimal. It is all in coastal bioregions, whereas the media has been focusing on activities on one farm in the cape. The media has reported land clearing comparisons which have been misleading. Land clearing has been shown to occur only on a broadscale level. This is certainly not the case in the South-East Queensland bioregion, where it is smaller operators trying to improve their businesses. They value the land and understand the environmental processes fully.

Unfortunately, the Palaszczuk Labor government and its ministers are again using the issue of vegetation clearing to shore up support from radical green sections. As part of this move, Labor is seeking to demonise Queensland farmers. Recently, Labor released reports that would have readers believe that Queensland farmlands were being stripped bare of tree cover and that Queensland farmers were responsible for massive increases in carbon dioxide releases, when the facts show otherwise. Respected independent agricultural and environmental scientist Dr Burrows has issued documents to politicians of all parties in an attempt to counter this misinformation. I would have thought that those opposite would have read those documents. In short, Dr Burrows says Queensland is in fact a 'carbon sink' resulting from woody vegetation thickening that has been occurring for decades on previously cleared land.

The Palaszczuk Labor government needs to stop demonising farmers and stick to the facts. Please be assured that the LNP is committed to protecting Queensland's environment through policies based on sound, scientific data. The LNP is also committed to retaining existing vegetation management regulations which have proved effective in allowing Queensland farmers to produce high-quality food and fibres for domestic and export markets.

Labor's environment minister, Steven Miles, has again tried to deliberately mislead Queenslanders on vegetation management rates in Queensland. Minister Miles issued a media statement on 29 February, deliberately designed to distort the truth. Minister Miles claimed land-clearing rates had dropped to approximately 80,000 hectares under Labor. In fact, the last time rates of woody vegetation clearing in Queensland occurred at that rate—around 78,000 hectares—was in 2009-10. They then steadily increased under Labor's rule.

The Palaszczuk Labor government has no shame in demonising farmers and graziers to please their extreme green and preferences friends. Steven Miles, the minister, has no credibility on these issues and is intent on holding Queensland agriculture back, with the help of the Queensland agriculture minister. We use the terms 'extreme green groups' or 'extreme ideology' but no longer is there a mask of secrecy or faceless members. It is now clear that the new evil face of extreme green policies is sitting opposite, with this minister, the agriculture minister and the Deputy Premier.

For those with investments or who live in regional Queensland, we have seen consistent media reports calling out this Palaszczuk government as 'deceitful and dishonest' when using vegetation data to justify this obscene bill. The government's own SLATS report has said that, while clearing rates increased to 296,000 hectares in 2013-14, the amount of tree coverage still increased by 500,000 hectares. Under our laws, graziers were able to carry out day-to-day vegetation management practices to maintain fence lines, pull fodder to feed stock and thin vegetation to maintain pastures and ground cover. Our laws provided people like the farmers in my region with a framework to manage their farms and their businesses in a fair and common-sense way. The last thing you need is to have the right to

effectively manage your properties, your farm businesses, trashed by a minister only interested in green grandstanding. If Labor has its way, Queensland farmers will be regulated out of existence and unable to grow food production and income for the state. The bill that the Palaszczuk Labor government has brought to the state parliament will cost Queensland jobs and stifle much needed growth in our agriculture sector.

The Property Council of Australia, Queensland's second largest employer, has also joined the many stakeholders condemning this bill. To add to the insult, no consultation has been undertaken. One of the numerous serious concerns raised by the Property Council is the significant additional costs of thousands of dollars that is expected on all new housing as a result of the new environmental offsets requirements. Queensland deserves better than a vindictive government indebted to third parties with a short-sighted, one-track agenda.

The LNP is committed to protecting landholders' rights, protecting your rights, protecting your right to farm, and all members should support this policy objective as Labor distorts the truth on vegetation management. I thank AgForce and all of the stakeholders who joined the many concerned constituents of the Bundaberg-Burnett region who have shown strong support in speaking out on these issues.

There are many memorable and important statements that will resonate with the people of Bundaberg and Queensland after the well-orchestrated campaign of many interested stakeholders. One was from the fishing sector with a placard that read, 'The Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries wouldn't know the difference between a mullet and a mudflap.' I wonder how we can still vote for these draconian laws. In closing, another message that was heard right across Queensland was the message, 'Don't Trad on me.'

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (5.15 pm): I am standing here not only as the Minister for Tourism but as the member for Ashgrove. The people of Ashgrove certainly got trod on by the Newman government. Campbell Newman knows full well how the people of Ashgrove feel about the backward step that the LNP is taking when it comes to protecting vegetation management in this state. That is why he went to the election in 2012 assuring all of the people in Ashgrove that the LNP would be retaining the vegetation management legislation. That is what Campbell Newman said to the people of Ashgrove in 2012. That is what he said in 2012. Within one month they had already started playing around with the legislation. First of all, as I understand it, they started winding back the penalties. After that, they came into this House and changed the law. I am doing the work that Campbell Newman promised the people of Ashgrove he would do—once again cleaning up his work.

**Ms Trad:** Someone has to.

**Ms JONES:** That is right. We all know that the National Party rolled him. Quite frankly, you thought you were not electable, honourable member for Callide, and that you had to outsource your leadership. Then you got a leader in. He made promises. Once again, I take this opportunity to say that you are solely responsible for using the people—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Miss Barton): Minister—

**Ms JONES:** The honourable member is solely responsible for using the people of Ashgrove as a stepping stone for his own political career. I will always be here to remind you of that.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Minister, I would again remind you to direct your comments through the chair.

**Ms JONES:** Thank you, Madam Deputy—what is she? Madam Speaker or Deputy Speaker?

**An opposition member:** You are so disrespectful.

**Ms JONES:** What is disrespectful is to promise to the people of Ashgrove, and I quote, 'When it comes to vegetation management, the LNP will retain the legislation of the Labor government.' That is what you said. Then you walked into this parliament and you ripped that up. You ripped up the promise just like you did to all the people in Ashgrove who lost their jobs—the teachers, the nurses, the doctors, everyone to whom the LNP promised their jobs would be safe and then you turned around you broke that promise. That is exactly why we are standing here this afternoon debating the vegetation management bill again, because the LNP promised one thing to get themselves elected and then did another thing when they got into office. That was the hallmark of the 2½-year experiment of the Newman-Nicholls-Seeney government that we saw for 2½ years.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Minister, I would remind you that the Speaker made a ruling earlier in the day with respect to how previous governments should be referenced.

**Ms JONES:** I am so sorry, Madam Deputy Speaker. I do understand that they spoke to the Speaker because they do not want to be associated with Campbell Newman anymore, but I am here to remind you that you are very much associated with Campbell Newman. We have seen his failure as a leader play out here today. It is shameful that we are having to stand here tonight debating this bill again after you promised to do one thing and you broke your promise in government.

We know that the people in my community, and indeed in all communities across Queensland, understand that the Great Barrier Reef is the lifeblood for thousands and thousands of people who work in the tourism industry. In actual fact, before I came here today I met with the mayor of the Whitsundays where they were talking about the way that they are going to grow jobs is by having a greater investment in tourism. We are not going to see more jobs in tourism without a Great Barrier Reef. I would like to refer to the shadow minister for tourism, the member for—

**Ms Trad:** Burnett?

**Ms JONES:** No, the member for Beaudesert.

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Ms JONES:** Well, he has not asked me a question. It is hard to know who he is. He has been there for 99 days and he has not said anything. The member for Beaudesert did stand up today and give his first speech as the shadow minister for tourism, and his speech was about how he wants to destroy the Great Barrier Reef. What a great shadow tourism minister! He talked about how he would go for a drive. Imagine this drive. Imagine driving along the Whitsundays with your children in the car and saying, 'That is where the Great Barrier Reef used to be.' That is exactly what those opposite are signing up for. The fact that they come in here and put politics ahead of protecting a world icon that we are custodians of is shameful not only for every Queenslanders but also for Australia as a whole. I pray to God that we do not come back here at the end of the year having to explain—

**Mr Springborg:** Why did you want to widow Dory by dumping dredge spoil on Nemo?

**Ms JONES:** I am not taking your interjections, honourable member for Southern Downs.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Miss Barton): Order! Honourable members, the Minister for Education has the call.

**Ms JONES:** It will be a shame if by the end of this year we are standing in this parliament having to talk about this again because the Great Barrier Reef is listed as endangered by the international community. I will not, as the tourism minister in Queensland, sit down quietly and allow that to happen. We are elected to represent not only our own generation and the interests of our own constituencies but also those of future generations. That is exactly what this debate is about tonight. Because we believe in science, as clearly articulated in the Deputy Premier's contribution to this debate, because we understand that the greatest threat to the Great Barrier Reef is climate change and run-off from agricultural practices, we will always fight to protect the Great Barrier Reef and the 69,000 jobs and \$6 billion industry that relies on the reef.

As I was saying, there is a clear contrast between this government's commitment to protecting the Great Barrier Reef for future generations and those politicians opposite who are yelling out that they are happy to put their own political interests above future generations being able to see this world icon. They are happy to put their own interests above even UNESCO. They are saying to the international community that we are going to have the Great Barrier Reef on the endangered list by the end of the year. I challenge those opposite to go to all of those tourism industries up and down the Queensland coastline and say that they came into this parliament and voted against protecting the Great Barrier Reef. What will they say when they look those people in the eye? I can see the member for Keppel nodding. She, like the member for Barron River, understands that tourism is the lifeblood for her community going forward.

In contrast to the cuts by the LNP, we are seeing real jobs growth in tourism. We are doing everything we possibly can to achieve that. I do not want to be a mother who has to look my child in the eye and say that I was part of a Queensland parliament that had the opportunity to protect the Great Barrier Reef and we squibbed it.

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Ms JONES:** I take the interjection from the Deputy Premier. The children of Currumbin wrote to us today saying, 'Please save the Great Barrier Reef.' That is what happened today. Let us protect the Great Barrier Reef for future generations. I will cop all the yelling and abuse from those blokes opposite if it means that I will be on the record standing strongly for the Great Barrier Reef. I know how this plays out. This plays out with you denying that you had any role—

**Mr McEachan:** Who is 'you'?

**Ms JONES:** Those opposite; the LNP.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Honourable members, I am struggling to hear the minister. The minister has the call.

**Ms Trad:** There are 57 seconds left; well done!

**Ms JONES:** In conclusion, with the 57 seconds that I have left, I will reiterate: the LNP has played politics with this issue for years. Campbell Newman went to the 2012 election letterboxing everyone in Ashgrove saying that he was not going to change vegetation management laws in this state only to come into this parliament and tear that up. Now we have a federal Liberal government that is out of step with their backward LNP colleagues in Queensland who are happy to sell the Great Barrier Reef off for their own political interests. They are happy to have the international community put scorn on our state because this Queensland parliament will relegate the Great Barrier Reef to endangered status on the UN list.

**Mr Stewart:** Shameful.

**Ms JONES:** I take the interjection from the member for Townsville; it is shameful, but it will not be because of me.

*(Time expired)*

**Ms JONES:** Thanks for the protection.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Minister, I assume that that was not intended as a reflection on the chair.

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (5.25 pm): I am delighted to rise to speak after hearing from the Minister for Tourism and having to put up with that rot in relation to this debate. I would like to point out that there are members on this side of the chamber who are also passionate about the environment. The members opposite do not have a mortgage on that issue. I am very proud to have been part of the former LNP government that—

**Ms Trad:** Sold out the Great Barrier Reef.

**Mr COSTIGAN:**—got the balance right. I take the interjection from the Deputy Premier. Let us have a little history lesson. We heard that the Mayor of Whitsunday, Andrew Willcox, was here at Parliament House today with ministers of the Crown having meetings. I have no problem with that, but the Mayor of Whitsunday knows full well that the former Labor government wanted to dump 38 million cubic metres of dredge spoil into the Coral Sea.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Miss Barton): Order! I appreciate that this is a very passionate debate; however, we also need to be cognisant that Hansard need to have the ability to hear and understand what members are saying.

**Mr COSTIGAN:** There is no doubt that dumping 38 million cubic metres of dredge spoil was Labor's plan. It was a crazy plan. Have a look at the environmentally friendly members opposite, the recycled rot. The member for Ashgrove talked about children who follow public policy debates and what is happening in the parliament. I say to the children of Queensland—not just the children of the Whitsundays in my electorate—it is the former Labor government that wanted to dump dredge spoil on Nemo, Dory, Crush the Turtle; you name it. They are the ones who gave children nightmares. They are the ones who wanted to jeopardise the tourism industry that I am very passionate about.

I have always said that we can have the best of both worlds. I salute my fellow North Queenslander, the member for Hinchinbrook, on delivering those common-sense reforms back in 2013. Members opposite do not have a mortgage on the environment. A few weeks ago on National Tree Day I was proud to be planting trees in Cannon Valley with Whitsunday Catchment Landcare, with people like Jim Dickens.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Honourable members! Again, I am struggling to hear the member for Whitsunday.

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Deputy Premier, whilst I am addressing the House I would ask that you please not interject. The member for Whitsunday has the call.

**Mr COSTIGAN:** I was pleased to have been there a few weeks ago at Cannon Valley with the likes of Jim Dickens from Whitsunday Catchment Landcare planting trees on National Tree Day because I reiterate: members opposite do not have a mortgage on the environment. There are people on the conservative side of politics who have made an enormous contribution to making our world a better place from an environmental point of view. I think of the legendary Queensland senator who many moons ago was known as the cycling senator from Mackay, and I refer to Ian Wood, who was responsible for delivering the Eungella National Park, which takes up a huge chunk of the hinterland Mackay-Whitsunday region. I will be speaking about the impacts of Labor's so-called reforms to the constituents whom I represent but also the wider region in a moment.

I have had enough of the demonisation of farmers and graziers. It has to stop. Our farmers have already been facing the impacts of one of the worst droughts on record, and the last thing they need is further setbacks brought about by a Palaszczuk Labor government that is basically going down that path of political payback. That is what this is all about—doing the deals and following through in office. The LNP put in place fair, workable laws that had the balance right. Labor's own statistics show that, under the LNP's laws, there was 30 per cent less land cleared than the average over the last 28 years. For the majority of the last 28 years, which party has been running Queensland into the ground? Labor. That is who. They have been on the treasury benches and scaremongering and we have seen the tree-clearing rates. Labor's scaremongering on the Great Barrier Reef, to be blunt, is unwarranted and the level of clearing has been static over the last three years. I want to thank all those people who provided submissions to the Agriculture and Environment Committee.

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Premier would like to have a conversation, they can do so outside, not across the table.

**Mr COSTIGAN:** I want to thank all those people who provided submissions to the Agriculture and Environment Committee. That committee travelled right around Queensland to various centres—to Cairns, Townsville, Roma, Charleville, Emerald and of course Brisbane. It was great to see people like Ron Bahnisch making an appearance in Emerald, as well as Peter Spies in Cairns. He does a great job for AgForce. It was pleasing to be alongside Peter last month to discuss the issues at hand. I also salute him on his work in supporting those rallies outside the office of the member for Mulgrave, the Treasurer of Queensland, and putting the heat on the Treasurer.

This debate has got people fired up. These people are salt of the earth people, peaceful people, hardworking people. To get them fired up, the members opposite must be doing something wrong. I salute Peter Spies. As he told the Atherton *Tablelander* on 28 July last year—

Most farmers are environmentalists. It is in our interest to protect the land for future generations of farmers. It is a misconception that trees protect the soil.

Mr Spies went on to say—

As an ex-soil conservation and land management officer with the departments of natural resources and primary industries, I can tell you this is garbage. Grass protects the soil. Ground cover, whether native, improved pasture or crop stubble, saves the soil. Trees compete for light and moisture and you will not see grass growing in a rainforest.

I think that says it all. He is a man who has been around and knows what he is talking about. I also want to thank those submitters from closer to my part of the world including David Wright from Mount Spencer Pastoral Company. Mount Spencer has been in the family hands since 1911. The Wright family and the Costigans go back a long, long time. Mr Wright was a practising solicitor until some years ago. It is a family that is very passionate about agriculture. We always see them supporting the beef dinner at Mackay every year, coinciding with the Mackay Show. As I recall, after the death of my great-great-grandfather, David's great-grandfather was the solicitor at hand. There is a lot of history there.

David Wright bleeds agriculture. His submission was pretty clear-cut in relation to these issues because he has had enough of this. He said in his submission to the committee—

The removal of High Value Agriculture ... and irrigated HVA ... affects farmers in regions differently, with those in the north particularly hard hit. Throughout northern Queensland energy and protein become limiting in cattle diets during the dry season and this can cause farmers issues with stock survival and welfare through years of drought. HVA and IHVA permits provide farmers in northern Queensland with the opportunity to grow fodder and grain for supplementing in the dry season and finishing off stock for market.

We hear from members opposite, but why don't they come up and see the real world with real people? Forget about Bonn. From my point of view, what about from Bowen to Broadsound and Bloomsbury to the Belyando? They are real people with real issues. I have to say this rot that is being brought by the Palaszczuk Labor government is in stark contrast to what we see from our federal colleagues in Canberra looking to develop Northern Australia. How can this government reconcile what they are trying to do and what we are trying to do at a federal level in opening up the north?

Mr Wright would like to develop 500 acres for production on Mount Spencer Station. If he can do that, he will put more cane through the rollers at the Mackay Sugar mills, whether it is at Marian or Racecourse, and that is good news for mill workers. Most mill workers would expect that mob over there to stand up for them. Guess what: they are missing in action. We are passionate about growing agriculture and the government members are not. If these laws are passed, that 500 acres that has been earmarked will not grow sugar cane. Mr Wright has 85,000 acres on Mount Spencer Station. This is the same station where they see koalas when they go mustering. If you go up the road to Homevale National Park—which was gazetted by this mob—you will not see koalas there because they have been burnt out by bushfires because that is the way they manage their national parks. It is despicable. If government members care about the environment, how can they possibly condone that sort of rot?

I will say to the member for Mirani in this debate here tonight that we have heard something today that perhaps gives the people of Central Queensland some heart. I know he worked on the land before going into the coalmining industry. If he is fair dinkum in this debate, there is only one outcome here. How can he possibly look people off the land in the eye at the Jolly Collier Hotel in Dysart or at the Nebo Hotel and say, 'I did the right thing'? I am hoping the member for Mirani comes good here and tells the Bolsheviks in Brisbane to go you know where.

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (5.36 pm): I rise to make my contribution on the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. I will state at the beginning that I am strongly opposed to the amendments proposed in this bill. I have spent my life on the land, working to sustainably develop and manage a property that had been heavily timbered and originally unproductive. To witness firsthand the vast change once managed clearing had taken place, enabling the land to be highly productive whilst remaining sustainable, was remarkable. I think I have a much broader knowledge and understanding of the implications of this legislation than any who will speak to this bill from the government benches.

This legislation will place an immediate limit on the area of land that can be developed for not only high-value agricultural cropping and horticultural purposes but also any expansion of the grazing industry. The reasons given for this draconian legislation are ill-conceived, misguided, ideological and, most importantly, purely politically motivated. The proposed legislation will do more to destroy confidence in our regional communities than any other single piece of previous legislation that I can think of. It will not only destroy confidence; it will destroy development and ambition. For our future farmers to remain on the land and provide the food and fibre requirements for our increasing world population, they must have the ability to expand and develop new land. This bill completely removes that ability.

The bill needs to be seen for what it is—a deliberate attempt to secure Green preferences and save the seats of members such as the member for South Brisbane and the member for Mount Coot-tha. This was evidenced in the manner that the bill was rushed into the House after the increase in the Brisbane inner-city Green vote in the recent local government elections—where the Labor Party lost a ward to the Greens and were outpolled by the Greens in other wards. The Labor Party needed to address the bleeding of Green votes, so they went to their old favourites—tree clearing and farmer bashing. The haste at which the Labor Party introduced this bill into the House was amazing, not to mention the lack of scrutiny, in an attempt to pass this legislation as quickly as possible.

The bill was introduced into the parliament on 17 March 2016 with the committee to finalise the report by 15 April 2016. This was a period of only 19 working days which included Easter and the school holidays. The bill was intended to be rushed through parliament with as little scrutiny as possible. This was a totally unrealistic time frame for such an important piece of legislation concerning all of regional

Queensland. The opposition moved an extension of the reporting date to 30 June 2016 which, after lengthy debate, was passed. The opposition were well aware of the need for scrutiny of this legislation due to the so-called consultation that took place during the formation of the bill.

The Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, Dr Anthony Lynham, who originally had responsibility for the bill, had stated on several occasions both in the House and to the media that there would be extensive consultation for all stakeholders. This was to be achieved through a series of roundtable meetings. Whilst organisations such as AgForce, the Queensland Farmers' Federation and the resource sector were willing to attend these round tables and negotiate in good faith, the green lobby groups and activists undermined the process and refused to engage in any meaningful discussion. Due to the actions and extreme green views of green groups like the Wilderness Society, the process was unworkable. The extreme greens had succeeded in undermining the process and, as a result, passage of the bill was then transferred from Minister Lynham to Deputy Premier Jackie Trad. Minister Lynham had been sidelined and removed from carriage of his own bill because of the demands of the greens. With this change, all pretext of wider consultation went out the window and groups like the Wilderness Society got the result they were looking for.

The Deputy Premier had delivered the bill the greens were demanding; they are happy. As the committee found during the hearings and submissions, nobody else is—not AgForce, not QFF, the Queensland Resources Council, Cape York Land Council, the Property Council of Australia, Property Rights Australia, the Canegrowers or the Queensland Law Society—and the list goes on. Let me outline some of the reasons why these industry and agricultural groups are strongly opposed to the extreme measures contained in this bill.

There appears to be a view by those opposite and the green movement that farmers just go out and engage in widescale land clearing just for the sake of clearing. This shows a total lack of understanding and absolute ignorance about how expensive and time-consuming tree clearing is. Any land clearing undertaken by a landowner is only done after careful consideration and is targeted at the sustainability and increased productivity of that land. This is particularly so in areas that can be developed for high-value agricultural purposes, an option that is removed under this proposed bill. AgForce stated—

Queensland agriculture has the potential to grow from \$17 billion to \$30 billion over the next decade, delivering thousands of jobs and opportunities in our regions. To grow we need sensible—

and workable—

land management laws.

The proposed changes in this bill are anything but sensible or workable. Removing the ability to clear land for high-value agricultural purposes or irrigated high-value agricultural production will stifle rural community development, accelerate the urban drift of young rural people to the city and stagnate local job creation. The Cape York Land Council Aboriginal Corporation stated—

Aboriginal people on Cape York are the Queenslanders most in need to actually use their land for economic development so that they can break free of welfare dependence ...

How does this Palaszczuk government expect to develop the north? This bill will do exactly the opposite.

The proposed ban on clearing and managing regrowth under the changes to category C high-value regrowth will see a thickening of regrowth and a loss of ground cover, resulting in a decrease in grass production and difficulties with stock mustering. This will have a direct negative impact on property values with that loss being worn by the landholder.

Many submitters expressed concern over the inaccuracy of the vegetation mapping, which raises one of the most horrendous aspects of this bill: the reverse onus of proof and the mistake of fact defence. The Queensland Law Society was particularly scathing in their assessment of this aspect of the legislation. This will mean that any landholder under investigation for suspected breaches of the act will be deemed guilty until proven innocent. This is not the case if under investigation for murder, rape or any other criminal activity. The Queensland Law Society stated—

We regard this as a step backwards for justice in this state.

...

... administrative convenience ... does not justify erosion of the principle that a person is presumed innocent of an offence until they are proven guilty.

They added—

... there is no justifiable reason or proof provided to reverse the onus of proof ...

No matter how honourable members look at this legislation, it is a horrendous attack on the rights and profitability of our farming sector. No other sector of our community has had to endure an attack on their livelihood or basic legal rights such as the one the farming sector is facing right at this moment. No member of this parliament who votes to support this bill can ever say again that they support the agricultural sector or the rural communities that rely on the industry. I oppose this bill and encourage all members to vote this dictatorial legislation down.

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (5.45 pm): The current high native vegetation clearing rate of about 296,000 hectares per year cannot be ignored. To put it simply, Labor succeeded in driving down clearing rates. History will not be kind to the LNP's policy. Even the federal Liberal and National Parties have stepped in to restrict their clearing policies.

Ignoring high clearing rates is costly. It impacts the Great Barrier Reef and, with it, Australia's international reputation as a manager of one of the world's iconic natural assets, a natural asset worth more than \$5 billion a year to Australia's economy. Without definitive action to address this clearing rate, Queensland's carbon emissions will continue to climb and impact on Australia's ability to meet international climate change objectives.

Leadership is necessary to safeguard a prosperous and sustainable future for Queensland, and that is what the Palaszczuk government is doing. I support farmers. I support regional communities and resources centres, but I do not trust or support the legislation of those opposite.

The issue was taken to the 2015 election. Last year I ran a consultation process, led by the Professor of Natural Resources from James Cook University, that was sincere and continued well past the round table. Nothing is more clear than our commitment in all areas of policy to consultation, and I continue to consult with stakeholders on other issues. I made this clear to the member for Hinchinbrook. He seems to struggle to comprehend how consultation works because he has never bothered to do it. He does not understand the process—not one iota. One must question whether his neurons do connect to his synapses.

I would now like to turn the attention of honourable members to the report on the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill tabled by the Agriculture and Environment Committee on 30 June 2016. The committee provided five recommendations, the first seeking further information on self-assessable vegetation clearing codes. The Palaszczuk government explicitly committed at the last election to retaining the self-assessable codes as long as they provided appropriate protection, and that is what we are delivering.

In September 2015 my Department of Natural Resources and Mines commissioned an independent review of the self-assessable codes to evaluate whether the codes are practical and effective and meet the objectives of the Vegetation Management Act. The independent review showed that the codes required changes to ensure they were consistent with available scientific literature, provide adequate protection to prevent land degradation and maintain biodiversity. In late 2015 the findings of the review were presented to peak stakeholders with an opportunity to provide feedback on the findings. Nine submissions on the findings were received.

Since 2015 my department has considered the submissions from peak bodies and consulted with other government agencies such as the Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to address the issues that the independent review raised and identify possible changes. The codes will be progressively reviewed and released during the remainder of 2016. Each revised code will be available on the Queensland government's Get involved website for public submissions. Further information on the review and the self-assessable codes that are out for consultation is available on my department's website.

Peak stakeholder groups will be, and have been, provided with an opportunity to be briefed before each revised code is released. Consultation on the self-assessable codes officially commenced when the consultation draft of the revised thinning code was released last month. Twenty-eight public submissions were received. Consultation on a revised fodder harvesting self-assessable code is currently underway and closes on 12 September 2016. Submissions on each of these codes will be analysed, and a summary of the feedback will be published on my department's website. Amendments may occur following this consultation.

I will now address the second recommendation made by the committee, which was to provide an update on the steps taken to improve the accuracy of the vegetation mapping and to provide landholders with updated property maps of assessable vegetation which correct any inaccuracies. The

Department of Science and Information Technology, through the services of skilled vegetation mapping experts at the Queensland Herbarium, manually reviewed proposed category C regrowth mapping against high-resolution imagery to remove areas not considered high-value regrowth. This refinement has removed about half a million hectares which is not high-value regrowth from proposed regulated vegetation management maps. This has included fixing obvious errors such as pasture, orchards and pine and hardwood plantations. As evidence I table maps which now show that Mrs Kellie's grass is no longer mapped as HVR, Mr Mee's avocado tree is no longer mapped as HVR and genuine high-value regrowth remains protected.

*Tabled paper:* Bundle of maps from the Department of Natural Resources and Mines of various properties [\[1322\]](#).

**Mrs Frecklington:** What about everyone else? That's only two people in Queensland!

**Dr LYNHAM:** Wait, I have the answer. This detailed technical review has resulted in more accurate mapping which is better suited for use on a property scale. My department has released this mapping and it is currently available on its website, the Queensland Globe, and the government's geospatial portal QSpatial. Landholders, including anyone who may have requested a copy of the proposed regulated vegetation management map, have been contacted and advised of the revised mapping and how they can access it. Should landholders have any questions about changes to the mapping they can contact my department to speak to a departmental officer or, alternatively, arrange a meeting: the offer is open. While this review of the mapping has removed a large number of the obvious errors and greatly improved its accuracy, it will not eliminate all errors. This is due to the large area involved and the manual nature of the review process. As a result, landholders can still apply to correct the map through a property map of assessable vegetation, or PMAV. Obvious errors will be fixed free of charge.

This outcome is a great example of the government working collaboratively to address landholder concerns, with the result being an improved mapping product. I would like to personally thank Department of Science and Information Technology officers who have invested significant time, expertise and effort in this process.

The hypocrisy from the member for Hinchinbrook, who introduced this bill, is absolutely incredible. How much consultation did he do before he introduced his legislation? Let us look at the explanatory notes for his own vegetation management bill, which is the one we are debating here now. How much consultation did he do? None. Zero. Zip. His own explanatory notes say 'no consultation', and yet he has the audacity to stand up here and criticise our consultation process. There was no consultation whatsoever before he introduced this bill—none at all. Let us not forget that his legislation is a result of a broken election commitment. You cannot trust the member for Hinchinbrook on consultation; you cannot trust him to keep an election commitment; you simply cannot trust the member for Hinchinbrook. What is he going to tell the tourism operators, workers and local businesses in his own electorate who depend on the Great Barrier Reef when this legislation undermines the UNESCO listing?

I have been at Biloela, Bundaberg, Beaudesert and Bowen. I have been to countless other rural and regional centres from Weipa to Eromanga. I know that this is an important issue for farmers. They understand climate change because they live climate change from day to day. They understand that sensible, considered, balanced laws are what is required; I therefore commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (5.54 pm): As a first-term member of this House I rise to voice my total disgust with this rotten piece of legislation. Perhaps as a first-time member I am more easily shocked, but today we are being asked to pass a bill which defies the most fundamental principles of good lawmaking. This bill is not about bestowing protection: this bill is about stripping our fellow Queenslanders of their rights under law. We must have independent courts, but the courts can only uphold the laws that we—who are privileged to sit in this House—write and pass.

Under this vegetation management bill the courts will have to presume the defendant before them is guilty. Most people will have heard of the presumption of innocence. With this bill Labor introduces a whole new concept: the presumption of guilt. If that is the case, what a sad chapter in the history of this House and the history of Queensland law. The prosecution will not have to prove your guilt; the court is bound to presume that you are guilty as charged. Reading the criticism by the Queensland Law Society I thought, 'Gee, this is an efficient system for the prosecution.' What a sinister system to inflict on our fellow Queenslanders. What a vicious precedent to install. Who wanted this reverse onus of proof? The Agriculture and Environment Committee report makes it very clear that this

clause was actively lobbied for by the green groups because they want to see more successful prosecutions of landholders than they have been able to achieve under the previous vegetation laws: the Beattie laws, the Bligh laws and the LNP laws. The Queensland Law Society and others told the committee that there were insufficient grounds for such a serious breach of principle. The Law Society stated that administrative conveniences or prosecutorial efficiency does not justify erosion of the principle that a person is presumed innocent until they are proven guilty; in other words, you should not take away a citizen's right in order to make it easier to convict them, but that is exactly what this bill does. All legislators in this chamber should be horrified at what they are being asked to do.

Under the 'presumption of guilt' a second fundamental right is lost, and that is the right to silence. In law it is the prosecution which must prove guilt, but when the court must by law see you as guilty then the prosecution does not have to prove anything; it is the defendant who must somehow prove they are innocent. There goes your right to silence! This brings us to the matter of defence, and this is where it becomes even worse.

The legislation is totally founded on vegetation mapping of Queensland by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines. The department itself told the committee that the mapping is inaccurate, which makes such legislation not only premature but fundamentally not fit for purpose. The committee heard of landholders charged under existing laws—that is right, the existing laws—for being out by a matter of metres, but the department admits that the maps are out by kilometres. There are inaccuracies in the type of vegetation and then there are inaccuracies of scale, particularly when you try and zoom in on a fence line or similar structure. Under this legislation a landholder will be charged even if the maps that he had to rely on are inaccurate. He or she will be charged if he acted on the advice of the department. If that advice turns out to be wrong—and the committee heard that departmental advice has turned out to be in error—then the landholder will be charged. When he or she is charged, he or she cannot use the incorrect maps which wrongly showed that he was safe or the incorrect advice from the departmental officers to defend himself because the legislation—this is where it hurts—removes his right to use the legal defence of mistake of fact. Is that what you want to pass tonight?

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Gregory, I would remind you to direct your comments through the chair.

**Mr MILLAR:** This legislation is so rotten that on legislative principles alone it should be dumped. Tweaking it by amending it will not fix it. It is also at odds with scientific principles. Queensland is big—very big—and within its land mass are a variety of distinct ecosystems. In my lifetime the scientific principles of land management have come a long way. While we still have further to go, I can say that the most useful step is recognising the ecosystem you are trying to manage. This bill gives no such recognition. It applies a jackboot footprint across all. You do not manage mulga the same as brigalow or Mitchell grass plains like savannah woodland or rainforest.

Debate, on motion of Mr Millar, adjourned.

## SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

### Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner, Appointment

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have to report that, pursuant to the relevant provisions of the Crime and Corruption Act 2001, Ms Karen Carmody has been appointed as the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner for a term of three years, commencing on 22 August 2016.

Ms Carmody was admitted to practise as a barrister of the Supreme Court of Queensland in 1994. Throughout her 22 years of practice she has been a director of barrister services, member of the Bond University law advisory board, practitioner member of the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal and the Public Interest Monitor for Queensland. The appointment of Ms Carmody has the bipartisan support of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee. On 4 July 2016 I tabled the relevant notice of appointment, as required under the act.

### Acting Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner, Appointment

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, pursuant to section 308 of the Crime and Corruption Act 2001 I advise that today I approved the appointment of Mr Mitchell Kunde as acting parliamentary commissioner for all periods when the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner, Ms Karen Carmody, is absent from duty or from the state or for another reason cannot perform the duties of the

office for the duration of Ms Carmody's term, which commences on 22 August 2016. This appointment has the bipartisan support of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee. I table the relevant correspondence from the committee.

*Tabled paper:* Notice of appointment of Mr Mitchell Kunde as Acting Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner [1323].

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 15 August 2016, from the Chair of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee, Mr Lawrence Springborg MP, to the Speaker, Hon. Peter Wellington, regarding the appointment of an Acting Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner [1324].

## Photographs in Chamber

 **Mr SPEAKER:** I advise that a photographer from the *Courier-Mail* will be around the chamber over the next little while taking some photographs.

## MOTION

### Black Lung Disease

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (6.02 pm): I move—

That this House calls on the government to establish a commission of inquiry within 30 days of today's date into the re-emergence of 'black lung disease' in coalmining workers.

Queensland has a long and proud history as a mining state—rich in natural resources that have driven our economic growth and been a key contributor to improving standards of living and prosperity across the state, especially in regional Queensland. We understand and recognise the importance of this industry and the hundreds of thousands of jobs it has provided across the state and through the decades. We also recognise the importance of ensuring that the health and wellbeing of those who work in the industry and have worked in the industry in the past are at the forefront of government policy settings.

Over many months now we have seen and read media reports about the re-emergence of pneumoconiosis, or coalminers' black lung disease, in Queensland. Pneumoconiosis, or 'black lung', is a potentially fatal disease caused by long exposure to coal dust. It commonly stems from working in the coal industry or in manufacturing of graphite or manmade carbon products. It has no known cure. The risk of contracting the disease often depends on the length of time a person has been exposed to coal dust. Symptoms can often occur up to 15 years after the exposure period.

Since 1993, by law all Queensland coalminers undergo pre-employment chest X-rays, with another at least every five years. These X-rays must be sent to the mines department for review. Last year the department admitted that 150,000 X-rays were still awaiting database entry. Earlier this week it was reported that WorkCover Queensland data, obtained through right to information laws, revealed that four claims for the disease had been lodged between 2007 and 2012. That also coincided with a report that I think many of us saw on 7.30 on the ABC on Monday night.

A Queensland Health audit of public health records carried out earlier this year also found four probable and seven possible causes of black lung between 1995 and 2015. This is despite the fact that it was thought the disease had been eradicated in Queensland for decades—until a case was confirmed in May 2015. In July it was reported that another 18 suspected cases had been detected after X-rays were reviewed by health experts in the US.

We recognise that the minister has shown genuine concern for this issue and made several public statements and taken steps to address concerns that have been raised. We know that when unions are protesting against the actions of this government there are seriously underlying concerns that need to be addressed, and we have seen several protests outside parliament in relation to this important issue. There seems to be a blame game happening now between the industry and government departments as to what happened, why it happened and whose fault it was.

The number of media reports and the varied nature of the issues that have been raised have galvanised our belief that the best way to get to the bottom of what happened and ensure it does not happen again is through a commission of inquiry—a commission of inquiry under the Commissions of Inquiry Act, sometimes called a royal commission, but, not for some time now, a commission of inquiry properly constituted with a judicial officer with all the powers necessary to call witnesses and examine evidence. A commission of inquiry with hearings and evidence all being presented in a public forum, with media scrutiny and attention, seems to be the best way to address this serious issue and reassure the workers, their families and the industry that all relevant matters have been considered as part of the review as to the re-emergence of black lung in Queensland.

In 2004 a judicial inquiry was established by the New South Wales government to ensure that the victims of the James Hardie asbestosis and mesothelioma claims were suitably looked after, and that brought issues around asbestos related diseases to the fore. In 1911 there was a royal commission into working conditions in goldmines in Australia. It revealed widespread lung disease. As a result of the royal commission, ventilation laws were introduced.

While commissions of inquiry often determine what went wrong and why, the uncertainty that has been created over the past 12 months, with media speculation about half-truths and rumours, severely undermines the ability of current miners and former coalminers to have confidence that their health is at the forefront of consideration of government and industry.

How can the government take billions of dollars in royalties with one hand and not expend a couple of million dollars to get to the bottom of what has happened and ensure it never happens again? That is why the House should support this motion and the government should establish a commission of inquiry within 30 days. We owe it to the workers—both the ones who are currently working in the mining industry and the ones who have had a long mining career—to get to the bottom of the issues that have been identified and reported. I urge all members to support the motion before the House and the government to act.



**Mr PEARCE** (Mirani—ALP) (6.07 pm): I move the following amendment—

That all words after 'House' be deleted and the following words inserted:

'establishes a Parliamentary Select Committee within 30 days of today's date into the re-emergence of "black lung disease" in coal mining workers.'

There is no greater advocate for coalmining health and safety in this place than me. I was an underground coalminer. I have worked with men who talked about family members and colleagues who had been dusted, as we express it in the workplace. Those people are my friends, my former colleagues, my constituents—just like the member for Bundamba, who works with me to keep mining industry issues at the forefront.

I say to everyone, from the heart and the head: this issue is getting the urgent, focused attention it needs from the best qualified minister it could have. Fate has at least been kind to us on this point. We have a minister who is a doctor, trained many years ago in this insidious disease as a medical student at Newcastle University, near the Hunter Valley coalmining region. He knew that this disease was thought to have been eradicated; he knew that it should not be reappearing and he took action.

We all know that prevention is the first line of defence, and that means better monitoring and cracking down on dust levels in mines. Under proposed regulatory changes, there will be stricter dust level management and coal companies will report dust levels to DNRM quarterly or at more regular frequencies as stipulated by the chief inspector. The three underground mines currently under directives are already required to provide dust monitoring data to the Mines Inspectorate at intervals stipulated by the inspectorate. As the minister has said, the Chief Inspector of Coal Mines has the authority to suspend operations at mines where he believes the risk is not at an acceptable level. Most importantly, the chief inspector will use that authority if required.

After prevention comes early detection, and it is critical that the disease be picked up in these early stages so that the miner is not working in a dusty environment. A miner with the first stages of coal workers' pneumoconiosis may have no symptoms at all, so if it is picked up early and the worker is removed from the dusty environment the disease can be managed. That is why better and more effective screening is critical in protecting the current workforce. We have in place dual screening where X-rays are checked by an Australian radiologist to ILO standard and then by a US X-ray reader approved by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. This provides a rigorous process for reporting on the presence of disease and, if it is present, describing its stage, which is very important. It is so important that we have that link to the person in the United States who is an outstanding expert in this field and I congratulate the minister for that move.

I have taken the minister's advice and have talked to my doctor about my black lung risk. So far I believe I am okay. All underground coalmines are offering their workers new checks on current X-rays or fresh X-rays if the X-ray was taken more than two years ago. I urge all of those workers who have worked in the industry for a long time who may not even be a member of the CFMEU to not take the risk. Go and talk to your doctor and have the X-rays. If there are no problems, it will be sorted out and you can live without worrying about what might happen to you in the future. As I said, I urge every miner who has not already done so to take up that offer. I urge any former miner who has any concerns to see their GP as I have. You and your families will have a workers compensation safety net to look after you if you need it. That is one of the best things that is going to be delivered by this government.

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (6.12 pm): The re-emergence of coalminers' pneumoconiosis in Queensland has been sudden, it has been concerning and initially it has been difficult to explain. The resources industry is the only industry in Queensland that has a workplace health and safety framework that is separate and distinct from mainstream workplace health and safety legislation. The very nature of work in the resources sector is risky and always has been. Mining has always been a notoriously unsafe workplace, but for over a century here in Queensland there has been a concerted effort to pursue continual improvement in workplace conditions for employees in the resources industry. This has particularly been true for the mining industry in Queensland, which is recognised world-wide for having one of the best resources sector workplace health and safety frameworks anywhere. I acknowledge that unfortunately that has occurred usually only after the industry and the government have learnt some very hard and all-too-often tragic lessons following a number of serious mine site disasters throughout the history of the Queensland resources sector.

The Queensland resources mine safety and health legislation framework is extensive and it is comprehensive. It is only actually when you have been a mines minister in Queensland that you understand the gravity of being ultimately responsible for the safety of thousands of workers in the mining industry and the experience of getting that late-night or early morning phone call when the very bad news comes that a worker has been hurt or worse. When I first became the mines minister in April 2012, Queensland was taking on board the lessons from the Pike River mine disaster in New Zealand. The focus during the period that I was mines minister was on innovations to improve the effectiveness of stone-dusting mechanisms in underground mining operations to try and maximise the chances of employees surviving in the event of an explosion. I recall stone-dusting trials and experiments at SIMTARS, research papers being presented at mine safety conferences and ultimately the delivery of the recommendations from the Pike River royal commission. That royal commission drove change to the mine health and safety legislation framework in New Zealand and has influenced many resource jurisdictions to consider their resource safety frameworks across the globe.

When coalminers' pneumoconiosis first re-emerged in Queensland in 2015, along with many others interested in these matters, I was surprised and concerned. In fact, I questioned the current mines minister in Queensland about whether or not anyone had seen this coming or whether anyone had expressed concern about the existing industry scheme, and the answer to that question was no. Those industrial employees in Queensland charged with the monitoring of the safety of coalmine workers—industry safety and health representatives—had not raised concerns with the department or the Mines Inspectorate about potential exposure to coal dust until 2015, and I table the question that I asked the minister which establishes that fact.

*Tabled paper:* Answer to Question on Notice No. 176 asked on 23 February 2016 [[1325](#)].

The answer was also no when I asked whether or not representatives of the CFMEU had expressed concerns about the adequacy of the Queensland coal workers' health scheme or requested a review of the scheme since it was established, and I table that question to demonstrate that that was the answer from the minister.

*Tabled paper:* Answer to Question on Notice No. 240 asked on 24 February 2016 [[1326](#)].

I questioned the minister about the re-emergence of coalminers' pneumoconiosis during the budget estimates committee proceedings this year and he outlined the response that he has been pursuing to tackle this matter since the cases first started being diagnosed last year. The motion tonight is not necessarily critical of the minister's actions to this point in time, but the fact is that Queensland really only knew about the re-emergence of coalminers' pneumoconiosis and the potential for it to re-emerge last year with the coalmine safety and health commissioner's annual report, the point being that historically royal commissions have been the catalysts for change to improve workplace health and safety legislation in Queensland and other jurisdictions.

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (6.17 pm): I rise to support the amendment moved by the member for Mirani and note his untiring support for coal workers in his electorate. The Palaszczuk government is taking decisive and concerted action to tackle the re-emergence of this terrible disease, coal workers' pneumoconiosis. Through the leadership of my colleague Minister Lynham this involves first a range of measures to prevent new cases of CWP and second identifying and detecting existing cases earlier. Thirdly, this government will be providing a comprehensive safety net for those workers with the disease through our state workers compensation system. My focus as industrial relations minister is on ensuring that any worker with CWP gets their full entitlements without delay. We will be there for those workers when they need it most. They deserve the best care and

support, and that is what they will get. Any and all workers who are diagnosed with CWP can claim no-fault statutory compensation and common law damages. Their rights to make a claim do not expire if the worker has finished work or retired and there are no age based limits to applying for compensation.

At this point I can confirm to the House that there have been 16 workers compensation claims for CWP, with seven accepted, one withdrawn and eight claims being processed. I am putting in further measures to ensure that there is a streamlined process for fast-tracking entitlements, including lump sum payments. WorkCover will now treat CWP claims in line with the streamlined process for other latent onset diseases, such as mesothelioma, which was developed during the mid-2000s. It will include a dedicated specialist team of experienced claims officers within WorkCover to expedite coal workers' pneumoconiosis claims.

As with asbestos related disease cases, this will mean that Queensland workers diagnosed with CWP will have their claims accepted, entitlements paid promptly and workers can be offered lump sum compensation payments quickly, often within weeks. This process will avoid unnecessary delays through the courts and remove some of the stress on people at a very difficult time. This will help workers diagnosed with CWP to focus on dealing with the impact of the disease instead of worrying about how they will provide for their family or pay their medical bills.

Workers with a latent onset dust disease injury that is a terminal condition are eligible for lump sum compensation of up to \$661,355. In addition, the workers' dependants are eligible for lump sum compensation of up to \$88,485 and a further \$11,800 for funeral expenses. If the worker did not receive any lump sum compensation, dependants are eligible for maximum death entitlements of up to \$589,875 plus weekly compensation in respect of dependent children. Workers with non-terminal dust diseases are entitled to compensation for lost time earnings and all reasonable medical expenses, including hospitalisation, surgery, rehabilitation, medication, medical aids such as mobility scooters and possible lump sum compensation payments for permanent impairment. In addition, the worker may be eligible for a caring allowance if required for day-to-day living.

The Queensland Resources Council CEO, Michael Roche, is right in saying that we need to be action oriented in response to this issue. Our focus must be on doing all that we can to prevent future cases occurring, to detect existing cases earlier through better screening and to ensure that there is a safety net that provides workers with their full entitlements as soon as possible.

This is a terrible disease. Again, I want to assure anyone with the disease and their families that they will get their compensation, medical assistance and the support they need quickly and promptly. If an inquiry by a parliamentary select committee can assist us in those endeavours, then I am more than happy to support it.

I am proud to have put these measures in place. We have now added pneumoconiosis to the latent onset diseases process of WorkCover Queensland. That will provide real benefits for those workers diagnosed quickly, promptly, without court appearances and, as I said, lump sums will be paid often within weeks.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (6.22 pm): I support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition to set up a commission of inquiry with respect to the re-emergence of black lung disease in the state of Queensland. I want to express some concern with respect to the amendment that has been moved by the government because, as I will explain in the next five minutes, there is quite a substantial difference between a parliamentary inquiry and the powers of a full commission of inquiry.

This issue of black lung disease should be above politics. This is the re-emergence of black lung disease in Queensland. I was industrial relations minister, sitting where the employment minister is, with the responsibility for workers compensation and, in my time in that role, my recollection is not one incident like this came across my desk and had to be dealt with. My concern is that, with the re-emergence of black lung disease, we will tend to have policy on the run in dealing with this issue. As more and more cases arise, WorkCover will change its policies, government will change its policies, but the best form of disinfectant is to let the sunshine in on this particular issue.

I see the merits of a parliamentary inquiry but, having established three commissions of inquiry myself when I was the Attorney-General, which included the Health payroll inquiry and the racing industry inquiry—and we have had the Barrett centre royal commission of inquiry recently under this government—I can say that there is quite a difference between a commission of inquiry and a parliamentary inquiry. With a commission of inquiry, you have the gravitas of a former Supreme Court or a retired District Court judge—or, in fact, a sitting judge, as Justice Cate Holmes was at the time when she presided over the flood commission of inquiry. Commissions of inquiry have the full powers

of a royal commission. In fact, in Queensland, the only difference between a royal commission of inquiry and a commission of inquiry is, at the federal level, the name of the legislation. At the federal level, it is the Royal Commissions Act. In Queensland, it is the Commissions of Inquiry Act. The powers are the same. In fact, the Governor issues and signs the letters patent on behalf of the government. A commission of inquiry is protected under the Westminster tradition of a royal commission because the letters patent are issued by the Governor.

As I said, we are seeing the re-emergence of this issue. I understand all honourable members' sincere, genuine concern with respect to this issue, but I think that we ought not in the next five, 10 or 20 years time have policy on the run when dealing with more and more cases of black lung disease. Let us have a full royal commission, with the full powers of a royal commission, instituted by a former retired District Court or Supreme Court judge to work out a road map. Just like Carmody worked out a road map for child protection in the state of Queensland, let us get a road map on how to deal with the re-emergence of black lung disease in Queensland rather than in two years time seeing a lot of former coalminers having to get compensation.

A few nights ago, I was moved to hear Steve Mellor's story when watching the *7.30 Report*. Steve was caring for his sick father and then he was diagnosed with black lung disease himself. I think it is pertinent that all honourable members read the story about Keith Stoddart, which appears today in the *Brisbane Times*. That article states—

Given the choice, former coalminer Keith Stoddart would have swapped his black lung diagnosis for cancer because at least then 'they may have been able to cut it out'.

We have people, as reported in the *Brisbane Times*, wishing that they had cancer rather than black lung disease so at least they can cut it out. As we have seen on the *7.30 Report*, I think there are issues with the industry, with the medical profession and with the union. A royal commission is not a blame game. It is not set up to find out who is at fault; it is to acknowledge the fact that black lung disease is in our miners across Queensland now, it is going to become more of an issue and we should jump on this opportunity to deal with it now. Let us find out how the re-emergence of black lung disease in the state of Queensland came about. I think the best way to do that is through a royal commission with the gravitas of a retired Supreme Court or District Court judge.

It is inevitable that parliamentary inquiries are political. When you have politicians involved in parliamentary inquiries, they are political. Let us get above that. Let us endorse a royal commission and have the gravitas of a former judge independently looking at this matter. Let us set a road map for the future in a bipartisan way so that we can help those affected by black lung disease.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mrs JR MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (6.28 pm): My father, my grandfathers and my great-grandfathers were all Ipswich underground coalminers. My great-grandfather Kitching died in the extended colliery at Raceview in a coalmining accident. My grandfather, Hugh Kitching, worked at the same colliery as his father. The other miners brought my grandfather out on top and out of the way as an act of kindness so that he would not see his own father, who was dead on a stretcher, brought to the surface.

My grandfather, James Daniel Pringle, died in 1968. When the doctors performed an autopsy, they found that he had black lung. I ask members to imagine it. His lungs were totally black. My grandfather—yes, my grandfather—died of black lung and that is why this matter is most important to me. It is so close to my heart because it is family. It is about coalminers who are family. It is about our great coal families right throughout Queensland—in Ipswich, the Bowen Basin, Mackay, Rockhampton and Emerald—and it is about workplace health and safety, which is something that I have grown up with since the day I was born because my family history is about death and dying in coalmines. My father, my grandfathers and my great grandfathers went to work, but they did not go to work to die. My grandfather did not go to work to die of black lung.

As I said, they both died because they were coalminers. That is the real price of mining coal. I thought black lung was gone. I really did. I thought it was over. I thought black lung, or pneumoconiosis, was eradicated in Queensland and Australia and so did the coalminers and their families, so did the CFMEU and so did successive governments. Now we know that the disease is back. Who is responsible? What failures have occurred and why? There obviously has been maladministration in the Department of Mines.

Let us talk about black lung. It is a terrible, terrible disease. The miners tell me that it is like having a ton of bricks on their chest every day. They cannot breathe properly. They are walking around with oxygen bottles. It is a terrible, terrible way to die. Patients have symptoms of shortness of breath and

chronic cough. They have more exposure to coal than anyone knows. They are down the mines, they breath it in and they cannot get the coal out so the coal stays in their lungs and it forms fibrosis. It is just dreadful.

There has been a cover-up way back to the Bjelke-Petersen government. There has been a systemic failure, there is no doubt about that, and we need to get to the bottom of it. Earlier this week the black lung victims group wrote to the Premier of Queensland. I table that for the parliament.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 11 August 2016, from members of the Black Lung Victims Group to the Premier and Minister for the Arts, Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk, regarding black lung disease [1327].

I want a royal commission, and I still do, but I also understand that we can get a parliamentary committee up and running quickly. Because of that and my involvement in the industry I really want to get to the bottom of this. So, colleagues, I offer my services as the chair of this committee because I have worked in the mining industry, I am trusted by the industry, I am trusted by coalminers and I am trusted by their families. If this inquiry does not work I will come back in here and I will move for a royal commission myself.

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

**AYES, 42:**

**ALP, 40**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hinchliffe, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Power, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

**KAP, 2**—Katter, Knuth.

**NOES, 41:**

**LNP, 40**—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Cripps, Davis, Dickson, Elmes, Emerson, Frecklington, Hart, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Perrett, Powell, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Seeney, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stuckey, Walker, Watts, Weir.

**INDEPENDENT, 1**—Pyne.

Pairs: Palaszczuk, Nicholls; Howard, Stevens.

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

Motion agreed to.

Motion, as agreed—

That this House establishes a Parliamentary Select Committee within 30 days of today's date into the re-emergence of 'black lung disease' in coal mining workers.

Proceedings suspended from 6.39 pm to 7.40 pm.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Elmes): Order! Before calling the next speaker, I inform members that Mr Speaker has advised that a photographer from the *Courier-Mail* will be around the chamber over the next little while, taking some photographs.

## VEGETATION MANAGEMENT (REINSTATEMENT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from p. 3035, on the motion of Ms Trad—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (7.40 pm), continuing: Mr Deputy Speaker, as you are a boy from Emerald, I am glad that you are in the chair to listen to my contribution because you will understand what I am saying. This legislation is so rotten that on legislative principles alone it should be dumped. That is what I said before the dinner break. This bill should be ruled out of order straightaway. It applies a jackboot footprint across all areas. You do not manage mulga the same way that you manage brigalow or Mitchell grass plains, and you do not manage them as you would savannah, woodland or rainforest. Therefore, this legislation will not achieve what the member for Mount Coot-tha keeps promising it will. What it will do is chop the Queensland economy off at its knees at a time when we are already in a downturn, particularly in regional Queensland.

As members know, Gregory contains the Bowen Basin coalfields, so it will be of no surprise that when the census was done in 2011 the resource industry was our biggest employer. What may surprise members is that the second biggest employer was agriculture, which was only a couple of percentage points behind the resource industry. It would now have regained its normal position at the top of the leader board. Furthermore, those agricultural jobs do not have a life of 30 years, as do jobs in a coalmine; agricultural jobs are forever. Agricultural jobs are not fly-in fly-out; they belong to residents and their families. Agricultural jobs underwrite regional Queensland's next biggest employer, that is, small business. Agricultural jobs keep our small towns prosperous and our land mass populated.

Our farms are getting tech smart. Our land management systems are getting better and better. We have unprecedented access to Asia and international markets, thanks to our free trade agreements. Queensland can prosper as a clean green producer of food and fibre, with an international reputation for quality and efficiency. Today, agricultural graduates are starting on higher salaries than many of their counterparts in conventional professions. In the electorate of Gregory, I am proud of the innovation that takes place every day, be it by Andrew and Jocie Bate at Swarm Farm, Craig and Bindi Pressler from 2PH who are developing new citrus varieties for specific Asian markets or the many good people working to develop the organic grazing industry on the Mitchell grass plains and those who are looking to restart the wool industry through the central west.

The federal government has announced funding for a business case towards the construction of Rookwood Weir. I have used this example many times as a case for why these laws should be thrown out. How the Labor party wants to change the laws should never have come to this parliament. With the Rookwood Weir, the people of the eastern part of Gregory were delighted because the impoundment would benefit us. However, if we follow what the Labor Party wants to do, this legislation would make such a construction pointless. This legislation would shut down all future prospects for growth in the most successful sector in the Queensland economy. This is Labor choosing that Queensland will not grow. This is Labor choosing not to develop our strengths. Why would any government be so reckless? When we talk about the Rookwood Weir, we are talking about an opportunity to construct further irrigation in Central Queensland. We are talking about a project worth billions of dollars in the agricultural industry. We are talking about hectares of irrigation.

**Mr Butcher** interjected.

**Mr MILLAR:** We can build the Rookwood Weir, but we cannot provide the irrigation country. That is what the legislation that the Labor Party has put before the parliament would do to the Central Queensland economy. I take the interjections from the member for Gladstone. He would understand that the Rookwood Weir has the potential to develop millions of dollars worth of opportunities through Central Queensland.

Eyebrows should have been raised when the passage of this legislation was taken from the Minister for Natural Resources and given to the member for South Brisbane. I know there are not many farms in the electorate of the member for South Brisbane. However, there is a desperate harvest under way, nonetheless. It is a harvest of green preferences. That is the true purpose of this bill. Last week, the blatant misuse of the SLATS report to demonise farmers saw a few people start to wake up. Rather than doing the hard work of proper land and environment management, the member for South Brisbane and the member for Mount Coot-tha have cast farmers as vandals who are determined to wreck the ecosystems of Queensland. The member for South Brisbane and the member for Mount Coot-tha ignore the evidence that clearly shows that in the brigalow ecosystem, vegetation management encourages pasture, which decreases sediments flowing into the Fitzroy Basin. I oppose this bill as a legal perversion. I oppose this bill as a breathtaking piece of cynicism—

*(Time expired)*

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (7.46 pm): I rise to oppose the worst ever Queensland vegetation management legislation, which is a massive assault on property rights and landholders, and it is all about West End, rather than western Queensland. It took former Labor governments 13 years to put in place 18 changes and 38 legislative amendments to the Vegetation Management Act 1999. The Palaszczuk Labor government wants to reinstate those changes on landholders in one foul swoop. It should be noted that this Labor government wanted to do that in only 19 working days of committee consultation. It was the LNP that forced the extended consultation period and the committee reporting date to 30 June. It was the LNP members of the committee who argued for a public committee hearing in Charleville and Roma, so that the landholders in my South-West Queensland electorate could have their say. I am very proud of the professional presentations made by multigenerational landholders from across the electorate. They are good managers. They look after the environment. They manage it well. They understand the science and have done so for generations.

There are a lot of very ill-informed views about vegetation management and science. I wish to enlighten members opposite as to what their government is doing to landholders and farmers in my electorate. I ask the members opposite: how would their constituents feel if the state government passed legislation that took the kitchens out of the homes in their suburbs and said, 'Families, you can keep living there and paying off the mortgage, but you cannot use the kitchen and we will not compensate you'? That is precisely what this legislation does to my constituents. It takes away their ability to sustainably manage vegetation without compensation and says, 'You can keep paying for the devalued asset and watch your profitability decrease'.

It is not only landholders who are outraged by this legislation. The ALP membership are fuming, too. They are saying that this government is not looking and listening in relation to the proposed vegetation management laws. They are also saying that the Deputy Premier would do herself a great deal of good by allowing people who live in the area to educate her on the topic, rather than being hoodwinked by the extremists. The ALP membership have been pleading with the Deputy Premier to visit Western Queensland. They have been pleading for a visit to Bakers Bend, Bollon, the Bulloo or Brigalow, but the Deputy Premier has been to Bonn instead. What an insult to the Western Queensland ALP members.

The landholders and farmers across my electorate are incensed and outraged by this legislation. The Wilderness Society claimed landholders were paraded in front of the committee. That is utter rubbish and it is an insult to every landholder. Ashley McKay from Augathella, who has been unfairly vilified and pursued by Labor governments for six years, had this to say about the legislation—

Queensland is a net carbon sink, it is not a carbon emitter. The Ibuki satellite from Japan and the NASA satellite are independent of Greenpeace and all the other interests in the world, and they are showing that Queensland in particular and Australia in general is a net carbon sink.

San Antonio ran out of water. Thirty years before, they had stopped tree clearing on the Edwards Plateau. Eventually, the government started paying farmers to clear the land to increase the water supply to San Antonio. This is in the Wilcox report of 2003 on the Edwards Plateau, Texas, USA.

Timber dewateres the landscape, and I have personally seen this on a number of occasions on our family properties. Why the state government is seeking to dewater an already dry landscape defies logic.

Andrew Schmidt of Charleville said about this legislation—

The majority of our mulga lands was historically semi open, so why does returning it to its original state become a mortal sin with mandatory sentencing ... why are we branded as criminals with guilt assumed ... An ice courier has more rights.

Guy Newell of Augathella said—

I would like to express my utter disdain for the proposal by the Palaszczuk government to reintroduce the reverse onus of proof provisions into the Vegetation Management Act ... The vegetation mapping may be wrong but we cannot be wrong. These proposed laws will provide rapists, murderers and even petty criminals with more rights than any farmer in Queensland who has a legitimate need to clear and manage vegetation.

Bruce Crichton from Morven, a fourth generation primary producer, said—

Many in this region, and with my own experience, have witnessed an alarming increase in the thickening of vegetation which is decreasing production and ultimately devaluing land.

Kenton Peart of Charleville said—

It appears this government is willing to sacrifice the state's food production potential in order to appease a misled few.

...

The SLATS report states that, despite these theoretical tree clearing rates of 296,000 hectares, tree coverage actually increased by 437,000 hectares during the same period. Vegetation in Queensland is currently increasing at a faster rate than it can be managed.

Robyn Bryant from Mitchell said—

Labor's proposed vegetation management legislation affects each and every person in rural Queensland. It stunts economic growth, puts unnecessary pressure on the people who understand and know the land and suggests that we are incapable of managing our own land and that we also might be criminals for doing it.

Matthew Peart, a fourth-generation primary producer, said—

My mum and dad cleared a brigalow block ... They cleared about 640 trees to the acre. It is about 1,500, 1,800 trees to the hectare. In some of my regrowth work I am now clearing between 100,000 and 130,000 stems a hectare.

Mr Peart also questioned if this is just a total waste of time because it was last time. I quote Mr Peart who is extremely keen to see this legislation fail. He said at the committee hearing in Roma that if this bill fails to pass—

I'll blinkin' drop my daks and run the full length of McDowall Street.

Unfortunately, I believe his time will be wasted and his daks are fairly safe because I can see this government pushing this legislation through.

James Stinson of Roma said—

People's biggest asset is their land ... These people are everyday mums and dads, nannas and pops who just want the best for their family, their livestock and their land. This legislation is just another pressure with massive effect on people's mental and financial state. They are torn between feeding their animals, paying the bank and maintaining regrowth. It is doing people's heads in and it has to stop.

Peter and Sue Joliffe from north-west of Roma said—

The thickening of vegetation has choked out the grasses, causing erosion. Where we have improved the land sustainably for grazing, erosion has been reduced. The land we have developed, needs constant maintenance to keep regrowth from taking over our grazing areas in order to keep it healthy and productive.

Justin MacDonnell from north of Injune said—

The Deputy Premier will happily stand in front of a TV camera and vilify us and tell untruths and talk about statistics that are wrong.

Don Perkins of Dirranbandi said—

If Jackie Trad and her mob want us to leave 30 per cent of unproductive land, maybe she has to pay for it. That is what she is asking us to do.

Anthony Dunn, a fifth-generation landholder, said—

My daughter is currently doing a project at school on the Great Barrier Reef. She can understand why and how principles on our property work, so I would be very disappointed if the state government cannot recognise common-sense when it is clear to a 10 year old.

Dan and Megan Devlin of Roma are typical of many young people in my electorate. They have worked extremely hard and been fortunate that their work has enabled them to realise their dream and purchase a semi-developed block not far from their home farm. It is now their intention to work their guts out and add value to this block and to one day realise the dream of being a full-time farmer and raising a family. They now believe that these laws—what will go through the parliament tonight—will completely destroy their dream. Nothing disappoints me more than Labor governments that destroy the hopes of young people who are passionate about growing, participating and developing the agriculture industry.

 **Hon. LE DONALDSON** (Bundaberg—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries) (7.54 pm): As the agriculture minister I am acutely aware of the arguments around the reintroduction of vegetation management provisions. I understand it is an emotive issue not helped by the language used by populist and opportunistic opposition MPs who are either climate change deniers or choose to overlook the overwhelming weight of scientific evidence and opinion because it suits their short-term political purpose. They describe our government as antifarmer. It is outrageous and it is rich coming from a bunch of flat-earthers.

I support this legislation because I want a sustainable and profitable future for Queensland's producers. Our farmers have the most to lose from more extreme weather patterns that are inevitable unless we act to restrict manmade climate change. They are already in the grip of a record-breaking drought. When I travel our state I see firsthand the distress and hardship it is causing. It is simply irresponsible to do nothing to address the damage to our precious environment.

The scientific evidence in favour of stronger tree-clearing laws has been clearly presented and cannot be ignored. In July 400 eminent international ecologists, conservation biologists and other environmental scientists issued a formal communique highlighting the impacts of tree clearing in Queensland. Their statement, supported by four of Australia's peak conservation science bodies, including the Australian Wildlife Management Society and the Royal Zoological Society—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Elmes): Order! Members on both sides will cease the interjections. I remind the minister or any other speaker that if they are going to dish it out they will get a little bit back. That is the way this place works. We cannot get to a situation though where I cannot hear the speech that is being made.

**Ms DONALDSON:** The Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales asserted that current rates of tree clearing threaten 'irreversible environmental consequences of international significance'. They called for urgent law reform to 'protect the unique biodiversity and marine environments of which Australia is sole custodian'.

According to scientists, eastern Australia has become the only land area from rich nations to feature among the 11 global deforestation hotspots. This deforestation is lifting carbon emissions and placing at risk almost 2,000 species. Tree clearing at the current rate in Queensland is unsustainable and will do immeasurable harm to our international reputation—a reputation our farmers rely on when seeking overseas markets for their produce. Having a social licence to operate is vital in any industry and when it is gone it will never be returned.

**Mr Hart** interjected.

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Burleigh and the Deputy Premier will cease the chatter across the chamber.

**Ms DONALDSON:** Consumers are increasingly turning their backs on products that are made or grown in areas that threaten the environment or animal species that are becoming endangered or extinct because of unsustainable practices. Professor Richard Kingston, Director of the Centre for Ecosystem Science at the University of New South Wales and Australian President of the Society for Conservation Biology, cites a tripling of land clearing in Queensland to 300,000 hectares a year after the Newman-Nicholls government reforms.

**Mr WATTS:** I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I refer to the earlier ruling made by the Speaker with regard to the use of 'Newman-Nicholls government'.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Elmes): The minister will withdraw.

**Ms DONALDSON:** I withdraw. These reforms were reckless and unsustainable. They threaten our vulnerable native wildlife and tens of thousands of jobs that rely on the continued health of the Great Barrier Reef.

As the Minister for Fisheries, I am acutely aware that the health of the reef is vitally important for the Queensland economy. As I represent an electorate which benefits enormously from interstate and international tourism, it is my duty to respond. On 3 June at a public hearing in Brisbane, Professor Stuart Bunn, Director, Australian Rivers Institute, Griffith University, Queensland Environmental Scientists, made comment about the impact of erosion in the Burnett-Mary area. This is what he had to say—

Again, from a water quality perspective we know that there are major erosion problems in the Burnett Mary. These are the same problems and the same approach to fixing them that we see right up and down the Queensland coast. If you think of protecting the Great Barrier Reef in a warming climate, those small southern catchments will be increasingly important.

The fish and other aquatic species that rely on the reef for survival depend on our action, as do the livelihoods of workers in industries where income is derived from fishing. He went on to say—

It is interesting that the whole Mary Burnett River system is one that gets a bit ignored in the debate about the GDR, but I think increasingly that is going to become a much more important region to be tackling in terms of dealing with future climate.

I fear those opposite are prepared to ignore every expert opinion and every scientific analysis that spells out the problem, the causes of the problem and the action required to address the problem. I cannot, and I will not, ignore the science.

**Mr Hart** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Burleigh.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** That will be enough on my right as well.

**Ms DONALDSON:** Queensland is now responsible for 90 per cent of Australia's emissions from land use. Some 36 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions every year are generated by land clearing in our state. It is argued by those opposite that restricting tree clearing will prevent growth in our agricultural production. Yet in the nine months I have been Minister for Agriculture I have seen plenty of evidence that our primary producers have a spirit of entrepreneurship, enterprise and innovation that will enable them to thrive in harmony with environmentally sustainable practice.

**Mr Hart** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Burleigh, you are making the same interjection all of the time. I do not want to get to the stage where I have to warn you.

**Ms DONALDSON:** I have faith in advances in sustainable farming techniques and faith in the hard work and ingenuity of farmers I have met to improve productivity on existing farm land using science, best management practice and technological advances. I know that there are hundreds of farmers who have been farming for generations. They were even farming under the previous vegetation management legislation under the Beattie-Bligh government and they are still here. They have not been destroyed. They are still profitable. They are still thriving.

I will give some facts. The analysis of Queensland agricultural production over 10 years from 2004 to 2014 shows the rate of land clearing is inconsequential to sector production and profitability. In 2004-05, the sector was worth \$8.266 billion. In 2005-06, it rose five per cent to \$8.709 billion. In 2006-07—the first year of the ban on broadscale clearing of mature forest introduced by Labor—Queensland's agricultural sector dollar value soared by nine per cent to \$9.532 billion. It fell by four per cent in 2007-08 to \$9.14 billion as the global financial crisis bit hard. The sector recovered ground in 2008-09, rising three per cent to \$9.405 billion only to lose those gains in 2009-10, falling back three per cent to \$9.137 billion. Two excellent years of sector growth followed. In 2010-11, there was a five per cent increase to \$9.555 billion. In 2011-12—the financial year of the Bligh Labor government—the agricultural sector value increased a further five per cent to \$10.035 billion.

Contrast that period of steady growth with the next two years under the LNP when land clearing increased substantially. In 2012-13, the sector only grew three per cent to \$10.3 billion and in 2013-14 showed a very modest rise of less than one per cent to \$10.399 billion. If there was any correlation between land clearing and increased agricultural productivity or profitability, it would show in these official figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The LNP claims that Labor's vegetation management provisions were bad for producers while their reforms boosted productivity and profitability. It is clear that those claims were false. In fact, the years of most spectacular growth were after the introduction of Labor's vegetation management provisions.

I urge farmers to back themselves rather than to listen to those who deny there is a problem that requires urgent repair.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Those on my left and right will come to order.

**Ms DONALDSON:** As Professor Brian Cox succinctly put it, 'Being anti-expert—that's the way back to the cave.'

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! We will wait until there is silence.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (8.05 pm): I would like to express my utmost disgust at the deplorable bill to change the vegetation management laws. The changes are designed to ban clearing for high-value agriculture, as well as reverse the onus of proof and impose retrospective penalties, making our prime producers criminals when their only crime is putting food on our table.

This is not a new fight for me or for Queensland farmers. I had the privilege of fighting against the tree-clearing laws back in 1999. I remember marching with the then member for Gregory and the member for Callide at that time. I remember being there when the landowners marched into the premier's building in 1999 when they introduced the ERMPs, the environment risk management plans. The impediments that the government imposed upon them at that time caused law-abiding landowners to prepare to break the law and march on the premier's office in desperation because they were sick and tired and gutted by consistent attacks by the Labor government. Likewise, we had the opportunity to march in Townsville this year and also on the parliament. There was one reason for that, and that is to march in support of fair laws for farmers.

These laws are disappointing. History shows us that farmers are a favourite to legislate beyond viability and virtually out of existence. Over the last six months the government has been actively running a misleading scare campaign, skewing the data and taking it out of context to push their own manipulative agenda. The government is claiming that trees are being cleared too quickly. What it is not making clear is that farmers in drought affected areas—80 per cent of Queensland—have been cutting down vegetation to feed their desperate stock, which is legal.

The Statewide Landcover and Trees Study report reveals that the clearing rate of woody vegetation has hardly risen since 2013, and 91 per cent of that clearing has been replaced by pasture. The report also revealed that the vegetation regrowth was occurring at a faster rate than clearing. What

the government would like to do is, when a farmer clears trees, have it reported on every news bulletin across Queensland, showing the bulldozers and the chains. What they are not showing is us is after that when the land is stick raked and cleaned up, the good seed is sown and all of a sudden the grass has grown—the legumes and the rhodes grass. Then we see the fat cattle and we see that the grass is holding the soil together so that when it does rain it is not running off to the Great Barrier Reef; it is actually protecting and holding the soil in place.

When a tree is knocked down, what happens is that the grass grows and it provides protection. What the government is not saying to people is that places like the Cape York Peninsula are 98 per cent remnant vegetation; the Einasleigh Uplands are 96 per cent; and the Gulf Plains are 98 per cent. There is a scare campaign that we are just knocking trees over, destroying the Great Barrier Reef, pumping rivers dry and all this nonsense that we are hearing, but what they are not saying is that this state is looking for development opportunities, particularly in the Cape York Peninsula with Indigenous people.

The biggest concern we heard from people at the public hearings in regard to these vegetation management laws was about the Indigenous people of Cape York Peninsula, because 98 per cent of that area is remnant vegetation. Only two per cent has been cleared. At the committee hearing the land council said to the committee, the government and the legislators that they need to have a choice. If these laws are passed, they said that it will put them on welfare. At this present moment they are looking finally at developing those regions. Those regions are not about ripping trees down everywhere so there will be no animals and death to all native wildlife. This is about sustainable management and sustainable development. This is about jobs for those Indigenous people.

I agree with the member for Hinchinbrook when he indicated that what is being cleared now has already been cleared. Broadscale land clearing is over. That happened in 2004. What landowners are doing now is reclearing vegetation that has already been cleared. When it comes to vegetation management, you have to be on the ball because you just cannot keep up. Once it is cleared, you have to try to keep on top of it, otherwise it will grow back and within two to three years it is back to the same state as it was previously. It is very difficult to stay on top of it, particularly when you are in drought and particularly when you have no money. There is no new clearing. As the SLATS report is saying, the regrowth is growing faster than the rate of land clearing. It is very illusionary.

There was an opportunity to clear land for high-value agriculture for which there is criteria. This is probably the only opportunity for Indigenous people to invest in, but this will be taken off them. In this legislation there is a reverse onus of proof—that is, they are criminals first before proven innocent. At the same time these laws are retrospective. Someone told me there are new maps out that look much prettier than they did before. What we saw was landowners had cleared land under mapping that was legal, but when the new mapping came out it was illegal. There are landowners now who are fearful that they have done something illegal. Because of the reverse onus of proof, they are guilty first of doing something that was legal under the previous mapping and the new mapping shows that it is illegal. That is one reason why we cannot support this bill. I can understand why the Queensland Law Society came out very passionately against this bill, because it is making criminals out of our law-abiding citizens and farmers who put food on the table.

At the public hearing in Cairns a landowner named Raylee Byrnes made a submission. They have a property in the Cape and they would like to clear 400 to 800 hectares to grow hay, because every year in the dry times they have to bring up hay from down south which costs an absolute fortune. The sad thing about it is they are frustrated because when they bring in hay they are bringing in noxious weeds and they are spreading pests. There is an opportunity for them to irrigate but they cannot irrigate and grow their own hay; they have to get it from 2,000 to 3,000 kilometres away and this brings in noxious weeds because they cannot clear their land.

There was an opportunity to put in an application for clearing for high-value agriculture, but this bill is going to take that opportunity away. As I was saying in regards to Indigenous people, their opportunity was about to come. They were about to find other means as to how they can achieve it, but the next minute this bill is introduced. As I was saying, there is 98 per cent remnant vegetation. The government recently said that no applications have been submitted to develop land by the Aboriginal corporation, but it would be illusionary to believe that because they were in the process of seizing the opportunity. Now we have these scare tactics. When there is a chance that this opportunity is going to be taken away, obviously there is going to be great concern.

I want to make this clear: broadscale land clearing is over. What they are clearing is regrowth that has already been cleared. We have only one opportunity, and that is to clear for high-value agriculture, and this is going to be taken away.

*(Time expired)*

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (8.16 pm): I think it is very disappointing that the Deputy Premier has had earplugs in for quite a bit of this debate. This House is a house of debate and we have heard some very reasoned contributions from people who are worried about the impact of this legislation. I also heard the Deputy Premier and the environment minister laughing when stories were being shared in this place about the very real concern that this legislation will bring about hardship because it is not balanced. This is Fourth World legislation, entrenching intergenerational poverty for Indigenous landowners of Cape York and other areas by denying them the opportunity to access mainstream economic development. It is Fourth World legislation because it imposes the law of the cities: laws drafted ever so ironically by people in concrete towers without consideration for those who are trapped in the disadvantage of welfare dependency—in this case, our Aboriginal Australians who own their land and who want to be able to farm it sustainably to create a better future for themselves and their children through growing crops, running stock and growing fibre.

Aboriginal landowners, like other farmers, are not environmental vandals. I think this is what is so upsetting listening to the laughter and the derision from members of the government who do not understand what they are doing to the future of not only our Aboriginal Australians in northern parts of this state but also other farmers and landowners throughout this state. They love their land more than any of us can imagine and tonight their future is under threat. They have the opportunity to change their destiny. They have a vision to change their destiny, but this legislation threatens it.

I want to quote from the voices of some of those who are concerned about this legislation, because it is draconian, it is poorly considered and it is more about environmental slogans. We all want to protect the Great Barrier Reef because we all love it, but it has to be based on real science, not political science. Tonight we have seen a disregard for the science in regard to this wonderful resource—the resource on land, which is what we are talking about—the science of sustainable land management.

There has been a tremendous overreach by this government, with their draconian laws in regard to reverse onus provisions. This is evidence of the desperation of a government that has no confidence in their science and the capability of their administration. That is why they have these reverse onus provisions. In other words, those who are charged under these provisions have to prove their innocence because they are first guilty.

I want to give voice to some of the concerns that have been expressed in submissions and on the public record. The first is Eric Rosendale of Bonny Glen station, which is south-west of Cooktown. I have met Eric. He is a fine and proud traditional owner with a proud heritage and a dream. He has worked hard for decades as a stockman throughout the state. He has a passion to see his land released, unlocked with its potential so other generations can benefit by living off their land. Let me quote his words as reported in the *Australian* on 17 August 2016. He outlined his plans to eventually expand and employ Aboriginal youth, but now he fears it will all be lost with the Palaszczuk government's laws. The article stated—

"I need to clear land for pastures and to plant crops for the cattle but I won't be able to do that under these new laws," he told *The Australian*. "The greenies are behind this and they don't care about my people, who have been looking after the land for thousands of years."

Mr Rosendale echoed the calls this week of the Cape York Land Council which urged key crossbenchers to block changes to the Vegetation Management Act.

So far this government has refused to listen to their very real concerns about the reverse onus provisions which were also identified as an issue by the committee. The article in the *Australian* continued—

The government has claimed that Aboriginal projects will still be able to secure land clearing permits under indigenous-specific exemptions of the 2007 Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act. But Bonny Glen—among at least 10 indigenous-held pastoral leases—is not eligible under the act, according to the Cape York Land Council.

Mr Rosendale said it was "idiotic" that resource companies can mine the Palmer River for gold on the station—owned by the Gummi Junga Aboriginal Corporation—but he can not clear the land. "We have a few small pastures, but we need to clear land to plant corn for feed and for more pastures if we expand the herd, and build it into a bigger station," he said.

"The miners cause more damage, more erosion and the Palmer River flows into the Gulf and not the Great Barrier Reef."

I want to quote another Indigenous leader, Noel Pearson. An article on the ABC News online on 10 March stated—

... Noel Pearson has hit out against the tightening of Queensland's tree clearing laws, arguing the changes could hurt Indigenous people trying to break out of poverty.

...

... Mr Pearson challenged the move, arguing it would hold back Indigenous people who want to develop agriculture businesses.

"We have a right to development, and in particular the Indigenous right to development isn't one that has ever been recognised," Mr Pearson said.

"We didn't have a chance in the old days to develop our land, we weren't part of the economy, we were marginalised and excluded.

"And now that we have our land back, what are you saying to us? That we don't have a right to development?"

"We're not going to lift ourselves out of the poverty and misery we live in unless we have balanced development."

I will also quote some comments from another Indigenous leader in the *Queensland Country Life* on 11 August 2016. The article stated that Richie Ahmat accused the government of pushing through the laws to 'keep the Green vote happy'. He said the proposed laws would devastate Cape York. The article stated—

"As about 98 per cent of Cape York is covered in what is misleadingly classified as "remnant vegetation" the proposed clearing laws will dramatically affect our region more than any other part of Queensland.

"Land is the only asset Cape York Aboriginal people have to unlock economic opportunity, provide jobs and break welfare dependence.

"But the new law will lock communities onto small islands of cleared town land surrounded by a sea of land they own but can't use for agriculture or other development."

I noted that the response of the Deputy Premier was that she is going to have a review—"Don't worry, there'll be a review." That somehow is supposed to make the issue go away, but it has not cut through because that is not black-letter law and that is what we are looking at here. That is what people are raising as their concern. This is Fourth World legislation because it is forcing people to go back to Third World conditions in a First World country with no opportunity to really see the potential of their land sustainably developed. Believe me, they love their country, they know how to look after it and they should have the right to develop it.

The reverse onus of proof has been mentioned. Even paedophiles charged with an offence in this state do not have the reverse onus of proof when they face the law, yet farmers under this government do not have that basic right. That is draconian and shows that the government have no confidence in their own administration to be able to bring a fair process to the table. They also have retrospective provisions in this legislation and they have removed the defence of mistake of fact. We heard the state development minister admit that there can be mistakes in the maps. We know that and it has been well argued by a number of my colleagues with examples of landowners in their areas who face this issue. The bill has reverse onus of proof, retrospective provisions and the removal of the defence of mistake of fact, even though we know the mapping issues are real. This shows this government have no confidence and they have had to rort the system with draconian laws.

*(Time expired)*

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (8.25 pm): I rise to support the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. From the outset I want to acknowledge the work of so many people in my community of Springwood who have been passionately spreading the word about the need to reinstate vegetation management laws in this state. People have been out letterboxing, hosting stalls, turning out to meetings and spreading the word online. I have been around politics a long time and I have been involved in campaigning for a while longer, but rarely have I seen people in any community, with such little prompting, throw themselves so heavily behind an important cause.

This is an issue that people in my neighbourhood care deeply about. I want to congratulate everyone who has been getting the message out there for turning their passion into action. There is no question what is driving that passion. It is a commitment to maintaining our forests, it is a commitment to saving the reef and it is a commitment to maintaining and growing the hundreds of thousands of jobs that depend on this state's natural environment. The LNP's repealing of Queensland tree-clearing laws was an act of environmental vandalism. The regime that we had in place, implemented by the previous

Labor government, was nation leading. Queensland was a leader when it came to climate action. Now, thanks to the LNP, we are leading the nation on emissions from deforestation—emissions that will have a lasting impact on the reef for generations to come.

Let us be clear about the reckless and arrogant behaviour of the Newman government, which doubled Queensland's annual tree-clearing rate. We are now seeing 300,000 hectares of vegetation cleared each and every year. This is vandalism—sheer vandalism.

Just the other day, I took my kids, Charlie and Scarlett, for a wander through Daisy Hill forest in my electorate of Springwood. We walked through the giant eucalyptus trees and we talked about how animals live and find food in the forest, about all the creatures, the big and the small, that make up this amazing ecosystem. We also talked about how the climate is changing and what this means for their future, what it means for the animals that live in Daisy Hill, what it means for their habitat, as my daughter pointed out, what it means for the beaches, what it means for characters like Nemo and Dory and their home, the Great Barrier Reef. We all decided it would be best to avoid these impacts.

**Mr Cripps** interjected.

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Elmes): Minister, take your seat. Pause the clock. When the shadow minister and the Deputy Premier have decided they have had enough chatting, I will call the minister and we will hear him in silence.

**Mr de BRENNI:** Almost all of the work that we do in this place has a direct impact on people's lives. Sometimes, such as tonight, the matters that we are called on to decide have a much more lasting significance. The LNP's decision to strip away Labor's land-clearing protections was an act of intergenerational warfare. It was a direct attack on the living standards of our children and of their children. Now we have an opportunity to make things right, to do things right by the generations to come.

Labor has a proud record when it comes to environmental protection, from the Whitlam government legislating the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and stopping Joh from drilling into the reef to the Goss government stopping logging on Fraser Island and nominating it for World Heritage status, right through to the Bligh Labor government making Queensland a leader on renewable energy with the highest uptake of rooftop solar in the world. Let's contrast that with those opposite.

Last night we discovered that the opposition environment spokesman is not willing to accept that humans are causing climate change. We have an opposition leader who thinks that solar power is for latte sippers. Let's not forget the member for Burleigh, who was worried that the newly deemed world surfing reserve on the Gold Coast—an important recognition of the Gold Coast environment and the jobs it supports—might affect economic development. How absolutely ridiculous! The conservatives in this state have become so reactionary that even the mere thought of conservation sends them into conniptions. It was not always this way. The Liberal Party in Queensland used to, at least on occasion, think about the future. All we have now is the National Party, and their same old environmental vandalism.

I will turn for a moment to the Great Barrier Reef. The Great Barrier Reef is another ecosystem at risk due in large part to land clearing in this state. It is riparian vegetation that keeps sediment and pesticides on land and out of the reef. If that vegetation is destroyed, it is like pulling the stopper out of a bottle of poison; all the bad stuff is going to flow freely, straight into the ocean. The reef attracts 1.9 million visitors, injects \$6 billion into our economy annually and supports 69,000 jobs. Each of these jobs is at risk because of the LNP's reckless environmental vandalism. I have said it before in this place and I will say it many times again, conservation equals jobs. We made a promise at the last election to the people of Queensland that we would reinstate Labor's nation-leading vegetation management and protection laws. This bill fulfils that promise and will return the valuable environmental protections that Queenslanders voted for in 2015. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (8.31 pm): I would like to start by acknowledging the speech made last night by the member for Hinchinbrook, the shadow minister; the report by the member for Gympie, Mr Tony Perrett; and the report filed by the committee. Both the speech and the report are well worth while listening to and reading for common sense and a very fine analysis and for putting to bed a number of the myths and fallacies in the government's argument.

**Mr Costigan:** *MythBusters*.

**Mr McARDLE:** *MythBusters* indeed.

I want to make only a couple of points in relation to the bill. They turn upon the legal issues contained in the bill. We know that in our system of justice one of the greatest principles is that people are presumed innocent until they are proven guilty. It is also the case that people stand equally before the law. They are two tenets in the common law system in this nation and indeed right across the globe: that people are innocent until proven guilty and they are equal before the law. If you are a farmer or a landowner, under this bill those rules do not apply to you. They can kiss goodbye the protections offered by the law in relation to those two principles.

Normally, when a person walks into a legal matter and they are charged with an offence, the Crown has to satisfy beyond a reasonable doubt that they are guilty of the offence. That does not apply here to a farmer or a landowner. When they walk into that court, they are deemed guilty. They are deemed guilty under this bill and they are required to prove their innocence. That is a complete fabrication of the rights and the principles of the English justice system that we hold so dear in this country. The protections afforded to all Queenslanders do not apply to farmers or landowners under the terms of this bill in relation to the reversal of the onus of proof. The protections where you and I, Mr Deputy Speaker, can walk into any court and expect fair justice do not apply under the terms of this bill in relation to the reversal of the onus of proof. Can honourable members imagine the Deputy Premier on this side of the House sitting quietly and not being shrill if we had put that into a bill? Can honourable members imagine the roof going off this building with the Deputy Premier going tooth and nail for the LNP and screaming for our blood?

This is a very serious matter. The reversal of the onus of proof strikes down a fundamental right long cherished in this country. The concept of the reversal of the onus of proof provides compelling reasons which must be justified by way of exceptional circumstances, not purely to score cheap political points or votes with the Greens, and that is what this is all about. This reversal of the onus of proof is part of a rollout whereby the Labor government is scoring cheap political points or votes from the Greens. In fact, by using this method, this government has put in place two tiers of citizens. This means that farmers and landowners are criminals based on what they did at a point in time in the past when what they did was legal. What they did was legal yesterday but becomes illegal today. The Deputy Premier then tried to draw an analogy between fines in relation to red-light cameras and the provisions contained in this bill as if that analogy was in some way a justification for what the government was trying to do. Quite clearly, the fines in this bill reach well over \$700,000 and can result in five years imprisonment. The Queensland Law Society says that comparison is ridiculous. They state—

There is simply no equivalence between the two and, with respect to the minister, it is like comparing a grape to a watermelon.

The Queensland Law Society is absolutely right; the comparison proposed by the Deputy Premier is absolute and utter nonsense. This provision strikes at the very core of the basis of our English justice system that people are presumed innocent until they are proven guilty. It is ironic that the Queensland Law Society used the word 'watermelon' because it is indeed what we refer to when we talk about the Greens: green on the outside and red on the inside. Red on the inside and green on the outside. The quote from the Law Society was beautifully stated and characterises exactly the hypocrisy in the Deputy Premier's attempt to draw the analogy between red lights and the provisions contained in this bill.

There are many inequities in this bill, but taking away a citizen's legal right in this nature and in this sense for the sake of a vote is a new low, even for this Labor government. However, the bill goes even further; it removes section 24 of the Criminal Code—that is, mistake of fact. Simply put, if a person acts in the belief that they were complying with the law at the time they did an act, then they have a defence if they were wrong in what they did. The Queensland Law Society gave a prime example of that—and it has been referred to by other members on this side of the House—a map that shows where a farmer can and cannot clear. If that map is wrong and the farmer clears, mistake of fact is no longer permitted under this bill. Not only that, he cannot rely on section 24; he is then deemed guilty. So the mistake made by a government officer makes it unavailable for a farmer to use section 24 and he is deemed guilty of an offence unless he proves to the contrary.

**Mr Cripps:** Double whammy.

**Mr McARDLE:** He cannot rely on mistake of fact. It is a double whammy. The innocent farmer follows a document prepared by a government official that lands him in court with no defence under section 24 and has to satisfy the court that he is not guilty—

**Mr Cripps:** Because he was told the wrong thing.

**Mr McARDLE:**—because he was told the wrong thing, which he relied upon as being what the law was at that point in time. That is the impact of section 24 being removed. The Law Society states that section 24, though not often used, is a defence that is relied upon by Queenslanders and has been since the Criminal Code was put in place well over 100 years ago, but it does not apply to farmers and landowners under this act—another right taken away. What is the situation with this government simply tearing up the rights of landowners and farmers? Do they not understand that it is those men and women and those families who feed us here in the south-east corner and provide our sustenance and our meat? They are turning their backs on some of the hardest working men and women in this nation.

The Law Society said it all when they said that removing section 24 would not pass either the sniff test or the pub test. There is no way in the world you would walk into a pub and have either of these provisions accepted as either realistic or provisions which should be in a bill of this nature. This bill is a travesty of justice. With regard to those two points, it is an attack on the rights that we have held dear for so many years. For that reason alone—and many others—it should be struck down and defeated on the floor of this chamber.

 **Mr McEACHAN** (Redlands—LNP) (8.40 pm): I rise tonight to speak against the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. This legislation is fundamentally flawed and will adversely affect thousands of farmers across Queensland. Those who vote for this legislation in the House tonight are voting against farmers; they are voting against the rights of Indigenous communities; and they are voting against the basic tenets of the rule of law.

I have been listening to the drivel about science and facts coming thick and fast from those opposite. For tens of thousands of years the reef has coexisted with humans engaged in active land management. Indeed, both Indigenous communities and the reef survived the last ice age, where the sea level was several hundred feet lower than it is now. Unlike anyone on that side of the chamber who has smugly mentioned science, I have worked on scientific research projects in the Great Barrier Reef marine park. For the benefit of those opposite, poorly managed national parks—which make up many of the parks in the reef catchment—contribute hugely to sediment and organic load to outflows. Unmanaged parks are full of noxious weeds, feral pests have degraded soil structures, and when they burn the fuel load is so high it causes a burn so hot that plants which rely on fire for their germination are killed off. This leaves more soil exposed, no habitat for wildlife and more damage to the environment: this is your environmental legacy. It shows your fundamental misunderstanding of ecological science. When those opposite sanctimoniously screech science at us, know that they have no idea what they are talking about.

The Palaszczuk Labor government's motivation behind this legislation is far from pure. Their motivation is the threat faced by the Deputy Premier in her own seat of South Brisbane who is concerned about Greens preferences. The Deputy Premier is a threatened species facing extinction at the hands of the Greens. It is clear that, in her panic to put this bill through the House, the Deputy Premier and the Palaszczuk Labor government did not listen to Queenslanders. The parliamentary committee was unable to recommend that the bill be passed. The proposed legislative changes have been constructed with very little consultation with those who are impacted so strongly by this legislation.

The Tablelands Regional Council stated in their submission to the committee that they were very concerned with the level of consultation undertaken, given the major changes and implications to their constituents. Rural and regional Queensland has suffered from devastating drought and the flow-on effects from the mining downturn. The last thing that rural and regional Queensland needs is crippling legislation written by those in George Street to satisfy an unwritten agreement by this Palaszczuk Labor government with the Greens. The Palaszczuk Labor government already has form in this space where the fundamental elements sound all too familiar: lack of public consultation, insufficient time for consideration, pandering to minority interest groups and showing disdain for the concern of those affected by their decisions. We could be debating any number of bills brought before the House by this Palaszczuk Labor government.

Many on this side of the House have worked on the land and, unlike the Deputy Premier and those opposite, we do listen to rural and regional Queenslanders. Frankly, the Deputy Premier would not know regional Queensland outside of throwing on a pair of RMs and chinos for a token photo shoot here and there. To know regional Queensland is to listen to regional Queensland. The explanatory notes outline just how little consultation has been undertaken on this proposed legislation. The submissions received by the Agriculture and Environment Committee were overwhelmingly critical of this, particularly given the significant impacts the bill will have on the agricultural, resource and development industries.

Shockingly, this bill also seeks to override fundamental principles of our justice system. Farmers and landowners will be presumed guilty until proven innocent. Our hardworking farmers will be treated worse than the most dangerous of criminals. This is simply unacceptable. The Queensland Law Society labelled this bill unjust and backward. QLS president Bill Potts stated—

The government's justification for these changes is, quite frankly, feeble and based on administrative convenience.

The application of retrospectivity to this legislation paints farmers and landholders as criminal from the outset. The explanatory notes acknowledge the massive impact that retrospectivity will have on those affected by this bill. They state—

There may be some detrimental effects on individual rights in relation to these applications; however individual rights are outweighed by the public interest to protect the long-term health of our biologically diverse state ...

I do not accept that we are a society which so easily casts aside the rights of the individual. Queenslanders expect better from this Palaszczuk Labor government. They expect more from this Deputy Premier than just deals with the Greens to manipulate her way into power. This is not the standard we should accept.

This bill seeks to remove high-value agriculture and irrigated high-value agriculture from the vegetation management framework. This will have a huge impact on farmers, restricting their ability to grow grain crops and fodder. Submissions to the Agriculture and Environment Committee opposed the reinstatement of regulation of high-value regrowth on freehold and Indigenous land.

Concerns were raised about the significant devaluation of land and assets held by freehold and Indigenous landholders, all without compensation for these hardworking landholders and farmers. Concerns also raised about the loss of pastures, with the result that landholders have to stock their remaining land more intensively. It also threatens a landholder's ability to manage their own land, including the control of noxious weeds. This can hardly have good outcomes for our environment.

Indigenous leaders, especially those on Cape York, consider that this legislation is an unfair restriction on their ability to realise the potential of their own land. With over 98 per cent of Cape York covered in remnant vegetation, these proposed laws will have a massive impact on Indigenous communities. It will prevent them from providing a sustainable future for themselves like any other Queenslanders. It smacks of paternalism in the same vein as the Bligh Labor government's reviled wild rivers legislation. Wild rivers prevented Indigenous communities from making decisions about their own land. Earlier tonight the Deputy Premier said that this legislation was in the great tradition of Labor governments which have gone before. On that at least, Deputy Premier, we can agree. This legislation is in the tradition of Labor governments gone by, including the devastating Traveston Dam travesty and the protectionist racket that was the wild rivers legislation.

Richie Ahmat, chair of the Cape York Land Council, responded recently to the Deputy Premier's statement that it was 'simply unacceptable not to act.' Mr Ahmat responded, 'We say it is simply totally unacceptable to exacerbate Aboriginal disadvantage on Cape York just so she and her ministerial mates can keep the green vote happy.' Mr Ahmat also raised concerns about the legislative restrictions that would be placed on Indigenous determination over the use of their own lands. Mr Ahmat said, 'If the proposed act is legislation, it will misappropriate Aboriginal people's private property rights and force our land to be used to provide public environmental outcomes without Aboriginal people's consent.' As the member for Maroochydore mentioned earlier, Eric Rosendale had a few words to say about this as well. He said—

I need to clear land for pastures and to plant crops for the cattle but I won't be able to do that under these new laws. The greenies are behind this and they don't care about my people, who have been looking after the land for thousands of years.

This legislation does not get the balance right, as claimed by those opposite—far from it. If Labor truly cared about balance they would treat all Queenslanders with respect. They would carefully listen to all the different views and act with consideration. Instead, they bulldoze communities, clear-fell the facts and woodchip the rule of law.

Earlier tonight the Premier declared that Labor cares about the bush. This proposed legislation makes it abundantly clear: Labor do not care about Indigenous landholders, they do not care about the agriculture, resources and development industries, they do not care about the fundamental principles of justice and they do not care about the bush.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (8.49 pm): I rise to speak in support of this incredibly important piece of legislation that will address the environmental travesty that is unchecked clearing of native vegetation. The Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill will fulfil an election commitment to restore Queensland's nation-leading legislative regulations on widescale deforestation.

Queensland Labor has an incredible legacy of protecting our forest vegetation. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, our native woodlands were being cleared at a phenomenal rate—up to 350,000 hectares per year. The first intervention came from the Goss Labor government in 1995. They had recognised that the consistent widescale clearing was unsustainable and was in most cases not translating into viable agricultural land. Alarmed at the waste and the sheer scale of the clearing, the Goss government moved to control broadscale clearing on leasehold land.

By the late 1990s it was clear that these regulations were not enough to significantly curb the rate of clearing. During the 1998 state election the Beattie government campaigned on a policy to extend the regulations to freehold land and to close loopholes in the existing legislation. Laws to this effect were introduced after the election, but loopholes continued to be exploited. The Beattie government imposed a moratorium on all clearing applications in 2003 to identify the weakness in the legal framework.

The next round of legislation, introduced in 2006, succeeded in phasing out the broadscale clearing of old growth forest and woodland. By 2009 the rate of clearing of native vegetation had dropped from the alarming 300,000 hectares per year in the early 1990s to around 50,000. The reforms ensured that only land that was guaranteed to be viable agricultural land could be cleared and crosschecked this requirement against the environmental protections for endangered and native species including koalas.

Thanks to this ambitious legislative agenda, championed by the Beattie-Bligh government, thousands—potentially millions—of hectares of native Queensland bushland had been saved. The effect that these changes had on reducing our state's net carbon emissions was also remarkable. Land clearing generates up to 36 million tonnes of carbon emissions annually, and Queensland is responsible for more land clearing per year than any other state. Ninety per cent of Australia's emissions from land use come from Queensland. The 2006 reforms allowed Australia to meet our Kyoto Protocol target by reducing emissions by 20 to 25 million tonnes annually.

The Beattie-Bligh government's long-term commitment to ending widescale land clearing is rightly considered to be among the greatest environmental achievements in Australian history. Of course, the reason for digging up this history in 2016 is because of the regressive changes made by the previous LNP state government. After their election in 2012 the other side wasted no time in broadcasting to the people of Queensland that unsustainable deforestation was back on the agenda. All investigations and prosecutions regarding illegal clearing were frozen in early 2012, and the legislative framework was weakened significantly by the laws passed in 2013. The amendments made broadscale land clearing permissible for agricultural use, reduced offset requirements and removed the existing protections for Indigenous land and high-value regrowth.

Aside from the significant loss of old-growth woodland and entire native ecosystems, the Newman government's changes have also resulted in massive increases in our carbon emissions. In 2013 Queensland was responsible for a third of Australia's total emissions—a disgraceful level for the nation's third most populous state. The Labor opposition opposed these changes every step of the way, and we campaigned strongly on a promise to restore sustainable land use measures in 2015.

The amendments proposed by the Deputy Premier in this bill go a long way towards undoing the damage caused by the LNP. We propose to reinstate protections for high-value regrowth on freehold and Indigenous lands. As the Deputy Premier said back in March, this regrowth has had 25 years to mature to the point that it can contribute meaningfully to our state's vibrant biodiversity. The bill will also reinstate environmental offset requirements on clearing that is permitted. This will ensure that our carbon emissions do not peak as they did under the last administration.

The Goss, Beattie, Bligh and now Palaszczuk governments have all shown nation-leading initiative in this area. I implore all members of this parliament to vote in favour of this bill.

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (8.55 pm): I rise to speak on the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I was on the committee that looked at the bill, so I have good insight on a number of aspects of this bill. Coming from a rural area of Western Queensland, I see firsthand the impacts of something like this on the people who live in the environment that will be affected.

I refer to the issue of natural justice as it applies to this bill. Much has been said about the reversal of the onus of proof. The committee recommended that that be taken out of the bill. An interesting point was made by Law Society president Bill Potts during the committee hearing. He said that someone,

through mistakes on a map, clearing some trees that they should not have and being arrested is akin to someone coming home from a week's holiday, finding a dead body in their back yard and being locked up straightaway because they are responsible for it. Putting it in that context makes it clear how unfair this is.

Some of the clearing activity I have been privy to in my time is not broadscale; it is fairly discreet. That contrasts with the mining developments and commercial developments that we see all the time that certainly are not discreet. It is logical that people who choose to live on the land in remote areas, away from the luxuries of metropolitan areas—they choose to live in isolation, away from their families, because they enjoy living in the environment—will care for it, at the very least as much as anyone else but probably in most cases more than anyone else. They are going to believe in sustainability and will want to ensure the best health of that land. Putting these responsibilities on land managers who will be performing vegetation management activities when there are so many flaws in the mapping does not make good sense and demonstrates that this is very poor legislation.

Much has been said about the SLATS report. The report showed that 296,000 hectares were cleared, while tree coverage increased by 437,000 hectares. That was debunked by the panel of academic experts who appeared before the committee. To my recollection, they said words to the effect, 'There are two different types of analysing the data. We made sure we knew how one was done with the clearing but the other one is not as accurate and reliable. Where the tree growth has expanded, it is not as reliable—we cannot rely on that data—but we are keeping a good handle on where they are clearing.'

Clearing has already been raised, but mulga is included in that. Mulga is cleared for drought fodder and it springs back up like the hairs on a dog's back. If that is being thrown into the mix in the middle of a drought, that does not make sense. According to this report, the most clearing happened in the Paroo shire, the Barcoo shire and the Boulia shire. It is such a wonderful effort for Boulia shire to make it into that report because you would have to drive about 50 kays to find a tree! Whatever bulldozer was doing the clearing there must have run out of diesel before it got to its second or third tree, but I do not know how Boulia even made that list. I am so glad that Boulia even had some trees to report!

There are misconceptions about vegetation. I am a layman and do not profess to know much at all, but I learnt some interesting things growing up. I have told this story in the House before, but dad told me one day about Burdekin Downs—the other day I was reading a history book on Queensland about Burdekin Downs—Fanning Downs and those stations outside Charters Towers. They are called downs country because they are open country. It is all moderately and, in some cases, heavily timbered country now, but for everyone who grew up there that is how they knew it. It was downs country when it was first settled. Back in the day the DPI had data and a way to analyse that, but there are a lot more trees there now than when it was first settled. The landscape is changing immensely. There have been tree surveys in the Etheridge shire showing heavy encroachment of trees over a large number of years, not just in the last four or five years.

A really practical and easy way to understand it is when the first Australians were out there a big part of their land management and the way they got around was burning. There would be big hot fires. They would burn suckers and let the bigger trees grow. That formed the landscape that we are used to. One residual outcome is that the Gouldian finch, which is one of our prized beautiful birds in the Etheridge shire, is endangered now because not as much burning is happening but they browse and thrive in that burnt landscape. Because the land is being 'managed' better now and there are not the big fires to rip through everything, a lot of effort is going on to preserve the Gouldian finches. The landscape is always changing and it is very difficult to just cut in a baseline. You cannot turn it back from the way it is and all of the clearing has been done. What we are talking about here is not environmental devastation and in most areas is very discreet.

In the gulf and cape another factor that is really important for people to understand is that there are a lot of commercial barriers to clearing. It is really expensive. I think one person at one of the hearings said that it costs \$300 an hour to operate one of his dozers and said, 'I've got to think really hard before I turn the key on that because it costs a lot of money and I've got to get that money back from cattle production.' It is not like everyone sits there with big piles of money ready to bulldoze the hell out of everything on their property. It is an expensive business and you have to think really hard. Coupled with that, a real culture has developed out there with primary producers in that they know that times have changed. They know that the environmental groups are a very strong political force and that there are laws in place now that restrict what they can do. There is a culture of fear out there already,

so most people are very reluctant to go down that road. You have to get your place survey mapped and get the vegetation mapping. It is a lot of work and it is a lot of expense, so there are already a lot of commercial barriers to stop people from clearing.

With regard to a lot of that country in the gulf and cape, the average size is 50,000 or 100,000 acres. In most cases these people do not want to be farmers. If you are a cattle grazier you do not want to become a farmer and tomorrow do 20,000 acres of farming. It would be very difficult for anyone to just change like that. Instead they might do 1,000 acres or 500 acres for a hay paddock to feed their weaners in the dry, and that is a completely different proposition. Some 500 to 1,000 acres of 50,000 to 100,000 acres equates to one per cent or two per cent on most of those places for high-value agriculture. If I had a scaled map of Queensland as tall as me here, you would not be able to pick those out. They would be tiny little dots on the map around Queensland and be barely discernible. That is what we are talking about in these areas. It is not big chains going through the forests clearing everything and koalas running off in fear. In most cases you are talking about discreet practices.

There is another practical point that did not come through during the committee process, and I say this with all due respect to the academics who fronted the committee. We went to Blair Knuth's property at Burdekin Downs near Charters Towers and saw the false sandalwood when it thickens up. It was not there 50 or 100 years ago when the first settlers were there, but all of this false sandalwood has come up now. He cannot go in there and tidy that up now, but where he is able to clear that up the landscape looks terrific. There is just as much biodiversity and animals on that land, but there was no grass under the dense false sandalwood that clusters up and there was erosion occurring. If these laws are passed, he would not be allowed to touch that up and clean it up. I cannot understand for the life of me how that is an improvement on the management. Blair does not want to pull everything on the place; he just wants to touch that bit and do 100 acres of high-value agriculture and employ a few more people and I think we would all benefit from that and I do not think anyone would ever notice, not even anyone on the reef. That is the extent to which most people want to go. From a practical sense you really have to live it and be out there and meet these people and understand it to be able to pass judgement on it. It is really difficult to pick up these nuances if you have not spent time in those areas.

Another practical point that was made was if you are up in the cape or in the gulf you are carting hay in during the dry period which is introducing weed species from all around Australia—you would be carting hay from everywhere—whereas if you had 500 to 1,000 acres for your hay paddock you would not have to buy hay and introduce all of those weeds. Weeds to me are a much bigger environmental problem than run-off. We had zero hectares of prickly acacia in the sixties. There is now talk of 20 million hectares of prickly acacia, and that is a real problem for all of us and there are some real environmental impacts from that. Feral cats in Western Queensland are a disgusting scourge on the environment. I would hate to think of the number of species that are under threat from feral cats in my area. These issues really do need to be addressed and the impacts they are having are very visible.

With regard to the Great Barrier Reef—and, again, I am no expert and everyone cares about that—when I am told that Blair Knuth cannot clear that little bit of false sandalwood under these laws and it is causing more erosion if he cannot clear it, it does not make sense to me. That needs to be changed. I made the point earlier about fire management. Fires were a natural part of life. Even when the white settlers first moved in, fires were a lot more prevalent. You would burn the country late in the year to try and bring up the green grass and to remove all of the suckers to let the big timber grow. It was a practice performed by the first Australians and then again by the first settlers, but now there are roads, firebreaks and rural fire brigades everywhere. If lightning strikes somewhere or someone throws a cigarette out the window and a big fire starts or if someone's fire gets away when they are doing controlled burns, in the old days it went through the whole gulf and wiped it out but now that does not happen or it rarely happens. The landscape is transforming even in the time that it has been developed, so it is very difficult to say, 'We need to keep it as it is now,' because what it is now is severely different to what it was 50, 100 or 150 years ago.

The key point is that we need people on the land who can manage the land themselves. We have to trust them because in most cases most of these people are trying to do the right thing. If we had no laws and no regulations at all, I am sure the land would not be too much worse off and I reckon it would be about the same because there is not a huge impetus to clear every tree that is out there. In some cases—and I speak only really with authority on the gulf or the cape—there are some opportunities for them to progress if a lot of those barriers are removed, but if we tighten up the system with these laws nothing will happen and we will remove that potential from those people.

In many cases, in a lot of these parcels of land in the north the property owners just want a little hay paddock. It is their big development plan for them to move forward in the future. If the government removes from them that right to have that hay paddock, that is pretty cruel. These people are good land managers. They are doing nothing wrong. They are doing a good job for their country and for their state by being producers. In most cases, they are doing a really good job in looking after the environment on their place. They are probably as good or better custodians of the land than any of us would be. For them to be told, 'We are going to remove any right that you have to develop your place,' that is pretty cruel.

A lot has been said about the development along the Flinders and Gilbert rivers. In my mind, there is no doubt that, even if these laws are passed tonight, in 10 or 20 years a big foreign company will want to bulldoze the hell out of the Gilbert or the Flinders and it will have the political muscle to be able to do that. Some farming families along the Gilbert would love the opportunity to do a little bit of irrigation and they would do a really good job of it. They care for the land. They have lived there all of their lives. Their farms have been in their families for generations. Under this bill, they will not be able to do a thing, especially in the Gilbert where there is a lot of timber.

Those farmers have so much potential to offer this state. At a time when the mining industry is declining and we are experiencing difficulties in the economy, we have to turn to agriculture. It is offering all of these positive signs of moving forward. We have to be very careful how we manage the opportunities for these farmers. If the government removes those opportunities, although it might not seem like much, what it will deny the state in terms of growth and addressing our debt problems is criminal. If the government denies those farmers the right to develop their land in these areas, basically, it is not only doing the wrong thing by them but also doing the wrong thing by the people who will inherit this state long along after we have left. This area has great potential for this state and any agricultural development there can be done in a sustainable manner. Like I said, it will be like pinpricks on a map. You could barely make it out while flying over in a plane at 20,000 feet. If that area is developed, it would have a lot to offer the state. Like I said, there are commercial barriers to a lot of this development, but it is the only opportunity those people have to progress in their lifetime.

There are wonderful opportunities in that area. Ninety-eight per cent of the cape is remnant forest. In the past, a lot of Queensland has been cleared—and that is good—but the cape has never really had that opportunity. We never made it up that far in terms of development. Every year, small parts of it are being developed and, in many cases, for the better. A lot of areas in the cape have been overrun by weeds and have thickened up and, because no burning has taken place, it can end up being in a worse condition than when it was when it was first settled. It can be misleading to think that development of an area is a bad thing. In many cases, it could mean that the country is better off. We need to allow people to use some of that 98 per cent of Cape York that is not developed. Even if we let people take only one or two per cent of that area to be used as hay paddocks, that can mean a lot to them. It can mean that their properties are viable. It means employment. As I said, bulldozers will not be moving into that area overnight. They are not going to pull up everything overnight but, if we as a parliament deny them the opportunity to develop in the future I think that is a terrible injustice to deliver to the people who will inherit that land from us.

In closing, the greatest impetus that I have heard for passing this bill is to save the Great Barrier Reef. I love the Great Barrier Reef. In my lifetime, I have been out there probably four or five times. Ironically, I think that most of the people who would be affected by this legislation would frequent the reef more often than people in the city who would be strongly in favour of this bill passing. That does not mean that people in rural areas care any more or less for the Great Barrier Reef. I just make that point.

No-one has a mortgage on the environment. Those people who live out in rural areas do not, but neither do those people who live in the city. We have to have a bit of trust in the people who live in rural areas. They are not all vandals and they should not be treated like criminals. We really should be compassionate for a sector of Queensland that is often forgotten. They do not get a lot of representation. I do not think they ask for a lot. A lot of the time they like to be left alone. I think they can do a pretty good job in managing their land if we leave them alone to do that.

Obviously, we will be doing everything we can to oppose this bill. I think that it would be a huge backward step for Queensland if the bill were passed. A lot of what this bill is trying to achieve has already been achieved. Already, in my adulthood a culture of fear and reservation has developed in rural areas. We could probably throw all of these regulations out the window, completely remove all

regulations on clearing, and we would not see a great deal more clearing than what we saw yesterday, or last year. Those days of clearing are over. That happened in the past. There are commercial limitations, but it would mean a lot to people in rural areas to have the opportunity to develop their land.

**Mr WILLIAMS** (Pumicestone—ALP) (9.15 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. Those opposite think that it is their absolute right to conduct mass tree clearing, believing that there were never going to be any repercussions. As the member for Pumicestone, whose electorate is only 300 square kilometres in size, one might ask what would I know about tree clearing. With tree clearing, we have sediment run-off. That sediment run-off gets into Moreton Bay. Once it is in Moreton Bay, it pollutes our water. The sun heats up the water and then we have blue green algae. Yes, tree clearing affects us in the south as well. Councils then spend a fortune trying to clear it up.

**Mr Hart:** How do you spell Pumicestone?

**Mr WILLIAMS:** I take that interjection.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Furner): Order! Member for Pumicestone, ignore the interjections. They are unruly and, if I need to, I will deal with them.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** Mr Deputy Speaker, it is all right. The member wanted to know—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I said ignore the interjections.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** I just wanted to know whether I wanted a vowel; that is all, but I have chosen to phone a friend. Thank you. He will fix that. As a person who has been involved in marine, fish and corals for many years, I know that it takes an increase of only a couple of degrees in temperature for coral to start dying. That is what is called coral bleaching. We have a lot of that happening in the north.

Clearing land adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef is vandalism. There are concessions in this bill, but that is not good enough for those opposite. One concession is being able to clear land up to within 100 metres from the banks of a river. That makes common sense. Those opposite would like to clear right up to those banks. That creates erosion. The water in the rivers then make their way through to the Great Barrier Reef. I referred to what happens in Moreton Bay and the creation of blue green algae. Once those waters make their way through to the Great Barrier Reef, there is the same result. The sun heats up the water and then we have coral bleaching.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. We will have order. There has been order since I have been in the chair and that will continue.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. They are rowdy. It is unconscionable that those opposite know that 91 per cent of cleared land is used for grazing purposes, not for crop planting. If we do not bring it into check now, the mass tree clearing in the hinterland around the Great Barrier Reef will eventually destroy the reef. When the waters around the Great Barrier Reef heat up, the coral dies within a couple of hours. We have seen that.

Queensland is transitioning back to a tourism economy. The mining boom is coming to an end and the Great Barrier Reef and the Queensland coastline is an integral part of our future fiscal success. Off our northern coast there are 100 million Chinese people with passports. They want to visit Queensland and see our reef. They do not want to come and be told, 'That is where the reef used to be.' That is what those opposite would have us do. They do not mind jeopardising the reef and our tourism industry that brings in billions of dollars per year to Queensland's economy.

Members opposite say that the farmers will look after the land. They do look after the land but it is in their own interests. They are not really concerned about run-off. They are not concerned about whether they kill the reef. The member for Whitsunday mentioned the Eungella National Park.

**An opposition member:** Have you been there?

**Mr WILLIAMS:** I know it very well. In the early days it was logged. There came a time for that logging to stop. In exactly the same way, now is the time for the mass clearing of trees to stop. We need to protect the reef; it is our future.

**Mr Hart:** What does that have to do with the reef?

**Mr WILLIAMS:** Sediments in the water kill the reef. As the minister pointed out, every 40 minutes an area of land the size of the Exhibition ground gets cleared. Those opposite would say they should be doing it quicker than 40 minutes. That is about the best we would get from them. I will close by saying that I never, ever want to see us in a position where we have to say, 'That is where the Great Barrier Reef used to be.' I commend the bill to the House.

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (9.22 pm): I rise this evening to make a brief contribution to the debate on the vegetation management proposals. At the outset I acknowledge the great work that the member for Hinchinbrook has done on this issue. Everyone on this side of the House knows just how hard the member for Hinchinbrook has worked with members of our team to travel the length and breadth of Queensland to ensure that landholders across this great state have an opportunity to understand what the government has been proposing and have an opportunity to be heard. I am sure that everyone would acknowledge the contribution that he made to this debate last night when he very eloquently set out exactly why it is that this legislation must tonight be opposed.

I oppose this legislation because as a member of the LNP I believe in the inalienable rights and freedoms that are associated with the ownership of property. When I was 16 I joined the Young Liberals because I believed in the freedom of the individual and protecting the rights of private property. I have been incredibly proud to be a member of the former Liberal Party and now the LNP over those years so that I can stand up against big government, against the abrogation of property rights. I am very proud to again rise in this House tonight and stand up for true conservative values that have been represented by the LNP and its predecessor parties for years and years and years.

Ronald Reagan once said that the nine scariest words in the English language are, 'I'm from the government and I'm here to help.' Landholders across Queensland are shivering in their boots at the thought of this Deputy Premier offering to help them manage their land. The thought of the Labor Party in Queensland having any idea about how landholders in this state should manage their land is just ridiculous. We know that farmers are some of the greatest conservationists that we will ever see. The land is their livelihood. They are of the land and for the land. For the government in this state to say to them that they have no idea how on earth they should manage their land is an absolute slap in the face to one of the economic powerhouses of this state. As members on this side of the House have said, any attempt by this government to dictate to landholders what they can and cannot do with land that they own will have significant ramifications for the production of agriculture in this state. It will also have a significant impact on jobs.

Time and time again we have seen the government stand up in this House and say that they believe in consultation. I think that demonstrably, by the way they have handled this issue and the way that they sought to truncate the committee's consideration of these very serious and significant issues, that is all hyperbole. Hypocrisy, thy name is Labor. We know that it is the LNP in this state that wants to give landholders a voice. It is people like the member for Hinchinbrook, the member for Nanango, the member for Gregory, the member for Warrego, and all 42 members of the LNP team, who genuinely believe in giving landholders an opportunity not only to have their say but also to manage their land as they know best rather than be dictated to by bureaucrats and boffins in George Street. We know that the people who are able to best understand what happens and what is right for the land is the people who live on it.

There are a number of serious issues that have been canvassed by my colleagues in this debate with respect to retrospectivity and the reversal of the onus of proof and I do not intend to canvass those tonight, but what I will say is can you imagine if the LNP were in government and stood up in this House and said that we will reverse the onus of proof, that we believe that legislation should be retrospective? The Deputy Premier would be the first person on her feet crying foul, saying that we are breaching fundamental legislative principles and we are abrogating the rights and freedoms of individuals in this House. Again what we see is hyperbole and hypocrisy emanating from the mouths of this government.

I will finish with just one final quote. Edmund Burke said that the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing. What we have seen tonight in this House is 45 members say that they will not let evil triumph, that they will stand up for the rights and freedoms of individuals, that they will stand up for the rights of property owners and they will respect the supremacy of private property. I condemn the legislation that is before the House and I look forward to joining my LNP colleagues in standing up against this big government abrogation of property rights.

 **Mr WHITING** (Murrumba—ALP) (9.28 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the bill. We have heard a lot from the opposition tonight, but we have not touched upon the issue of climate change. This bill is a crucial part of the actions that we need to take to combat climate change. We have to take action against climate change. Climate change is real and it will change our state. I talked about how it will change our state in my inaugural speech and I will touch on some of these issues. This is what we are facing in Queensland if we do not act. There will be more extreme rain events and they will be more destructive and extremely expensive. The 2011 floods caused \$56 million worth of damage to public infrastructure.

Due to heat stress, slower growth, lesser breeding success and reduced appetite, our \$5 billion beef industry will decline by 19 per cent in 2030 and 33.5 per cent in 2050. As reefs bleach and highland forests are fragmented, the tourism industry will decline. The Great Barrier Reef brings in \$12.6 billion in direct and value-added expenditure, and employs nearly 70,000 Australians. Tourism will be worth \$51.4 billion in visitation dollars over the next 100 years. Rising seas will place \$31.3 billion worth of roads, commercial buildings, industrial sites, houses and railways under threat in the next 100 years.

We are already suffering from the effects of climate change here in Queensland. In my time as a councillor and member of parliament, in the areas that I represent I have seen two one-in-1,000-year rain events. That is a 0.1 per cent chance plus a 0.1 per cent chance of those things happening. Our infrastructure and our houses are built to cope only with a one-in-100-year flood event. They cannot cope with a one-in-1,000-year flood event. During those two rain events, I saw whole neighbourhoods that were devastated.

In Queensland, the best and most effective legislative action that we can take to stop that getting worse is to stop emissions released through land clearing and protect the carbon that is locked up in vegetation. That is the best way to shield all Queenslanders, including rural producers, from the effects of climate change. Over the last day or so, I have found it galling to hear opposition members say that they will oppose the bill to protect rural producers. I state: the rural economy will suffer the most from climate change. Rural producers will bear the impact of runaway climate change. If we want to protect their interests, we need to protect them from climate change.

Of course, if you do not believe climate change is actually a threat, you will not take action. Incredibly, it looks like the LNP does not believe climate change exists. The member for Moggill has questioned the extent of human contribution to climate change. He says it is in scientific dispute. Here we have a man of science rejecting the opinion of 97 per cent of scientists. The shadow minister for the environment is ignoring the opinion of all climate scientists.

**Dr ROWAN:** I rise to a point of order. The member is misleading. I find it personally offensive and I ask him to withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Furner): Order! Member for Murrumba?

**Mr WHITING:** I withdraw, but I also table this article.

*Tabled paper:* Article, dated 17 August 2016, from the *Brisbane Times* titled 'LNP environment spokesman questions human contribution to climate change' [[1328](#)].

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** You can do that.

**Mr WHITING:** I withdraw.

**An honourable member:** You're back on camera 2, Ritchie.

**Mr WHITING:** Indeed, thank you very much. The former minister for the environment, the member for Glass House, could not even say the term 'climate change'. During three years of the LNP government, he could not even say it. During his near one-hour speech last night, the member for Hinchinbrook could not even say the phrase 'climate change'. The only member opposite to say 'climate change' was the member for Hervey Bay. Climate change is a massive public policy issue for the future of the state.

**Mr Cripps:** Only if you carry on about it forever.

**Mr WHITING:** Perhaps the member would like to listen, because he has not talked too much about it in the past. Climate change is a massive public policy issue for the future of the state and to deny it is a massive abrogation of responsibility. The public needs to hear the LNP say that they think climate change is real or that it is not. The member for Moggill: does he actually believe climate change exists? The member for Glass House: can he state whether climate change is or is not a threat to Queensland?

**Dr ROWAN:** I rise to a point of order. I find the member misleading, based on my speech tonight.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): Order! If you find the member misleading, you may put that in writing to the Speaker.

**Dr ROWAN:** I find his comments personally offensive and I ask him to withdraw.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** We need to be a bit circumspect about claiming personal offence for every single thing. Can the member explain to me what it is about what the member said that you found personally offensive?

**Mr SEENEY:** I rise to a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. That is a gross departure from the normal procedure of this House. As long as I have been here, which is a fair while, every member has had the right to find comments made about them personally offensive and ask for them to be withdrawn, without explanation to the chair. That has always been the case, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I doubt whether you have the authority to change that.

**Ms TRAD:** I rise to a point of order. It is true that comments made that are personally offensive should be withdrawn, if a member finds them offensive, but the honourable member for Murrumba was not making comment; he was asking a question. He was posing a question. How anyone could find offence through the proposition of a question beggars belief.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I will say two things: you, member for Moggill, may make—

**Mr Hart:** ‘You’?

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I beg your pardon?

**Mr Hart:** ‘You’; is that what you said? ‘You’?

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I take offence at your tone and I ask you to withdraw.

**Mr Hart:** I withdraw.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I take offence at that tone and I ask you to withdraw.

**Mr Hart:** I withdraw, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. The member for Moggill may ask the member for Murrumba to withdraw his comment. I ask the member for Callide to withdraw because of the tone in which you questioned my ruling. Member for Callide, I ask you to withdraw your comment. I accept your comment, but I find the tone in which you addressed the Deputy Speaker to be personally offensive and I ask you to withdraw.

**Mr SEENEY:** I withdraw, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Member for Murrumba?

**Mr WHITING:** I withdraw. Last night, I heard the member for Hinchinbrook say that he is speaking up for real people, real industries and real communities. I am speaking up for the real people, real businesses and real communities in my area. They are the ones who are now facing the spectre of the continual flooding that we can expect to see from climate change. They are real people such as Liz Parks from Major Street in Deception Bay. Her place has been flooded three times in the past 18 months. They are real people such as Kylie from Northshore Pet Resort in Rothwell, which has suffered from continual flooding in recent years. In the May 2015 floods, they had to haul their boarded pets out by hand in order to save them. There could well be other factors in the flooding, but we cannot explain the sheer volume of downpour without the forcing of excessive carbon in the atmosphere. To the members opposite I say that businesses in their communities are potentially facing disasters such as these floods, and scientists are pointing the finger at climate change and the forcing actions of CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations.

This debate is one of those moments that people will look back on in future years. One of the things that they will be asking the LNP is, why did you not take action on this issue? Why could you not take up the one bit of legislative action that could have made a real difference to the future? I commend the bill to the House.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Before I call the next speaker, I wish to make a statement. There has been a trend over this week in particular for members to show disrespect to the chair in terms of the tone in which they address the chair and speaking after the chair has risen. I let members know that if that continues I will warn them under standing order 253A for disorderly conduct.

**Mr ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (9.39 pm): I rise to speak on the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I know one thing for sure about this bill and that is that its purpose is not evidence based. Rather, it has been designed by the Palaszczuk government to appease the greens, notably those who live in the south-east corner of the state.

This amendment bill is premised on an emotional and sensationalised view that if the law is not changed Queensland will somehow become barren. That is simply ridiculous. The truth is that land clearing did not become out of control under the existing vegetation management laws. Rather, the greatest swathe of land clearing occurred under the previous Labor governments. In fact, it was the LNP in 2014-15 that invested heavily in regrowth vegetation on previously cleared land.

This amendment bill is another example of a game of smoke and mirrors this government continues to play with the people of Queensland—claiming holier than thou policy positions where the devil in the detail reveals a slap in the face to hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders whose livelihoods depend upon agriculture and farming. That begs the question: who are the people in Queensland for which this bill is intended or, phrased differently, who are the people in Queensland this bill is designed to protect?

They are not Indigenous Australians in Cape York—the very people this Labor government claims to be working so hard for. Closing the gap is not a concept and it most certainly cannot be achieved by taking away the right to farm land, to build local economies, to foster self-reliance and to provide stability and a future for families. This bill raises more questions than it answers, so I pose another question: what is the Palaszczuk Labor government's minister for North Queensland actually tasked with if not to represent and indeed address the needs of North Queenslanders?

Indigenous leader Ritchie Ah Mat, whom I have known for some years, was quoted in the *Australian* the other day as saying—

... a bill seeking to protect 'remnant vegetation' may make sense in the Southeast Corner of the State but not in the North with its pattern of underdevelopment ... this Bill would frustrate economic determination for Aboriginals who own about 30 per cent of Cape York.

As I said, I have known Ritchie for a long time. If there were two scallywags in North Queensland he would be both of them. He knows the people, he knows the country and he knows what is best in terms of development in that country. Ritchie should be heard by this government. The government should be taking notice of people like Ritchie Ah Mat when it comes to development in Cape York.

If it did not completely succeed, the LNP policies, including the proposed best practice model, certainly came close to striking that balance by making it possible to build roads and other essential infrastructure to make economic growth possible. Forget the scaremongering. Let us talk about some facts. Nowhere did the LNP's Vegetation Management Framework Amendment Bill 2013 provide for nor was used for the rampant, unjustified destruction of land that, as the Palaszczuk government would have us believe, has laid waste to ecosystems and native habitat and will bring the final curtain down on the destruction of the Great Barrier Reef.

Queensland's agricultural sector is probably worth around \$11 billion. The LNP introduced sensible vegetation management legislation that defined high-value agriculture and legislated strict vegetation controls in reef water catchments based on the goal to achieve sustainable land management practices. We will never hear the extreme greens talk about that. It is contrary to their cause.

Where are the campaigners that we heard so much from in the last state election calling for additional support to Australian and Queensland farmers? We cannot hear them because the WWF and their allies have taken over the airwaves with a leg up from the Greens party and their Labor mates.

I have the great privilege of representing the Noosa electorate which is Queensland's first designated biosphere reserve which supports sustainable relationships between people and their environment. Man can and must live within his local biosphere and environment. Our Indigenous heritage has taught us that living sustainably is achievable. We need a balanced approach. Forgive me for stating the obvious, but it is not the role of government to stifle the process; it must provide a way for it to be achieved. Extreme, ill-founded views have no place here.

There is a bloke whom I have a bit time for and am going to mention and who always gets a reaction. I speak of Nick Heath from the WWF. When I was the shadow minister for environment in 2010 I took the opportunity to spend two or three days with Nick. We went to Bundaberg, Mackay and up into the Burdekin to have a look at farming practices and how farming practices have improved, particularly in the cane areas of Bundaberg and Mackay because they are smaller farms and in the large farming enterprises in the Burdekin.

When we looked then at the improvements that were being made in farming in terms of the way the land was prepared, the way cane was actually planted in the ground, the way water and fertiliser was applied the result of these better practices was that the amount of water used and run-off into our waterways and the amount of fertiliser used was significantly reduced. I do not know whether the Deputy Premier or the environment minister have taken a trip with Nick, but I am sure that he would take them to some of those farms in those areas and show them the sort of farming practices that can be achieved by talking to farmers, engaging with farmers and working with farmers rather than turning them into criminals.

Over the past 10 years that I have been in public office I have enjoyed working alongside hundreds of conscientious, level-headed, hardworking conservations who must not be grouped with or assumed to be aligned with the mad greens—a small minority that twist the truth for their own agenda. The Greens candidate in the Noosa electorate—I call him ‘Mad Joe’—suggests that the future of this legislation rests entirely in my hands. Indeed, he has been quoted in local media as saying that if I do not support the bill I will singlehandedly be responsible for the destruction of the Great Barrier Reef.

We can achieve an outcome that guarantees the future of the Great Barrier Reef and we can achieve a balance that will allow for a sustainable future for agriculture in this state. These things can only be achieved if those people who are truly interested in the issue educate themselves rather than listen to extremists who are only interested in preference exchanges between the Labor Party and those whom I believe are a few degrees even worse, the Greens.

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.48 pm): I rise tonight to speak in support of the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. I strongly support this bill because it makes sense on so many levels. Other speakers have spoken of the positive environmental aspects of the bill and I acknowledge those thoughtful contributions.

I want to emphasise that this bill makes good economic sense in the long term. The bill fairly balances, in my view, the interests of the agricultural sector and the tourism sector. For too long the debate about land clearing in Queensland has taken place in the context of agriculture versus tourism and other sectors of the Queensland economy and conflict between city and country—between those who live on the coast and those who live in the bush. Many members of the LNP opposite have promoted this adversarial culture, yet what this bill seeks to do is to find the right balance. It is not a radical change. It is about sensible change. Let me take the tourism industry first.

The Great Barrier Reef is the jewel in Queensland’s tourism crown. Land clearing in North Queensland and Cape York puts at risk the integrity of the Great Barrier Reef. All Queenslanders know that the Great Barrier Reef is one of the natural wonders of the world. In reflecting on the natural beauty and environmental uniqueness of the reef, the economic impact of the reef can be overlooked.

A 2013 study undertaken by Deloitte Access Economics on behalf of the federal Department of the Environment and Energy measured the tourism, recreational, commercial fishing and scientific research and management activity within the reef catchment and World Heritage area. This study found that the value added economic contribution of the reef to the Australian economy in 2011-12 was \$5.68 billion. It also found that the reef generated 69,000 jobs, of which the vast majority were in tourism. That is jobs on Hamilton Island in visitor accommodation, hospitality and entertainment; jobs on Heron Island running educational tours to give visitors a scientific account of the sea life found in the waters of the reef; jobs at Airlie Beach booking day trips for tourists to explore the reef. I cite these figures to make the point that the reef is a significant economic asset, and maintaining its integrity is vital to the future prosperity of our state. More land clearing will lead inexorably to more agricultural run-off, and that is what places the reef at risk.

The reef remains in danger and is the subject of considerable international attention. If this bill is not passed, that failure will be noticed around the world. Indeed, the commitment to reduce land clearing in the reef catchment area was a critical component in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s decision not to list the Great Barrier Reef as endangered. Even members of the LNP must realise the devastating effect a formal UN declaration that the reef has or might be degraded would have on our state’s tourism sector.

I now turn to agriculture. Queensland farmers are amongst the smartest and most innovative in the world. For the overwhelming majority of them, farming is about sustainability, about treating the land correctly and with respect so that it provides the best return over many years. Queensland farmers are undertaking measures such as using semi-permeable membranes in their irrigation pipes so that salt and other impurities are removed from the water, a measure which allows them to use salty water when irrigating crops. They are also using drones, which allow for the remote monitoring of fences, stock and dam levels. One particular innovation uses drones to spread predatory insects over cropping land so they can kill pests that would otherwise destroy crops. This is modern thinking which applies new technology to one of our oldest industries.

This bill does not ban land clearing completely. What it will do is encourage farmers and others to think of other solutions, because the simple solution of clearing more land to allow for more agriculture is the sort of solution that many Queensland farmers left behind a long time ago. Let us not forget that for many years the greatest clearer of land in rural Queensland was none other than the

former Country Party and National Party premier Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, a man whose whole style of government is one which modern Queensland has left well and truly behind. Likewise, land clearing as a simple solution to agricultural issues is one that has been left well and truly behind by many.

The cries of those opposite that agriculture will be badly affected are just not supported by facts. Consider this: in 2005-06, the year before bans on broadscale clearing of mature forest was introduced by the Beattie government, the value of Queensland's agricultural sector was \$8.7 billion. The next year, 2006-07, the first year of the ban, the value of Queensland's agricultural sector went up by nine per cent to \$9.5 billion. This grew steadily to over \$10 billion in the final year of the Labor government. Then, when those opposite reached back in time during the Newman-Nicholls LNP government and allowed land clearing to increase substantially, the growth was considerably more modest. In the first year after the LNP changed the rules on land clearing, the value of Queensland's agricultural sector increased by only three per cent and in the second year by only one per cent.

Many Queensland farmers realise that broadscale land clearing is not a sustainable practice and, at some stage, it must stop. Queensland's agricultural sector is one that is largely based on exports. Increasingly, consumers, especially those overseas, are demanding that their food be produced in a sustainable fashion. Australia's reputation as a supplier of clean, fresh, world-class agricultural products produced in environmentally sustainable ways is vital to Queensland's international brand and adds value to our exports. I urge those arguing against the bill to go back to the first rule of marketing and of business: ask the customer.

This is a bill which supports the sustainable development of two of our major industries—agriculture and tourism. I thank and commend the Deputy Premier and also the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines for the significant work they have done to bring this important legislative measure to the floor of the House. This bill tries to move Queensland on from the adversarial approach promoted by many of those members opposite, an approach based on perspectives, and prejudices in some cases, of the last century. This is a bill which looks forward to Queensland's future and not to its past. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (9.55 pm): I rise tonight to make a brief contribution to the vegetation management bill. I want to paint a picture of Queensland—Queensland under Labor. In an urban electorate in Queensland, an electorate that covers 2,900 hectares here in Brisbane, per voter they have less than a hectare each—just 936 square metres. In the electorate of Mount Isa, per voter they have 29,839,531 square metres each. When we start talking about clearing land, it is easy to see how people who live in the south-east corner can get a very unrealistic perspective of what it means when people start saying they are clearing 296,000 hectares.

If you cleared 296,000 hectares this year and you did not revisit that same 296,000 hectares of Queensland until you had cleared every other patch of Queensland, it would take 660 years before you got back to the starting place. I do not know what those opposite know about trees, but in 660 years I figure that a fair few would have grown on that patch. Regardless of what you did, I think it would be fairly well vegetated by then. We need to bring some perspective to the argument—660 years is what it would take, if we cleared at this rate, to clear all of Queensland.

**Mr Cripps:** You're a denier.

**Mr WATTS:** This is the maths. They are their figures. Let me ask this question. Let us say you are an individual here in Brisbane and you are trying to make your way in the world. Let us say you buy yourself your 936 square metres and you pay for the title deed. You buy the block of land and you clear it. You are planning to build a house. You are going to plant some hedges, plant a lawn and everything else. Then in the middle of the night the people that you voted for, the people that make the laws, turn up and say, 'Actually, your land is now worthless. You can't touch it. You cannot do anything with it. You're just going to have to sit there and look at it because we're really worried that over the next 660 years nothing much is going to grow on it unless we tell you that you can't touch it.' Take anybody's urban block of land. If I said to you, 'You cannot cut your grass for 600 years, you cannot trim your hedge for 600 years, you cannot maintain your house for 600 years, you cannot fix the cracks in your driveway for 600 years,' I put it to you that there will be a fair amount of vegetation growing through it at the end of 600 years. We need to bring some perspective to this about the size of Queensland.

The first time I came to Queensland I arrived straight from Hong Kong. I came from an area that was 400 square miles and there were 6½ million people living there. The suburb I had left was Mong Kok. It had a million people resident there in a square mile. I arrived here. We had breakfast at Brekky Creek and I drove with a good friend of mine, Kirsty, out to her father's property at Rolleston and I stood in the middle of the property.

Two people lived on this property. There were three adjoining properties, and I could see the horizon in every direction, and just two people lived there. There are people on one side of the chamber who would say that he is going to destroy Queensland if he clears the land. I put it to you: he is not going to destroy Queensland if he clears the land. What he is going to do is grow some really nice beef that people can go down to Cha Cha Char and they can buy and have a really enjoyable meal, or they can go to the organic markets on the weekend and buy it from the farmer who is using world's best practice to deliver these goods. To do that, they need to have a profitable business. They need to have the ability to be able to clear weeds as they come up through their property. They need to have the ability to improve the land so they can grow organic vegetables for people to enjoy and to make sure they have good quality beef that is going to deliver a reasonable rate of return for the hectares they own.

This effectively means that someone can come in and say, 'Not only am I going to stop you from clearing your land; if I find there has been a problem I am going to assume you are guilty until you can prove yourself innocent. I am going to devalue it. I am going to make it retrospective. I am going to put the reverse onus of proof on you.' Can you imagine if we did this to people's title deeds on their houses, if we did this in an urban footprint? There would be riots on the street. It would be so offensive to the good governance of a state that it would be completely unacceptable to the citizens who elect representatives to come here.

Those on the government side of the chamber really need to understand what they are doing to people's property rights, because if people do not have confidence in their property rights they will stop investing. It does not matter if you are a taxidriver, a farmer or what it is you do; if your property rights cannot be defended under law, you are not going to invest. I put it to you that people will leave. The best example of that is if you go to some of the Eastern Bloc countries and you travel back in time to when property rights were not respected. They were completely destroyed by the state. They could take whatever they wanted whenever they wanted. In that environment people left, or tried to leave, in droves.

I do not want to see a Queensland like that. I want to see a Queensland where people want to come here, they want to invest, they want to develop, they want to make their way in the world, and their property rights are protected and defended by this House. If they want to grow great agricultural products and they want to do it in a sustainable way within the law, then the law needs to treat them fairly and honestly. It needs to respect their rights to be able to conduct their business and not leave them standing on shifting sand that they cannot understand and they do not know by making retrospective, reverse onus of proof type of legislation.

We have a legal problem within this bill and we definitely have a problem with the size and the scope of Queensland. I can see how it might appear to people who live on 400- or 600-square metre blocks of land. I have lived in a very small apartment block. I can see how 296,000 hectares sounds like a lot of land, but it is 0.15 per cent of Queensland and it will take 660 years to get back to that same piece of land if you cleared at that rate. I do not know what you would consider a sustainable rate of clearing, but I would say that 660 years is probably a reasonable rate of clearing. Maybe it could be higher; maybe it could be lower. Certainly it needs to be in the right place at the right time and for the right reasons, but this piece of legislation abuses so many things that this House is founded upon—the onus of proof; legislation that protects property rights. That is what this House is founded on. That is why it is here. It is not here to take those things away. If you want to take those things away, you just need the Politburo and a big army and you can take everything away whenever you want to take it away.

This House has to respect those things. I would think long and hard before we start creating precedents that do that to people. I would ask the people of Queensland to consider very carefully what this means for their property rights—the piece of land they own, the business they own, the investment they have made. Once this House starts disrespecting that and taking it away, it is a very short distance before the state controls everything for the so-called benefit of everybody.

The reality is that the people who live in this city want to be fed. They want good quality agricultural products delivered to their doors. To do that, we need sustainable farmers with good practices. We all know that Queensland has some of the best farmers in the world. Not only are they some of the most efficient; they respect the land, they respect the law, they work hard and they do a fantastic job. For this House to treat them in this way with the legislation that is proposed is abhorrent. If there was any other group of people in Queensland that this House was treating in such a bad way, everybody would be up in arms saying, 'Who on earth has proposed this legislation?' Make no mistake:

the extreme greens have proposed this legislation so they can save their own necks and make sure that the member for South Brisbane and the member for Mount Coot-tha get the preferences they need to be still standing in this place.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr PEARCE** (Mirani—ALP) (10.06 pm): As the debate on the bill before the House draws to its end, I wish to make a brief contribution on behalf of the landowners of Central Queensland. Honourable members know that I am a member of parliament who likes to tell it how it is. I have this belief that there is no point in mucking around. If I have something to say, I like to say it. If people do not like what I say, I really do not care two hoots. My experience in life with most people is that they will respect a person who is up-front and tells it as it is. I think if they are prepared to respect you for that, they are worth continuing to want to know.

There is an audience watching tonight with expectations around how I might vote, but before I go further I want to say to the Deputy Premier on behalf of my constituents and other landowners across Central Queensland that the intent of the legislation is not what landowners want. In fact, they do not like it at all. Landowners want certainty. Landowners want to work their lands to maximise their returns. Today's landowners, farmers and graziers are considered to be world's best practice producers of food for domestic and international consumption.

Again, on behalf of the landowners operating in the Mirani electorate and right across Central Queensland, I want to say that those landowners expect government to follow the recommendation of the Agriculture and Environment Committee to remove from the legislation that provision which refers to the reverse onus of proof. That is one of the provisions in the legislation that got people so angry. I have been cornered on a number of occasions and had to accept abuse and confrontation, but what it said to me, from my experience, was that it was really bugging people. I hope that following the recommendation of the committee the Deputy Premier will consider taking that out of the legislation.

The hours move on and I cannot see the point in raising again matters which many members have raised here today in this place. It is just too repetitive. We are running out of time, and I do not think it is my place to go over it all again. Before I end my contribution, I know that because of electronic media and social media there are expectations that I might abstain from voting. All day I have said that I was considering taking that action; that I would be following the debate and making a decision prior to the vote. Unfortunately, media became aware of what I was thinking. Late in the day I was made aware that a letter to me from AgForce had been leaked to the media.

That action ended any consideration that I may have been contemplating. I am here to do the right thing by my electorate. One of the things I cannot stand is to have things happen after certain words have been said between people. That was a letter in confidence and somebody has leaked it so they have lost me.

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (10.09 pm): The fundamental foundation of any functioning society is property rights and the rule of law. This legislation impinges every aspect of that in the most drastic and diabolical way. It undermines people's confidence in their own property rights, the value in their own property rights and also their confidence in the rule of law. We really have to question the motivation of a government or a society where the government is prepared to apply a standard to a particular section of the community that they are not prepared to apply to those people who act in the most depraved or outraged way against the criminal law. The government are seeking tonight to apply a particular standard to rural landholders in this state that they are not prepared to apply to some of the most repugnant and reviled individuals who stand in a court of law in Queensland.

If we are going to take this action because allegedly it is in the best interests of the community and because the community are demanding it—and they are not, in the numbers that have been put forward by the Deputy Premier and others—then the community must be prepared to pay good and just compensation for it, and they are not. There are some very, very serious deficiencies in the approach of this government to this issue—extraordinary inconsistencies dating back to the late 1990s when we saw the first iterations of this legislation in Queensland. We saw the actions in the most unforgiveable way of the so-called tree police, with trumped-up circumstances where there was very little evidence, reverse onus of proof and the misery they impacted upon many people in Queensland. We saw the ridiculousness of the former premier, Peter Beattie, going out to public meetings saying he had to bring in these tree-clearing laws because it was going to save our land from salinity and stop our railway tracks from rusting away. People may remember the ridiculousness of that.

We heard tonight again the Deputy Premier continue to proffer this argument that it is based on science. It is not based on science; it is based on junk political science. The greatest indication that this is not based on science is the provision in the legislation with regards to mistake of fact. Why would the government need to have that to protect themselves if they were comfortable or confident in their science, if they were comfortable or confident in their own maps, if they were comfortable or confident in everything that underpins their legislation? What they are doing is excusing themselves from their own dereliction of duty—the fact that they do not know what they are doing, the fact that there is such subjectivity in this, the fact that they cannot prove any of these things. They are shifting their own incompetence on to a landholder who has got to take them in good faith. When they can remove mistake of fact, which is the greatest indication that their science is wrong, then we can start to believe that this legislation is based on science. It is not based on science; it is based on ignorance, it is based on a misunderstanding, it is based on the most capricious political action and it is based on a deal with another side of politics on the most extreme left in Queensland.

It is also important to consider for one moment that the land in Queensland has changed for 40,000 or 60,000 years or beyond as a consequence of human intervention. It is not something that has just happened. The land is changed constantly by human beings to the benefit of human beings—just as the first Australians did with regard to using fire to manage the landscape. They could ensure it was able to be farmed in what was a relatively rudimentary way, they could ensure the control of regrowth, they could ensure there was new fresh growth to be able to hunt and gather. It has been changed for the benefit of human beings and most profoundly so—to the extent that it had a significant impact on some of the major marsupials in this state and nation. That is what happened with the larger marsupials.

This has probably had a very beneficial impact. I can remember my own father telling me when I was a very young child about his experiences when he used to drive his sheep along the edge of the forest. I asked him, 'How did you ever get them through here, Dad?' and he told me that there were very, very few trees when he was a young man in the 1930s. It has grown back because we have controlled fire. That is unknown to those on the other side of this parliament. They do not even want to consider or contemplate that. They live in an urban environment which is so profoundly different to what it was before that they do not even want to draw any sort of correlation whatsoever with that.

They are beneficiaries of things that are dug from the ground and turned into a motor vehicle, using energy sources that are dug from the ground. That assists them. They are beneficiaries when they live in a unit block somewhere, whether it be in West End or wherever, that is made from the aggregate that comes from the ground. That allows them to be able to live there and concoct these sorts of political campaigns whilst remonstrating basically all of this mock outrage and having some sort of social conscience at someone else's expense.

We heard the hypocrisy a while ago when the Minister for Health stood up in here and tried to lecture farmers about how they should be adopting these technologies. In my experience—and I do not farm anymore; we lease that—farmers are able to grow crops in drought situations where they never would have grown crops before. We are able to do amazing things. That is where real innovation is.

I was in a subway supermarket in Shanghai the other day and I was looking at the consumers in the meat section. Basically, they had Aussie beef and it was marked 'natural and safe'. We have that marketing advantage at the moment with the tree-clearing laws that we have. We control, we regulate. We do not clear-fell. We do not have the same sorts of issues that many places in South-East Asia or South America have. They do not have the same advanced landcare techniques that we have.

Honourable members cannot stand in here without any practical knowledge and start to delude themselves about what they think the case is. The honourable member for Toowoomba North pointed out the reality of the amount of this state that is actually cleared each year. It grows back many times faster. I have grazing pastures at home that have not been farmed for 10 years and we have trees up to 20 feet high on them. The big challenge for many people is how to deal with the issue of regrowth.

The point I am raising is that we are in a state of continuing flux and we are in a state of evolution. Human beings do that, whether it was the first Australians or where we are today. If government members want to try to stop that in some sort of esoteric mindset believing all these things if they do with some sort of sanctity or chastity—and I do not believe that in any way whatsoever—then they should at least try to understand what they are doing. Unfortunately, there is the most base of political motivation.

This does affect the confidence of landholders out there. This affects their investment security because they do need to be able to clear and manage to grow food regardless of the fact that we are becoming more and more productive. Whether we like it or not, crops are not necessarily the greatest

companion with trees. It may be the case if we had 100 inch rainfall in some areas, although that would even be doubtful because the sunlight would be barred from coming through the canopy and causing photosynthesis to start with. They are the realities that we deal with. This government are impugning and offending landholders out there who have properly stewarded and managed the land for so many years in the most base way.

There was nothing more galling than listening to one of the former ministers for environment in Queensland, the member for Ashgrove. When she was the minister, she was going to dump 38 million cubic metres of dredge spoil on Nemo and Dory. That is what they were going to do. That was reduced to four million when we were in government and to an onshore solution. That is the simple reality. When the Minister for Education writes back to those children who produced that little paper cut-out fish today, will she say, 'Don't worry, kids. My commitment to you is that I am going to apologise for wanting to dump 38 million cubic metres of dredge spoil on Nemo and Dory'? That was a great big mistake.

There was no concession around that whatsoever. This government is seeking to draw a whole new line in the sand. It does not want to talk about what happened in the past because the past with this government and its environmental management was not really pretty. It was the same situation under its legislation till we made the changes in 2014. That is when the major escalation of tree clearing happened. When we made the changes in law it provided a more settled environment where there was confidence and people could plan without necessarily having to take those particular actions.

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (10.19 pm): We have no economy without protecting our environment. They are two closely linked, mutually dependent elements of our community. However, it is a lesson we have yet to learn as a community, given the entrenched opposition to this bill by the LNP and by most crossbenchers. I speak tonight emphatically in support of the Palaszczuk Labor government's restoration of tree-clearing laws, the Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016.

Given that this bill is likely to be defeated tonight due to LNP and crossbench opposition, today is a sad day for Queensland's environment and for action on climate change. It means the Newman government's stripping of tree-clearing protections in 2013 will remain in place despite the LNP's promise not to touch the laws made before Campbell Newman was elected in 2012. It was a clear deception and misleading of Queenslanders by the LNP before the 2012 election, and that deception will stand most likely after the vote tonight. The LNP, including the current opposition leader, Tim Nicholls, did not have the courage to tell the people about the environmental destruction they had planned before the 2012 election, and that piece of political trickery may well remain in place tonight. That is bad news for Queensland's environment.

In 2010-11 we saw 91,690 hectares of vegetation on Queensland land bulldozed. With the LNP weakening of laws in place from 2013 under Campbell Newman, Queensland saw nearly 300,000 hectares bulldozed in 2014-15, a tripling of clearing rates in only four years. The numbers do not lie. Let me repeat that figure: just under 300,000 hectares of land was bulldozed in just one year. This means that 90 per cent of Australia's carbon emissions relating to land clearing comes from our state of Queensland. That is not a record that this state can be proud of. We are contributing unsustainably to global warming and rising sea temperatures via bulldozing of trees and vegetation after the turning back of the clock to the 1990s under the previous premier and treasurer and now current opposition leader.

The greatest threat to the Great Barrier Reef is climate change; that is an established fact. Now all political parties and politicians claim to love the reef. They want to protect it; they want to be seen to be with it. Tonight is all about acting on those pro-reef sentiments: walking the walk when we have no time to waste on either protecting the reef or acting on climate change. Unlike the current LNP shadow minister for environment, the member for Moggill, or the former minister for environment under Campbell Newman, the current member for Glass House, it is clear that human induced climate change is real, happening and becoming obvious.

Last month was the hottest month in recorded history. According to NASA—not known to be a particularly left-wing organisation; the somewhat precise and methodical space agency who if its research and calculations are out by thousandths or millionths that results in rocket explosions and astronaut deaths—more than 97 per cent of actively publishing climate scientists agree climate warming trends over the past century are extremely likely to be due to human activities. Most of the leading scientific organisations worldwide have issued public statements endorsing this position—organisations such as the US National Academy of Sciences, the Geological Society of America and

the American Medical Association just to name three. Yet the LNP members for Glass House and Moggill know better than NASA in terms of doubting human impacts on climate change. It is really quite astonishing and astounding that that should be the case given that the year is 2016, not 1916. To be quite frank, I find that embarrassing for this House.

One expects denial of scientific facts from One Nation as par for the course—queue the eye roll—but for a major political party, the Liberal National Party, to doubt human impacts accelerating climate change it is embarrassing. It also devastating for our environment, which is needlessly being left with inadequate tree clearing and vegetation management laws and people will needlessly suffer as a result.

As an adult, I try to seek out the truth. Facts established by rigorous scientific inquiry are at the heart of human progress. Without it, the human race would resemble other species and their characteristics. Through science, we have developed architecture, ships, culinary skills, medicines, production, manufacturing, fuels, energy, space exploration and the digital world. However, 25 years after mainstream media covered the science of the greenhouse effects and the challenge ahead of human beings in terms of taking responsibility for our impacts on climate—the six to seven billion souls on earth and the technology we have—denial of science and facts remains resilient.

The Palaszczuk government's restoration of tree-clearing laws is not extreme. It is a return to common-sense regulation of bulldozing of our vegetation here in Queensland. After the Beattie government laws came into effect 15 years ago or so—I think in 1999—did the Queensland economy tank? Was there a mass migration off the land by farmers? Did the Queensland economy collapse into recession? Of course it did not. In fact, it thrived. It went from strength to strength as Queenslanders adjusted to sensible laws that took into account our environment. We now see nearly 70,000 Queenslanders employed because of the great natural beauty of the Great Barrier Reef, which is under threat of inaction from this parliament tonight.

These conditions of our reef are contributing to coral bleaching at a time when scientific surveys have confirmed that 93 per cent of the reef is affected by some degree of bleaching. Strengthening the vegetation management legislation to protect remnant and high-value regrowth vegetation, including riparian zones along watercourses, is an action supporting our joint state Commonwealth Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan. It is a very important part of it.

It was just over 12 months ago that the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Environment went to UNESCO's World Heritage Committee to get the Great Barrier Reef off the endangered list, yet here we are facing inaction from this House. If this parliament fails to pass this bill, what message are we sending the rest of the world about our commitment to our environment and to the Great Barrier Reef? History and Queenslanders will judge this current parliament harshly if we fail to pass these laws tonight. Let us look at the numbers: 296,000 hectares of land were cleared in 2014-15 and yet if we go back to 2010-11 it was only 91,000. The numbers are there; they do not lie. What we see from the LNP is their typical behaviour: they say one thing—they say they protect the environment, and yet they do nothing. They do not act on their rhetoric and that should be condemned. It is a rejection of science. It is a case of here we go again.

Bjelke-Petersen would be proud of the LNP's position here tonight. The Liberal Party is dead and buried. The true Liberal Party that might have stood up for some half-decent environment laws are dead and smothered by the National Party, who have taken them over holus-bolus and sold out the environment here in Queensland. There are no true Liberals in this place. It is a poor track record. If this bill fails it will not be a tragedy for this government; it will be a tragedy for Queensland's environment. It will be a tragedy for our biodiversity. It will be a tragedy for the reef.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BAILEY:** They can interject all they like. They do not like to hear the truth. It is an issue that will not go away. Queenslanders will be dismayed to hear if we do not pass this bill and they will want action. Action on tree clearing is inevitable whether it is tonight or in the future, but it is better for our environment if it is tonight. The parliament has a very important decision to make.

I am proud of this Palaszczuk Labor government's action to stop tree clearing. I am proud to be part of Queensland Labor which has acted consistently for 17 years on this issue and we will continue to act consistently with principles, science and vigour.

We will be up-front with our policy. We will not hide our policy. We will not deceive Queenslanders like the LNP did before the 2012 election. We will back science, we will back action on climate change and we will be up-front about it. We will not skulk around with our policy like the opposition did. Why am

I confident? Because action is needed. It is the only course forward. What we will see is continuing impacts on our reef, continuing extremities of our environment with inaction, and people will increasingly demand action. It is better for us to pass this bill tonight. Let's get on with it. Let's join the 21st century again and protect our reef—

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (10.30 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker—

I rise to join in the debate on the Vegetation Management Bill, sick at heart and with a deeply felt anger ...

Those were the words that I said in this parliament on 10 December 1999: 17 years ago. Those words are every bit as relevant and as pertinent tonight as I rise to sum up the debate on behalf of the opposition in this parliament.

This is the 18th time in that 17 years that this issue has been debated in this parliament. There are 38 major amendments that have been included, according to the committee report, as well as myriad consequential and minor amendments since this legislation was first introduced into this parliament in 1999. There has to be a reason that deeply felt anger and that heartsickness that I express here tonight on behalf of my constituents and the people of regional Queensland has persisted down those 17 years.

The reason is obvious to anyone who has listened to the addresses that have been given by the people on this side of the House. The reason is obvious because this legislation was always unfair and unjust; it was always nonsensical and absurd; and it always produced outcomes on the ground that had nothing to do with the rhetoric of those who forced it through this parliament time after time. Back in 1999 in that speech I also said—

Today sees the culmination of a strategy that was designed to deliver an ideological goal to a noisy minority in return for—

Greens—

preference support in key urban seats.

It has not changed either. I also said—

Today sees the culmination of that strategy, which was dishonest at the start and is dishonest at the end. The strategy which has led to the introduction of this legislation has had dishonesty and deceit at its core. It has been driven by a dishonest and deceitful Minister who has grossly misused the resources of his office to divide Queenslanders and to set them against each other in the cynical pursuit of this nonsensical ideological agenda.

Those words from 1999 sum up the debate in this House in 2016 because nothing has changed. So many members on this side of the House have expressed the views of their constituents and have put forward the practical realities of the application of this legislation and the latest proposed changes over and over again. If anyone needs to understand the reason for the anger that has been expressed by the people on this side of the House, they need only listen to the responses from the other side of the House. They too have not changed in 17 years.

I want to pay tribute to some really great speeches on this side of the House, particularly from the member for Hinchinbrook and shadow minister. It was one of the great speeches I have heard in this parliament. There have been so many others: the member for Gympie; the member for Maroochydore who made a great speech about the impacts of this legislation on Indigenous communities; the member for Redlands who actually surprised me with the great speech that he made because he showed great insight into the issue; the member for Mansfield who brought a different perspective to indicate that this issue is not all about farmers but also about young homebuyers; and so many other members who represent regional seats—the member for Warrego, the member for Burdekin and the member for Whitsunday. A whole range of them expressed the anger and frustration of their constituents and tried to lay out the practical reality and the practical impacts that this legislation has on their constituents.

There is one particular sentence that I would recommend to the people of Queensland who are seeking to understand the rights and the wrongs of this debate, and that was something that the member for Hinchinbrook said in his address. He said that the 2014 SLATS report states clearly that woody vegetation covers about 51 per cent of Queensland and that the vegetation management activities reported in that year accounted for about 0.3 per cent of that woody vegetation in Queensland. That is not 0.3 per cent of the whole state, as the member for Hinchinbrook went on to say—because about half the state is covered by woody vegetation—but 0.3 per cent of that vegetation was affected in 2014-15, and yet on that basis member after member on that side of the House predicted all sorts of

calamities for the people of Queensland, for the Great Barrier Reef, for the whole of mankind and for the globe. It was absolute absurdity from members such as the member for Murrumba, the member for Stretton and the minister himself. It was complete and utter garbage—

**Mr PEGG:** I rise to a point of order. The member for Callide accused me of speaking in this debate, which is misleading the House.

**Mr SEENEY:** I withdraw. The point is that all of those calamitous predictions are based on 0.3 per cent of Queensland's woody vegetation, yet just about every person who got up over there predicted the end of the Great Barrier Reef. Of that 0.3 per cent, only a percentage of that is actually in the eastern catchments. As was embarrassingly pointed out to the minister here one day, a fair percentage of the woody vegetation is actually in catchments that run the other way. Yet every member chose to invoke the emotiveness of a threat to the Great Barrier Reef to justify what is an ideologically driven agenda which has not been accepted by the people of Queensland who have been affected by it for the last 17 years and will not be accepted for the next 17 years.

Another issue that a lot of members over there used in their arguments, especially the minister, was an emotive portrayal of the SLATS data, which is the data that measures the thickening or the thinning of ground cover across Queensland. The figures were grossly misused, and the member for Hinchinbrook went into that in some detail. In summary, I would suggest the 0.3 per cent that has actually thinned is more than compensated for by the thickening in vegetation that is not measured by the SLATS process and there has been absolutely no mention—

**Mr Perrett** interjected.

**Mr SEENEY:** I take the interjection from the member for Gympie. Can I say that, in the 17 years that I have debated this issue, there has never been an acknowledgment from the government of what their own DPI scientists have told them for those 17 years: vegetation in Queensland is thickening. It has been thickening, and that constant thickening is a challenge for land managers.

Our government made three changes to the legislation, essentially. We made it possible for high-value agriculture to be developed—for agricultural operators to expand their operations in certain circumstances and for Indigenous communities to develop an economic base in the cape. We made it possible for landholders to control regrowth so that they would not be forced to reduce their economic activity because of that vegetation thickening. We also put in place a fair enforcement regime. Those are the three things this government now seeks to overturn—three things that any reasonable, sensible examination of this issue would lead a person to support: high-value agriculture, endangered regrowth and a fair enforcement regime. This bill seeks to reverse those changes that were positively welcomed by Queenslanders. This bill should be defeated.

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment) (10.40 pm), in reply: If that contribution from the member for Callide illustrated one thing clearly it is that the Queensland National Party is still in charge of the LNP. There are no Liberals in Queensland anymore; there is only the Nationals in the LNP. The contribution from the member for Callide represents the contribution from all of those opposite. That is, not one single new thing was presented in the arguments from those opposite in relation to this historic and evolving issue—not one new fact, no-one skerrick of new evidence, not one new argument. Nothing new from those opposite was presented in the debate.

If anything demonstrates that we are stuck 30 years in the past with the old Nats in charge of Queensland, it is the contribution from the member for Callide and the absence of a contribution from the members for Clayfield and Indooroopilly. If there was anything that demonstrated the lack of courage, the lack of fortitude, the lack of leadership in relation to the old Liberal Party in Queensland, it was the absence of a contribution from the members for Indooroopilly and Clayfield.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): Order! Deputy Premier, there is a custom in this House not to refer to the absence of members.

**Ms TRAD:** No, the absence of their contribution to this debate, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I am sorry, Deputy Premier. There was an earlier ruling and I do ask you to withdraw.

**Ms TRAD:** I withdraw. I will go back. If anything demonstrates that the Liberal Party is no longer in existence in Queensland, it is the absence of a contribution to this debate from the members for Clayfield and Indooroopilly. They were absent from contributing to this debate for a reason: they know in terms of representing their electorates that their position is absolutely unsustainable—as unsustainable as the arguments put forward by the member for Hinchinbrook.

In a moment I will address the contribution made by the member for Hinchinbrook. First I will recap some critical facts that have been introduced into this debate by those on this side of the chamber—some new facts, new evidence, new scientific data that needs to be heeded when we are talking about this very important issue. I am incredibly proud of the fact that it is Labor governments in this state that have always led the way on responsible, sustainable land-clearing laws. From the introduction of the Vegetation Management Act in 1989 to the ban on broadscale tree clearing in 2006 and protections for high-value regrowth in 2009, it was Labor reform that drove land-clearing down from rates on par with clearing of the Amazon Basin to an all-time low in 2009, when only 53,590 hectares were cleared. It was due to those Labor reforms that Australia was able to meet its Kyoto targets for reducing carbon pollution. We acted and we achieved results. That is what Labor governments do.

Unfortunately, when the Newman government, of which the Leader of the Opposition was the treasurer, gutted Labor's laws, this caused, in effect, a complete reversal of this significant achievement. Of the 11 world regions highlighted as global deforestation fronts, eastern Australia is the only one in a developed country. This is truly disappointing. Furthermore, Queensland is now responsible for 90 per cent of Australia's emissions from land use. Some 36 million tonnes of emissions every year are generated in Queensland by land clearing alone. This is up from the 15 million tonnes that were generated in 2011, before the LNP came to government. At a time when the rest of the world is reducing their emissions, Queensland is driving Australia's emissions up thanks to the LNP's land-clearing laws. This is the legacy the LNP left us with their reckless and irresponsible approach to tree clearing.

This debate should not have been about farmers versus conservationists. It is not about siding with so-called extreme greens or even taking sides at all. It is a clear-cut question of science. Labor accepts the science that proves that unsustainable rates of tree clearing are damaging Queensland's environment and our climate, and ultimately it will damage our economy.

I turn to points made by the member for Hinchinbrook. He went to the issue of consultation. He claimed—

I said when I commenced this contribution that this legislation was conceived exclusively between Labor and the Greens, and despite the Palaszczuk government giving repeated undertakings to rural stakeholder groups that they would be consulted this consultation never happened.

When we introduced this legislation, those opposite did not even want it to go to committee. They did not want to even to debate it in this parliament. They wanted to shut it off at the first gate.

Let me be clear about the consultation we had on this bill. We took this election promise to the 2015 election. In fact, in 2012 those opposite signed up to an election policy that there would be no statutory decrease in tree-clearing laws in Queensland. Then they came in and did the exact opposite. We took our commitment to the people of Queensland. It was the same commitment Labor has taken to the Queensland electorate election after election. This is not a secret; this was a key plank of our commitment to the people of Queensland, to work hard to do what we could to reverse the decline in the Great Barrier Reef. That was our commitment, and we are following through. The member for Hinchinbrook also said—

Under the current vegetation management framework in Queensland all remnant vegetation is protected under the Vegetation Management Act. Let me say that again slowly for the benefit of those opposite. Under the act and following the LNP's reforms in 2013 all remnant vegetation remained regulated.

That was to an extent, until they introduced the rort of high-value agricultural permits and irrigated high-value agricultural permits. I say to the member for Hinchinbrook—and very slowly for his benefit—that high-value agricultural permits have been used to clear tens of thousands of hectares of land for pasture, not high-value ag.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms TRAD:** The SLATS report states that 91 per cent of clearing was for pasture.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): Order! Members on both sides, order! This is not a time for conversations across the chamber. The Deputy Premier has the call.

**Ms TRAD:** I will remind those opposite about the clearing that has taken place at Olive Vale which is now under investigation by the LNP federal government in relation to matters of national environmental significance and also at Strathmore and Kingsvale. Even Malcolm Turnbull's own federal government's environment agency has suspended that permit—a permit that was granted by the former deputy premier, the member for Callide, which it has said should not occur because of the damage it will do to Great Barrier Reef catchments. That is what is taking place. These are the rorts that the former

LNP government put in place in relation to the Vegetation Management Act and it was our commitment to the people of Queensland that we would close these rorts down. Those opposite talked a bit about regrowth vegetation and made the suggestion that this should be made available for clearing. They made lots of comments about remnant vegetation, but if they are so keen to protect remnant vegetation then they should want to protect high-value regrowth as well.

**Ms Jones** interjected.

**Ms TRAD:** This vegetation shows the same characteristics as remnant vegetation. That is why it is categorised as high-value regrowth. Some 62 per cent of clearing was regrowth. This is remnant like and stores massive amounts of carbon.

**Ms Jones** interjected.

**Ms TRAD:** That means that 38 per cent was remnant. This is devastating considering the LNP said it maintained protections of remnant, but we know that the majority of this clearing is turned into pasture for cattle, not cropping.

**Ms Jones** interjected.

**Ms TRAD:** Many of those opposite talked about the impact on the agricultural community. In fact, if you listened closely to the member for Glass House then you would think that in the years between 1999 and 2012 when Labor's vegetation management laws were in place Queensland did not produce any sugar.

**Ms Jones** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Minister for Education, if you persist you will be warned. I want to hear the Deputy Premier and we will get on with the vote.

**Ms TRAD:** If you listened to the member for Glass House you would think that there were no food products produced in Queensland because of Labor's vegetation management laws.

**Mr Powell** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Glass House, if you have a point of order, rise and raise it.

**Ms TRAD:** Let me assure those opposite that Queensland continued to produce incredibly high-value agricultural produce not only for our state to share but also for export. I think that the Minister for Agriculture detailed very well in her contribution to this debate how much the agricultural community continued to grow and thrive in Queensland even under Labor's vegetation management laws, which goes to prove—and I think she put it perfectly—that we could grow the agricultural community and protect our environment at the same time. Labor has always been able to get that balance right.

I noticed that the member for Whitsunday made a contribution, particularly in relation to his electorate, but he did make mention of Peter Spies and his submission to the committee's review of the bill. Of course Peter Spies is a consultant for hire churning out reports in favour of land-clearing applications. Members will be familiar with his most infamous work at Olive Vale where his flawed technical reports were used to justify clearing that should never, ever have been approved. An independent review that I commissioned of his—

**Mr Bennett** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock, and I apologise, Deputy Premier. Member for Burnett, if you persist with your interjections you will be warned and I will take the appropriate action and I assure members that that will reflect in the voting.

**Ms TRAD:** An independent review that I commissioned of his technical work for the Olive Vale tree-clearing application found that the reports supplied to QDNRM assessment officers failed to supply consistent and accurate information on the proposed time line for clearing, failed to supply land suitability information at the scale required to support the application and that, as a result, the area nominated by the applicant as suited for cropping was overestimated. Indeed, the clearing at Olive Vale supported by Mr Spies's report was so egregious that the Commonwealth government felt the need to step in and stop it. This says it all about Mr Spies and the LNP's approach to clearing—pseudo science to support dodgy claims.

A number of other members made statements in relation to the development sector. The government's proposed legislation needs to be read in conjunction with the Sustainable Planning Act. Within urban areas as defined under that act offsets are only required for a limited number of matters. There are exemptions and special arrangements available to developers in urban areas that get the balance right between development and the environment, and I thank the Minister for Environment for his work in relation to that area and working through those issues with the development sector.

I touch on the issue in relation to Aboriginal development in the Cape York Peninsula area in particular, and I am aware of the contribution through public channels of the member for Cook. The Minister for Environment and I went to Cairns and met with a number of senior Aboriginal leaders and traditional owners at the invitation of the member for Cook—and I thank him for that—and it was very clear at that meeting that there was a wide variety of views in relation to economic development in the cape. There were issues relating to native title tenure resolution that inhibited economic development or frustrated economic development. There were issues in relation to facilitation of assessments and applications through different government agencies.

However, for the past 10 years there have been provisions for economic development in the Cape York Peninsula through the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act. This act changes nothing in relation to that and in fact there is, I think, a case to be made for reviewing that act and for reviewing some of the issues that have frustrated economic development within the cape, and I have made that commitment to the member for Cook and I am very happy to continue talking to him about it. However, it is absolutely incorrect to say that this bill has any effect on the ability of Indigenous people in the cape to access mechanisms within the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act and to enable economic development activities because the Hope Vale banana farm was able to be set up and to function under Labor's vegetation management laws. That is an excellent example of how we can go forward on the cape with good Indigenous community economic development opportunities and still have the balance right with the environment.

In relation to the onus of proof, the government made a decision in relation to our response. It is a whole-of-government decision in relation to that position. I can understand that people will have very strong views in relation to this issue and I have outlined why since 2003 until 2013 this provision was in the act and the government and the cabinet made a decision that we would want to go forward seeing this provision reinstated within the Vegetation Management Act. With regard to the issue in relation to property rights—and we have heard a lot from those opposite in relation to property rights—I understand that people have a very strong view about what they should do on their property, on the land that they buy, on the freehold title that they hold. I understand that. I absolutely understand that. The member for Toowoomba North was right when he said that this parliament and most common law systems have been built on the preservation of personal rights, of individual rights.

I understand that, but we have come a long way in 150 years and it is not just about the protection of property rights that spurs us, that motivates us as a legislature to make laws that impact on our economy, our society and our environment. There are a whole range of factors, including emerging scientific consensus around the impacts of climate change and what those impacts will do not only to our economy, to our farming land, to our infrastructure but also to every single bit of the way of life that we understand today.

We take action to change some of the practices today that are unsustainable in the same way that legislatures took action to change the way that we used to dump toxic water from factories into rivers or the way that we used to dredge the Brisbane River. We used to do a lot of things that had significant environmental impacts, but we have changed that because they were unsustainable and broadscale tree clearing is unsustainable. It is unsustainable today.

The member for Warrego talked about children in her electorate. I think that is a very important point to end on, because the decisions that we make have intergenerational consequences. Today, the member for Currumbin came into this place and distributed beautiful origami pieces made by children at a school within her electorate. I think that was a very poetic reminder to us in this place that there are children in this state, in this country, who are desperate for us as lawmakers and as adults to do something—

**Ms Jones:** And as mothers.

**Ms TRAD:** I take that interjection—and as mothers and as parents to do something to protect the Great Barrier Reef, to do more to protect the Great Barrier Reef.

I make no apology for going to Bonn to represent this state and, with my colleague the Minister for Environment, arguing ferociously to keep the Great Barrier Reef off the endangered list. I make no apology for that, because I know how much it means to our economy—\$6 billion a year—how much it means to all of those jobs that depend on it in all of those regional communities, 69,000 jobs. I thank the health minister for his contribution to this debate in which he outlined in great detail the significant economic contribution that the Great Barrier Reef makes to our state.

We are at a critical juncture in terms of our stewardship of the Great Barrier Reef. We have had a significant coral bleaching episode. We have sediment, pollutants and nutrients running into the reef that are growing the numbers of crown-of-thorns starfish—in fact, encouraging infestations that are smothering seagrass, that are cutting out light for coral. These are things that are real and scientifically quantifiable and we can do something about that.

**Ms Jones:** We can.

**Ms TRAD:** We promised that we would do something about it.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister for Education, I have made comments already in relation to wanting to hear the Deputy Premier. I do not want you provoking the opposition. I would prefer that we hear the Deputy Premier. Let her finish, then we can move on, have a vote and take whatever the appropriate action is.

**Ms TRAD:** I will go back to my point. There are children throughout this state who want us as lawmakers to do more than what we are doing. In fact, at the last election we promised the Abbott and then the Turnbull government that we would do more in Queensland. We promised them and we now have an intergovernmental, legally binding agreement in relation to enacting the Reef 2050 Plan and it includes reinstating tree-clearing laws here in Queensland. We promised the international community that we were going to be good stewards of the Great Barrier Reef. This is our moment to do something about that, to fulfil that promise.

I think it is incredibly important that I also reiterate the very alarming story that the environment minister brought to the parliament's attention, for which I thank him. Significant environmental philanthropists are saying to the Queensland community, 'If you do not enact the laws that you promised to stop land clearing, to stop the pollutants and the sediments running into the reef, then we will not be contributing our money into saving the Great Barrier Reef through programs and projects that are there to improve the health of the Great Barrier Reef.'

At this moment, there are children asking us to step up. There are people throughout Queensland asking us to step up. There are people throughout Australia asking us to step up here tonight and, can I say, there are people around the world asking us as Queensland legislators to stand up tonight and do something more than have the status quo, to have an impact on climate change and to save the Great Barrier Reef. That is what people are asking us to do tonight.

I reiterate what I said at the rally yesterday in the chamber here tonight. I fundamentally believe that a vote against this bill tonight is a vote against the Great Barrier Reef. Those on this side of the House are resolute and will be voting to save our environment, to restore balance, and to do everything we can for the Great Barrier Reef.

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

**AYES, 42:**

**ALP, 41**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hinchliffe, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Power, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

**INDEPENDENT, 1**—Pyne.

**NOES, 44:**

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

**KAP, 2**—Katter, Knuth.

**INDEPENDENT, 1**—Gordon.

Pairs: Howard, Stevens.

Resolved in the negative.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Correction of *Record of Proceedings*

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (11.12 pm): I wish to advise the House that during the debate on committee reports on the Appropriation Bill on Tuesday I cited a figure in relation to a matter under investigation. I said the figure was \$1,370.66. I have since been advised that due to an error in calculation that figure is not correct. I am advised the figure is \$1,613.64.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### Child Protection

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (11.12 pm), by leave: Mr Speaker, earlier today I made a statement regarding child safety. I wish to clarify and assure you and the House that the latter part of my statement regarding abuse notifications did not, and was not intended to, reference any particular matter before the courts.

## SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.13 pm): I move—  
That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 30 August 2016.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.13 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

### Dalby, Small Business

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (11.13 pm): Since becoming the member for Condamine, I have had the opportunity to visit many small businesses within my electorate. It continues to amaze me how resourceful and innovative small business people are. They repeatedly rise to the challenge of changes in the economy and marketplace by modifying their business model. Small business is responsible for keeping our economy stimulated and employs a significant number of people.

Dalby is home to a large number of agricultural, manufacturing and engineering companies that have based themselves on the Darling Downs and invested in their local communities. Those businesses trade locally, Australia-wide and globally, putting Dalby on the world map as a location for companies to successfully run their business.

The community of Dalby went through a rapid and unsustainable development period that saw unprecedented growth. This turned into a massive downturn with the end of the construction phase for coal seam gas projects. Many companies changed their core business to service the CSG industry and its demands. However, once the rush was over, they had to readjust to a more realistic and sustainable business model.

In Dalby, many businesses have been operating for more than 20 years, with several closer to 30 years and one, White Industries, which commenced operations in 1960, is still one of the leading businesses in Dalby, employing local people. Simplicity is an agricultural machinery business that has gone from strength to strength, employing almost 100 people and continuing to develop state-of-the-art air seeders and tillage equipment to service farmers in Australia and worldwide.

Dingo Australia is developing its core business, whilst moving into different market spaces to diversify their product base. Ozcon, which is a relatively new business started by a local young couple, grew rapidly alongside the CSG industry expansion in the Surat Basin. They have now changed their

focus and diversified to ensure their business remains successful into the future. Dalby Rural is an agricultural supplier company that has been operating since 1993. The founders are local people who support their local community and encourage local employment and industry.

As members can see, I am incredibly proud of my electorate and the active small business community within it. Small business is an important part of our economy and all our futures. I think tonight's result will give them a little boost as well.

### Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (11.16 pm): Labor went to the people of Queensland with a commitment to openness and transparency, and I am more than happy to support a parliamentary select committee inquiry into coal workers' pneumoconiosis. While my department and I will cooperate fully, it is important that we are not distracted from the primary focus, which is a solution to this issue.

For me, the initial reported cases of coal workers' pneumoconiosis were a catalyst for action for change, not a royal commission. In January I announced a five-point action plan to tackle the re-emergence of the disease. One of those points was an independent review by occupational health and safety experts at Monash University. That team has made 18 recommendations and we have already begun to implement them. As well, my department is considering the recommendations from the Senate inquiry.

Together with doctors, unions and employers, we are focusing on prevention through dust management, early detection through better screening, and a safety net through workers compensation. As the member for Mirani told the House earlier today, our state's 5,500 underground coalminers now have a dual-screening guarantee for chest X-rays. Current and past miners who visit their GP with concerns can be confident that their GP has received detailed information from Queensland's Chief Medical Officer on coal workers' pneumoconiosis. Intensive training is being developed for nominated medical advisers at the mines. It is proposed that employers will be compulsorily required to report cases to government. Tomorrow at the COAG Energy Council meeting in Canberra I will raise that this is a national issue with national implications.

On dust standards and monitoring, it is proposed that companies will be required by regulation, for the first time, to report all dust-monitoring results quarterly to my department. The Chief Inspector of Coal Mines has the authority to suspend operations at mines where he believes risk is not at an acceptable level and he will use that authority when required. Queensland will adopt any recommendation from SafeWork Australia for a new national standard for respirable coal dust exposure.

There has been a great deal of complacency across-the-board on coal workers' pneumoconiosis. My commitment to this House and to coal workers and their families is that their health and safety is my No. 1 priority. As always, I urge any coalmine worker who has concerns about their health to please talk to their general practitioner.

### Wide Bay, Infrastructure

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (11.19 pm): Infrastructure spending in the Wide Bay region has been slashed in the Labor government's recent budget and that is harming my electorate. In Queensland, the total infrastructure spend has been slashed by around \$400 million compared to the LNP's last budget. In the 2016-17 year, across Queensland the average infrastructure spend per person is about \$2,232, but in Wide Bay it is \$2,211.

Missing out on vital infrastructure money, coupled with the constant regurgitation of promised projects that are announced by the Labor government but never started, is putting real pressure on the region. Apparently, the starting date is the 12th of never. With less money being invested in the regions, it comes as no surprise that jobs are harder and harder to find.

All we have is regurgitated announcements for projects. For example, on 14 August 2015 it was announced that the budget contained \$26 million for the Yarrilee intersection upgrade. In this year's budget it was announced that there is \$26 million for the same intersection. It is really making it very difficult. Despite the minister telling us that the upgrade of that intersection has already happened, I can assure him that it has not. I doubt there is anything that would assist the minister in keeping up with such important information that affects Queensland drivers' safety.

Those opposite talk about jobs, jobs, jobs. Why do we not get on with that infrastructure and create those jobs? They promised \$50 million to upgrade the Hervey Bay Hospital emergency department. If the money had been spent on those three projects, costing about \$90 million, that would

create jobs. We have some of the highest unemployment rates in the state, yet those projects cannot get off the ground. Their announcements are simply regurgitated. They make the same announcements and they just keep on regurgitating their promises. Come on fellas: get on with the job of creating jobs for people, especially the youth, and make sure we keep the economy going.

### **Algester Electorate, Neighbourhood Watch**

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (11.22 pm): Neighbourhood Watch Queensland is a great link between police and the community. Members of local Neighbourhood Watch groups are filled with incredibly generous people who think nothing of giving up their time to help others. Their efforts help our neighbourhoods be connected, supportive and safe places to live. I am very privileged to have a number of Neighbourhood Watch groups in my electorate of Algester. I pay tribute to all that they do, which of course, as we in this place all know, is much more than many would appreciate.

Earlier this week I was honoured to host a dinner in Parliament House for the executive of a number of Algester electorate Neighbourhood Watch groups. The generosity that we see in the community was once again on display at our dinner table. The conversation was dominated by the sharing of hints, advice and ideas about how to serve our communities, and even contacts and resources were offered up to help each other.

Owen Roberts and Jocelyn Marentis, two very wonderful people from Forestdale Neighbourhood Watch, whose group celebrated its 25th birthday last year, generously shared some of the secrets of their success, including what they have been doing in preparation for this Sunday's Forestdale Neighbourhood Watch Motor Show and Country Markets, being held at Lincoln Green Park.

Alanna Ngo, the area coordinator for Heathwood Neighbourhood Watch, and treasurer Kinnari Shelat, who I have to say are absolutely incredible women, are passionate about making a difference in their community. Alanna, Kinnari and the team are working hard to prepare for their now annual picnic in the dark event on the Halloween weekend. If it is anything like last year, it will be a huge success.

Robert Stack and Margaret Madden from Hillcrest Neighbourhood Watch, whom I am absolutely in awe of, have worked tirelessly to establish the group and are making a real difference in our community. They are also busy preparing for their community meet-and-greet event at the Sweetgum Street Park this Sunday. I look forward to being part of the celebrations.

I also mention Rod Rush and Ray Rogers from Lakewood Neighbourhood Watch. They were not able to make it to dinner this week, but I know that they would have been just as generous with sharing their experience with others. Those wonderful people are true community heroes and our neighbourhoods are made all the better for their hard work, their generosity and their desire to make a difference.

In the short amount of time I have left, I also congratulate the P&C and staff of Grand Avenue State School. Last week they held their third annual Ekka Funday. Once again, it was a huge success. It is estimated that over 5,000 people attended the event. I worked on the barbeque stall with the federal member for Oxley, Milton Dick, and local BCC councillor Charles Strunk, along with a number of our volunteers. I can tell the House that it felt like every single one of those 5,000 attendees ordered a sausage on bread or a steak burger, because we were run off our feet. The school made some \$30,000 for a number of activities that the P&C is committing to, to improve playgrounds and equipment for the students at the school. Congratulations, once again, to Grand Avenue State School.

### **Navua Sedge, Eradication**

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (11.26 pm): I table a poll from constituents regarding Navua sedge.

*Tabled paper:* Nonconforming petition regarding the Navua Sedge weed [\[1329\]](#).

The poll asked if the state government should prioritise funding into R and D and eradication of Navua sedge, with 100 per cent of the 234 participants saying yes. I ask the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries to take this seriously. Agriculture is the largest employer on the Atherton Tablelands and Navua sedge is killing it, and it is only going to get worse. Navua sedge is an invasive weed which has the capacity to spread at an alarming rate. The weed has now been found in the drier areas of the Tablelands—an area where it was initially thought it could never survive—and the situation is now critical.

Biosecurity Queensland points out that Navua sedge is extremely aggressive and takes nutrients, light and moisture from the natural pastures and is capable of forming dense stands that can smother many tropical pasture species. In pastures, Navua sedge is unpalatable and provides little feed value for cattle. Navua sedge can cause death in cattle as they cannot pass it, there is no nutrition, they put on no weight and they starve. Each flower has over 500 seeds which remain viable in the ground for over three years.

Without the existence of a pre-emergent herbicide, control of this weed is reliant on intensive and regular spraying. The devastation of this weed can be seen on neighbouring Fiji. Navua sedge has reduced the carrying capacity of pastures by up to 40 per cent and is a major cause of low milk production. It is estimated that Navua sedge could have a larger impact on pastures in Far North Queensland than it has had in Fiji. Applying the scenario of reducing carrying capacity rates by 50 per cent could potentially reduce the agricultural economy from \$149 million to \$74 million, which would be a devastating loss for the Queensland economy.

I was pleased that the call for urgent action has been heard by the Department of Transport and Main Roads, and I welcome the much needed additional spraying rates for Main Roads road verges. Unfortunately, this alone will not be enough to combat this invasive weed, and unless more is done much of our prime agricultural land will be rendered useless. The Tablelands Regional Council, the agricultural industry and I are seeking support for funding for a research and development program into Navua sedge and the establishment of a Navua sedge pilot program on the Atherton Tablelands to step up the fight to free this state of this devastating noxious scourge.

### **Hagslea State School**

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (11.29 pm): On 30 July I had the pleasure of attending the 140-year celebrations of the Hagslea State School. Under bright sunshine, the celebrations went all day and had everything—choirs, dancers, an orchestra, face painting, great food, drinks, a small engine display, classic cars, emergency services rides, a mechanical bull, sideshow rides, a jumping castle, a historical photograph display, tree plantings and even a maypole performed beautifully by the students.

This event was very well organised by the school community, and the hard work of the school's administration officer, Mrs Leigh Spelleken, needs to be acknowledged. The school principal, Mr Thomas Cameron, and teachers Ms Deborah van den Berg, Mrs Nichol Simpson, Mrs Joanne Panzram, Miss Sharryn Patterson, Mrs Tracey Rathjen, Miss Melita Mackay, Miss Helen Ballard, Miss Tamasin Collins and the cleaner, Mr Kevin Watts, did a tremendous job. The hard work of the Parents and Citizens, led by Mr Dean Rutherford, Miss Leonie Kilpatrick, Mrs Cheryl Draheim and Mrs Donna Bradley, must also be acknowledged. I was very impressed by the school leaders, Seth Jenkins, Dalen Rutherford, Travis Ostrofski, Chelsea-Lea Payne and Digby Devey.

Hagslea State School really cherishes and preserves its history. I learned that it has had two name changes since it was first opened on 12 July 1876, when it was called the Walloon Scrub State School. The name changed to Kirchheim State School in 1884. There is a small church located across the road, and 'kirchheim' is German for church home. In October 1916, in reaction to World War I, the lands department anglicised the name of the area to Hagslea in honour of British General Douglas Haig. Enrolment numbers have varied. When the school opened in 1876 there were 30 students. The school peaked at 140 students in 1885, but by 1980 enrolment had dropped to just 17 students. Currently, enrolments are a healthy 45 students.

There are a number of plaques and signs that record the school's history. The Anzac memorial stone was presented by Mr Ken Savage of the Rosewood RSL on Anzac Day 2015 and the Anzac Garden was constructed by Mr Dean Rutherford. The cricket pitch was opened by the great Australian fast bowler Jeff Thompson in 1976. The library was opened by Shayne Neumann MP in 2011, with funding from the education revolution program, while Bill Klupfel opened the tennis courts in 1971. Mr Gerry Panzram, a great supporter of the school who passed away in 1992, is commemorated by a memorial plaque. His wife, Joanne Panzram, continues to work at the school.

The school oval is called 'birralee', which is the local Aboriginal word for children's playground. The Len Claus Reserve, just over the road from the school and adjacent to Claus Road, was opened by Mr Len Claus, a local resident and former student, at the prime age of 91. I would like to end by thanking Hagslea State School students, staff and parents for including me in their celebrations, and I once again wish them a great 140th birthday.

## Nerang2020

 **Mr CRAMP** (Gaven—LNP) (11.32 pm): There is one constant when you speak to local residents and local business owners in the Nerang area. They see the potential of this beautiful part of the Gold Coast. While many people and groups have on separate occasions sought to progress Nerang, I identified that we needed to bring everyone together and start community-wide communication and consultation. With this in mind, Nerang2020 was established.

Nerang2020 is a community task force dedicated to revitalising and progressing the Nerang area. This group of industry experts include urban designer Stephen Harrison of Harrison Development Group; property consultant Mark Witheriff of Knight Frank; town planner Michael Nash of Urban Planning Services; business leader Mehmet Tavli, chair of the Nerang branch of the Gold Coast Central Chamber of Commerce; civil engineer Michael Clarke of CB Engineering; and advertising concept consultant David Lister of Headline Creative.

Nerang2020 is not a talkfest but a task force for industry leaders who have interests and their heart in the Nerang community. Members of the forum do not just sit down and say 'wouldn't it be great?'; we are looking at practical applications to put in place an apolitical vision, aspiring to see Nerang create more jobs, promote economic development, become a central hub and to see urban renewal undertaken. With billions of dollars worth of development scheduled in the Nerang and surrounding areas coinciding with the Commonwealth Games, this is a generational opportunity to leverage this urban renewal.

Recently Nerang2020 announced plans for community consultation for a boardwalk and water-space precinct on the Nerang River. Locals are being encouraged to provide feedback on this ambitious plan which has been developed over the past 11 months and is designed to enhance and revitalise the heart of Nerang. Consultation with stakeholders has been wide ranging including Gold Coast City Mayor Tom Tate, the Gold Coast Waterways Authority and Regional Development Australia. The proposed concept for the river adjacent to Bill and Ursula Birmingham Park includes a natural swimming reserve, pontoons and jetties; improved parking and pedestrian access and recreational facilities; the revitalisation of the adjoining park reserve to cater for community events; and a boardwalk along the riverbank.

Nerang2020 is confident locals will embrace plans to improve the suburb's biggest asset. This vision will see the area thrive as a destination for recreational activities which would provide a welcome boost to the local business community and enhance the social fabric of the community and surrounding areas. For too long Nerang has missed opportunities for social and community infrastructure upgrades, with the focus often placed on other areas of the Gold Coast.

Community consultation will continue over the coming months via submissions to [feedback@nerang2020.com](mailto:feedback@nerang2020.com) to refine this concept in line with the local community's desires and expectations. Feedback will then be prepared for presentation to relevant stakeholders. Locals are encouraged to join the conversation on Facebook at [fb.com/nerang2020](https://fb.com/nerang2020).

## Diew, Mr J

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (11.34 pm): I rise in this House with a heavy heart to speak about the late Jacob Jok Diew and his son Chan. Jacob was a resident of Sunnybank and he was unfortunately killed in South Sudan on 8 July, along with his son, his nephew and his driver. Jacob had rescued his nephew and was trying to get him to a hospital after he had been injured in the civil unrest that happened in South Sudan. Unfortunately, on his way back from collecting his nephew he met his untimely death, along with his son, the driver and his nephew.

Jacob Jok Diew was born in South Sudan on 23 April 1959. He completed his primary schooling at Ulang Primary School and then joined his senior secondary school where he completed his final studies in 1981. Jacob then studied at the American University of Beirut. After completing his studies he went back to Sudan, where he worked for the Ministry of Commerce and Trade in Khartoum. In 1995 he went to Egypt to join his family and he decided to study theology at the theological college in Cairo which he completed in 1997. In 1998 Jacob and his family migrated to Australia and settled in Sunnybank Hills, where his family built their own home in 2005. While in Australia, Jacob enrolled at Griffith University and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts and Information Technology in 2006 and he did some postgraduate studies in information technology in 2007.

Upon his arrival in Queensland, Jacob worked for a number of organisations, including the Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma, QPASTT, as a community development officer, and the Multicultural Development Association, MDA, as a case manager. In 2009, Jacob went back to South Sudan to help in rebuilding the war-torn country after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Sudan government and the Sudan rebels. He was employed with DAR Petroleum, a Chinese oil company, as director of procurement and later as director of auditing until his untimely death with his son. He was an active member of the Sudanese and South Sudanese communities. He was president of the Sudanese Community Association. Mr Diew was an advocate for his community and he will be sadly missed.

### **Cleveland Electorate, Road Infrastructure and Development**

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (11.37 pm): In the electorate of Cleveland, the Shore and Wellington streets intersection has been in desperate need of upgrading for some time. I have spoken about it many times in this House and I rise tonight to do so again. The people of Cleveland and indeed the greater Redlands overwhelmingly welcomed the recent announcement of the federal LNP government's funding of \$3½ million for upgrading this notoriously dangerous intersection. The project is underway, as the federal member for Bowman, Andrew Laming, has begun communications with Senator the Hon. Fiona Nash to commence the process.

Labor could not achieve it in 14 years, and now another two budget years, because they are asleep at the wheel. It has taken an LNP government to get things moving again. Discussions will soon commence with the state government and the Redland City Council to work together to provide this much needed upgrade. I call on the state government members to stop talking the project down—point taken today—and to put their support behind it.

I turn now to public transport car parking. The Cleveland station redevelopment and related commuter car-parking issues at that station and at Birkdale station are important matters for locals. It would appear that the government has—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Government members, it is getting late. We have two more speakers. I would urge you to consider your comments.

**Dr ROBINSON:** It would appear that the government has no immediate plans to increase parking at Birkdale station, despite a project to do so having been on the drawing board for many years.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** You will be warned. You will set a record soon.

**Dr ROBINSON:** The car parks were promised and there was a community expectation. However, it has gone mysteriously quiet. Frustrated commuters complain that there is never enough parking at Cleveland station. At a time when governments are encouraging the use of public transport, it has to be questioned why appropriate facilities are not being made available. The redevelopment of Cleveland station should have brought much extra commuter parking—that was the original plan—but the very low number has created angst amongst residents who live in the immediate vicinity and those who utilise the station for their daily commute. My consultations with the community have revealed high levels of objection to this development among nearby residents. Body corporates around the area are very unhappy and object to it in its current form, particularly around the parking.

The missing car parks have been found. Instead of them being at Cleveland and Birkdale stations, they have now been given to the neighbouring Labor electorate of Capalaba, at the Thorneside Railway Station. In June this year, Thorneside station received a commitment of funds for an additional 44 car parks. This deliberate switch is nothing less than Labor pork-barrelling and a raid on Cleveland car parks. It is a broken promise, leaving an increase of only 17 commuter car parks for Cleveland station. Tonight I announce that I am withdrawing my support for the redevelopment of Cleveland station in its present form due to the low car park numbers and development change of use. I call on the government to urgently review the situation.

### **Logan House Fire Support Network; Chalmers, Mr J**

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (11.41 pm): House fires are a tragedy that have impacted too many families in the city of Logan. They have a devastating impact not just on the property destroyed but also on those lives left behind, lives often changed forever. Tonight I want to acknowledge and thank two local champions, Louie and

Christine Naumovski, who co-founded the Logan House Fire Support Network. The network has worked hard to provide help to local families who have been devastated by house fires to ensure that no family feels isolated, alone and lost in their time of need.

Earlier this year the network asked me for a decommissioned ambulance to help them better support fire victims. I am pleased to be able to advise the House that on 15 July this year I delivered a retired ambulance to the network. Louie Naumovski told me that the donation would help them to help victims of house fires more efficiently by being able to carry emergency items that people need in the immediate aftermath of a fire. The vehicle will allow families impacted by a house fire to be shielded from the scene and allow affected families to contact extended family members, insurance providers and others from the comfort of the vehicle.

I have spoken in the past about the strong sense of community in the electorate of Woodridge and the city of Logan, and this is a very real and tangible example of that sense of community. I would like to place on the record my thanks to the mighty Queensland Ambulance Service for continuing their strong record of donating retired ambulances to charitable organisations. I would also like to thank Shane, Tiffani and Ashley Drew of Drew's Sign It, a great Logan business, for the sign-writing and artwork they donated for the vehicle, as well as other network sponsors, Quell, Logan Funerals and the Mayor of Logan, Councillor Luke Smith, and the Logan City Council, which covered the registration costs for the vehicle. Most importantly, I would like to thank Louie, Christine and the entire Logan House Fire Support Network for the outstanding community support they provide.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Jim Chalmers MP on his re-election as the federal member for Rankin. Jim made an outstanding contribution to the last federal parliament and will continue to hold the Turnbull government to account, standing up to their attacks on Medicare and public hospitals, their tax breaks for multinational corporations and the deregulation of higher education. I was very pleased to see Jim appointed to the shadow ministry as the federal shadow minister for finance. I know that in Jim Chalmers the people of Woodridge and the electors of Rankin will have years of effective federal representation ahead of them. Congratulations, Jim.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.44 pm.

## ATTENDANCE

Bailey, Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Crawford, Cripps, D'Ath, Davis, de Brenni, Dick, Dickson, Donaldson, Elmes, Emerson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gilbert, Gordon, Grace, Harper, Hart, Hinchliffe, Janetzki, Jones, Katter, Kelly, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Lauga, Leahy, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, Miles, Millar, Miller, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Power, Pyne, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Seeney, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Trad, Walker, Watts, Weir, Wellington, Whiting, Williams