



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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## FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT

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## TUESDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 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.

For the sitting week, Mr Speaker acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land upon which this parliament is assembled.

### ASSENT TO BILLS



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from His Excellency the Governor a letter in respect of assent to certain bills. The contents of the letter will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the letter for the information of members.

The Honourable P.W. Wellington MP  
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

I hereby acquaint the Legislative Assembly that the following Bills, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, were assented to in the name of Her Majesty The Queen on the date shown:

Date of assent: 8 September 2016

“A Bill for an Act to amend the Disaster Management Regulation 2014, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the Police Service Administration Act 1990, the Police Service Administration Regulation 2016, the Public Safety Business Agency Act 2014, the Public Service Act 2008, the State Buildings Protective Security Act 1983, the State Buildings Protective Security Regulation 2008 and the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 for particular purposes”

“A Bill for an Act to amend the Workers’ Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003 and the Workers’ Compensation and Rehabilitation Regulation 2014 for particular purposes”

“A Bill for an Act to amend the Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990 for particular purposes”

“A Bill for an Act to amend the Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2001, the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005 and the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 for particular purposes”

These Bills are hereby transmitted to the Legislative Assembly, to be numbered and forwarded to the proper Officer for enrolment, in the manner required by law.

Yours sincerely

Governor

8 September 2016

*Tabled paper:* Message, dated 8 September 2016, from His Excellency the Governor advising of assent to certain bills on 8 September 2016 [[1456](#)].

### SPEAKER’S STATEMENT

#### Childhood Cancer Awareness Month



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I advise that September is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. The Golden Octopus Foundation has invited members to wear a gold pin on their lapels today to show their support for all children and their families who have been touched by childhood cancer—those who have fought, those who are fighting childhood cancer and those who have been lost to this dreadful disease.

### MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

#### Aiken, Mr JA



**Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.32 am): I move—

1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late John Albert Aiken, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland.
2. That Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the family of the deceased gentleman the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the Members of the Parliament of Queensland, in the loss they have sustained.

John Albert Aiken, better known to those who knew him as Jack, was born in Kensington, New South Wales on 17 March 1918. Mr Aiken was educated in New South Wales at the Hornsby Public and Chatswood Intermediate high schools and later graduated with honours in wool technology at the East Sydney Technical College.

It is reported that during the Great Depression Mr Aiken packed up his swag and moved from Sydney to Charleville looking for work. He worked as a wool classer, a postmaster and storekeeper, a newsagent in Charleville, and a grazier and bloodstock breeder. I also note that, upon finding work in Charleville, Mr Aiken put enough money aside to pay for his five younger siblings to go to school.

In 1969, the then longstanding ALP member for the state seat of Warrego decided to retire from the parliament, and Mr Aiken was selected by the ALP to contest the seat as its candidate at the upcoming state election. On 17 May 1969, Mr Aiken was successful in his election and took his place in this House as the newly elected member for Warrego.

Mr Aiken was a strong advocate for the future and wellbeing of the people of the west, as anybody who reads his first speech in this House in 1969 would attest. He spoke passionately about issues such as drought relief and the changing nature of the times in Western Queensland and how some of those matters could be addressed. I also understand he was labelled the 'Voice of the West' in a *Courier-Mail* front page of the time because he never needed a microphone.

After the 1974 state election when he lost his seat, Mr Aiken stayed in politics, becoming mayor of the Murweh Shire Council from 1975 to 1978. The former member for Gregory, Vaughan Johnson, said—

Neil Turner won the seat of Warrego from a very popular Jack Aiken. All that happened when Neil Turner took over was a changing of the guard—two similar blokes, two bush larrikin type fellows, two men whose word was their bond.

Following Mr Aiken's passing, his daughter Judey described her father as being a 'Labor man through and through' who 'was bred with and died with Labor'.

John Albert Aiken passed away on 3 September 2016 aged 98 years. A funeral service to commemorate his life was held at St Mary's Catholic Church, Charleville on 6 September 2016. I place on record the government's thanks for the years of service Mr Aiken gave to the institutions of our democracy and to the Queensland community. On behalf of the government, I take this opportunity to extend my sympathy and that of this House to Mr Aiken's wife, Jill, and his children Judey, Mary and Jeffrey.

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.35 am): I rise to add to the acknowledgement for the service, as already mentioned by the Premier, of the late Jack Aiken, the former member for Warrego. As the Premier has indicated, Mr Aiken was born in Kensington in Sydney into a life of humble beginnings, as many of his generation were. As the years passed, he made his way north to Charleville in Western Queensland, where he was homeless and looking for work. It is fair to say that his path to parliament was not easy, and for a time he lived under what is still the old bridge over the Warrego River. However, his energy and determination saw him become an active member of the community, working in the local newsagency and, again, as the Premier has mentioned, paying for his five younger siblings to attend school—no mean feat.

In 1969 he was elected as the state member for Warrego. As a community leader, Jack fought for Queensland's farming families. During his maiden speech in parliament, he passionately called for greater assistance for those in the west—something that we continue to hear about today. As the Premier has also acknowledged, the *Courier-Mail* nicknamed him the 'Voice of the West' because he never needed a microphone. I think it is fair to say that there are many voices from the west who have been in this place who have not needed a microphone and long may that be the case.

Jack admired the hard work and tenacity of our farmers and campaigned in a different time for a wheat subsidy for graziers. He called on the government to provide natural gas for cheaper power and television. He also pushed for the subsidised installation of refrigeration and air-conditioning plants to make life, as he said, 'more comfortable and pleasant' for Queenslanders. He was a great supporter of the ambulance and the Royal Flying Doctor Service and worked tirelessly to ensure they received the support they needed.

Mr Aiken served as the member for Warrego until December 1974 and remains the last state member for Warrego—once a safe seat for the ALP. However, that was not the end of his political career. He continued to serve his community as mayor of the Murweh shire from 1975 to 1978. Mr Aiken was outspoken. He fought his way up despite great adversity early in life and he never backed down from the issues he felt passionately about. On behalf of the opposition, I support the motion moved by the Premier and extend our condolences to the family of the late Jack Aiken.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (9.37 am): John Albert ‘Jack’ Aiken was elected, as we have heard, as the Labor member for Warrego on 17 May 1969. He held the seat for five years until 7 December 1974. His life in politics did not end there. From 1975 to 1978, he was the mayor of the Murweh Shire Council also in the Warrego electorate. The 1970s no doubt would have been an interesting time in local politics in the Charleville area with his successor Neil Turner as the state representative and Jack Aiken as the local mayor at the same time.

The electorate was somewhat different in area than it is today. Warrego was what is known as a zone 3, country zone seat, with some 7,692 constituents, stretching in an east-west direction from the Great Dividing Range around Mitchell to the west out to the state’s boundary. It stretched across the river systems of the Paroo, the Maranoa, the Barcoo and Mungallala Creek.

As Jack Aiken made his maiden speech in 1969 in this House, the region was trying to recover from one of the worst droughts on record—the 1965 drought. He spoke of ‘how people of the west were trying to cope with probably the most severe drought ever known in the back country’. History has since proven his observation to be very accurate—the 1965 drought was one of the most severe droughts across Queensland.

He was passionate about the impact of droughts on the electorate, drought assistance and the resultant population drift to the east. From his background as a wool classer, he recognised the value of the agricultural industries to the region. He spoke of the potential of the vast reserves of natural gas in the Roma area and also to the west of Charleville in the Gilmore field and spoke of how these reserves could provide a cheap form of power for the region.

Jack Aiken’s daughter Judey still lives in Charleville. I have known her for some 20 years. Judey is a founding member of the Charleville fishing club, which does a great job with volunteer work on competitions, restocking, carp busters and workshops for keen young juniors and anglers. I often drop in to see Judey in her shop, Judey’s Browse In, a camping and fishing store in Alfred Street, for a chat. We have some great yarns. My deepest sympathy is extended to Judey, her family and friends during this difficult time.

*Whereupon honourable members stood in silence.*

**Mr SPEAKER:** Question time will commence at 10.41 am.

## PETITION

The Clerk presented the following paper petition, sponsored by the Clerk—

### Calamvale, 2236 Beaudesert Road

**Mr Pegg**, from 70 petitioners, requesting the House to reconsider the development proposal for 2236 Beaudesert Road, Calamvale [[1457](#)].

Petition received.

## TABLED PAPERS

### PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS

The Clerk informed the House that the following papers, received during the recess, were tabled on the dates indicated—

2 September 2016—

[1442](#) Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee: Report No. 32, 55th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 25 May 2016 and 14 June 2016

[1443](#) Land Court of Queensland Annual Report 2015-16

6 September 2016—

[1444](#) Queen’s Wharf Brisbane Act 2016: Queen’s Wharf Brisbane (Freehold Land) Declaration 2016, No. 162

[1445](#) Queen’s Wharf Brisbane Act 2016: Queen’s Wharf Brisbane (Freehold Land) Declaration 2016, No. 162, explanatory notes

[1446](#) Queensland Police Service—Surveillance Device Warrants Report—Annual Report 2015-16

[1447](#) Report on Operations of the Land Tribunal established under the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 for the year ended 30 June 2016

7 September 2016—

- [1448](#) Brisbane Port Holdings Pty Ltd—Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2016
- [1449](#) City North Infrastructure Pty Ltd—Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2016
- [1450](#) DBCT Holdings Pty Ltd—Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2016
- [1451](#) Queensland Lottery Corporation Pty Ltd—Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2016
- [1452](#) Queensland Treasury Holdings Pty Ltd—Consolidated Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2016

8 September 2016—

- [1453](#) Meta-analysis of Disaster Management Exercises Discussion Paper 2: 2016

9 September 2016—

- [1454](#) Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 29, 55th Parliament—Annual Report 2015-16
- [1455](#) Overseas Travel Report: Report on a Trade Mission to the United States of America by the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply (Hon. Bailey), 3-11 August 2016

#### TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

##### STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Supreme Court of Queensland Act 1991—

- [1458](#) Supreme Court (Admission Guidelines) Notice 2016, No. 157
- [1459](#) Supreme Court (Admission Guidelines) Notice 2016, No. 157, Explanatory Notes

Economic Development Act 2012—

- [1460](#) Economic Development Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2016, No. 158
- [1461](#) Economic Development Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2016, No. 158, explanatory notes
- [1462](#) The Mill at Moreton Bay Priority Development Area Interim Land Use Plan
- [1463](#) Map No. PDA 10—The Mill at Moreton Bay Priority Development Area
- [1464](#) Moreton Bay Regional Council Planning Scheme 2016

State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—

- [1465](#) State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2016, No. 159
- [1466](#) State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2016, No. 159, explanatory notes

Environmental Protection Act 1994, Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011—

- [1467](#) Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2016, No. 160
- [1468](#) Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2016, No. 160, explanatory notes

Nature Conservation Act 1992, Recreation Areas Management Act 2006, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995—

- [1469](#) Transport and Other Legislation (Hire Services) Amendment Regulation 2016, No. 161
- [1470](#) Transport and Other Legislation (Hire Services) Amendment Regulation 2016, No. 161, explanatory notes

Major Events Act 2014—

- [1471](#) Major Events (Motor Racing Events) (Gold Coast 600) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2016, No. 163
- [1472](#) Major Events (Motor Racing Events) (Gold Coast 600) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2016, No. 163, explanatory notes

Retail Shop Leases Amendment Act 2016—

- [1473](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 164
- [1474](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 164, explanatory notes

North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability and Other Acts Amendment Act 2016—

- [1475](#) Proclamation commencing certain provision, No. 165
- [1476](#) Proclamation commencing certain provision, No. 165, explanatory notes

##### MEMBER'S PAPER

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

Member for Cairns (Mr Pyne)—

- [1477](#) Document, undated, titled 'Queensland on the Rocks—The Toogum Esplanade Rock Wall: An administrative fiasco'

## NOTICE OF MOTION

### Road Infrastructure, Federal Funding

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (9.42 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this parliament request the Australian government play its role in the development of Queensland roads and jobs across this state by:

- agreeing to apply the 80-20 funding arrangement for the M1 upgrades because the M1 is part of the National Land Transport Network, consistent with the federal government's election commitment and as defined on maps published by their own department;
- expediting the announcement and commencement of successful projects in the North Australian Roads Program that was first announced on 18 June 2015; and
- expediting the announcement and commencement of successful Queensland projects in the Beef Roads Program that was also first announced on 18 June 2015.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Counterterrorism

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.43 am): It is a sad reality that governments the world over are faced with the threat of terrorism. Here in Australia the national terrorism threat level is probable. That means that we must be forever vigilant; that we have a laser-like focus on the prevention of terrorism. It means that all levels of government and all law enforcement agencies must work cooperatively to ensure we are best prepared to identify potential threats early and respond as necessary.

This week I have written to the federal Attorney-General, Senator George Brandis, providing my government's support for two bills the federal government proposes to introduce into parliament this week implementing new counterterrorism powers. One bill will introduce a uniform nationwide regime for postsentence detention for terrorist offenders who still present a risk to the community after completing their sentence. This proposed legislation enables the Attorney-General to apply to a state Supreme Court for a postsentence detention order. This model of postsentence detention was pioneered here in Queensland through the Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act. I believe it is crucial that authorities can maintain an appropriate level of surveillance on those who have offended and could potentially offend again. The Queensland government has supported this bill under the Intergovernmental Agreement on Counter-Terrorism Laws as a means to improve community safety, noting that the bill employs an appropriate threshold test and is balanced by sufficient safeguards.

The other bill to be introduced will reduce the age limit for control orders from 16 years to 14 years. This reflects the changing nature of terrorism, acknowledging the number of recent incidents involving young teenagers. Again, it is a sad reality that such measures are needed, but we must do everything in our power to keep innocent Queenslanders and Australians safe. In providing support for this bill, the Queensland government noted the additional safeguards that apply for orders made for people under 18 years.

The Queensland government looks forward to continuing discussions with the federal government to ensure the effective operation of the proposed regime including how the federal government will address any resourcing implications for Queensland. My government has also recently introduced its own measures to enhance counterterrorism and emergency powers to enable police to respond swiftly to any emergency situations. This is in addition to the operational policing activity that continues to occur involving the Queensland Police Service, ASIO and the AFP including specific work to identify people who are at risk of becoming so-called 'lone wolf' offenders. The Queensland government will continue to act to ensure that effective measures are in place to address the continuing threat of terrorism.

### Serious and Organised Crime

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.46 am): Later today the Attorney-General will introduce the Serious and Organised Crime Legislation Amendment Bill. These laws will be the most comprehensive organised crime laws in the country, and they will focus on all forms of organised crime, not just one. We will do more to tackle the problems of illicit drugs and the horrific crimes of child exploitation. We will increase penalties for existing offences and write into our

laws tough penalties for new offences. The maximum penalty for child exploitation offences will be increased from 14 years to 20 years. The maximum penalty for trafficking dangerous drugs will increase from 20 years to 25 years.

Through these proposed laws, we will introduce new offences. We will give our police and prosecutors the laws they need. We will also provide powers for police to seek an order in a search warrant to require a person to provide passwords and information to allow access to electronically stored information. We will ban the practice of wearing gang colours in public, taking the fear and intimidation off our streets.

These laws will go to a committee. These laws will be scrutinised by the parliament, by stakeholders and by the public, as they should be. I also want to make sure this issue is discussed at a national level. Organised crime syndicates do not care which state they are committing their crimes in, which is why I will work with other state premiers and the Prime Minister to see some legislative uniformity across the country.

I want to see organised crime gangs driven out of Queensland, but I do not want to see them pop up in another state. I want to see organised crime gangs driven out of the country altogether. There is already some level of consistency between the laws in New South Wales and the laws I propose for Queensland, but without a consistent national approach I fear we will simply see the gangs establish themselves in other jurisdictions. We have seen a coordinated national approach when it comes to counterterrorism, as I outlined previously. I think now it is time to see a similar approach taken to serious organised crime, which is why I look forward to discussing it at the next COAG meeting.

### Accelerated Works Program

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.49 am): My government has implemented an Accelerated Works Program to support economic activity and employment in key regional areas. The Accelerated Works Program is supporting local economies and bringing forward employment opportunities in regional areas that are experiencing subdued economic conditions. We have identified more than \$440 million worth of capital works projects that are already funded through the state budget and are being brought forward to commence earlier than planned. We estimate that these projects will support up to 950 jobs.

I am pleased to advise the House that 97 of the accelerated projects have already been completed and at the end of August we had another 36 under construction. These 133 projects represent an investment of approximately \$233 million. The completed projects include Townsville port road, Alligator Creek Road to Allendale Drive overtaking lane, school maintenance works at the North Rockhampton State High School, and repurposing and refurbishment of classrooms at the Mackay West and Proserpine state schools. Some of the 36 projects that are now under construction include port of Townsville berth 4 upgrade, Hervey Range Road widening and wide centre line treatment, Arnot Creek bridge upgrade and Cairns special school.

The projects that have been completed and those now under construction will support more than 600 jobs across Queensland when fully completed. The bulk of these jobs are in the Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, outback and Fitzroy regions. I am pleased to report that various Queensland government departments and government owned corporations are also continuing to see a steady ramping up of expenditure, which is great news for these regions considering the jobs this program is supporting. Further projects are continuing to progress through their design phases and most of the remaining projects are expected to start construction by December this year.

The Accelerated Works Program illustrates my government's commitment to drive the economy and to sustain and create new jobs in regional Queensland. I commend the progress to the House.

### Solar Industry

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.50 am): I have made it a priority for this government to help create new industries in Queensland so we can diversify our economy and create new job opportunities into the future. I can report to the House that Queensland now has a brand-new, large-scale commercial solar industry to call our own. We have long been—

**Ms Jones** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I take that interjection. We have long been touted as a potential national and world leader when it comes to solar energy.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** What do they have against solar?

**Ms Trad:** Latte sipping, champagne drinkers.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** We will get to that later.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, members. It is early. We will wait.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** At the last election the Deputy Premier and I announced our strategy to kick-start Queensland's large-scale solar industry through our Solar 40 package. Now in government we have increased that to Solar 150 and the results are beginning to show. Last week ARENA, the Australian Renewable Energy Agency, announced around \$51 million of funding will be allocated to the construction of six large-scale, commercial solar generation projects in Queensland. That means over 50 per cent of their funding allocation will go to Queensland, the strongest possible vote of confidence in our Solar 150 policy and the future of a solar industry in this state. The six projects selected are worth over \$600 million and will generate 300 megawatts of solar power. The projects are Whitsunday Solar Farm, the Kidston Solar Project, Oakey Solar Farm, Longreach Solar Farm, Darling Downs Solar Farm and Collinsville Solar Farm. The Darling Downs project, at over 100 megawatts, will be the largest solar farm in the country. Importantly, these projects are expected to support more than 500 jobs during construction and hundreds of other jobs indirectly. I thank very much Minister Bailey for all his hard work in helping to drive this brand-new industry for Queensland.

### Queensland Economy



**Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (9.52 am): I rise to update the House on some positive indicators for Queensland in terms of our economy.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr PITT:** What do they have against positive news about the economy?

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** We have all been practising this morning. Thank you, members.

**Mr PITT:** I rise to update the House on some positive economic indicators for Queensland. The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics national accounts data shows the Queensland domestic economy strengthened in the June quarter 2016. State final demand is one of the indicators of the health of our domestic economy. This key measure grew 0.3 per cent in trend terms in the June quarter 2016. That growth follows a revised growth figure for state final demand in the March quarter of 0.2 per cent. In seasonally adjusted terms the rises were 0.7 per cent in the June quarter and 0.1 per cent in the March quarter.

State final demand is not the same as gross state product, which takes into consideration net trade—the sum of our exports and imports. Of course, the recent successive positive quarterly figures are good news because I have repeatedly said that our strong statewide growth performance is, to a large extent, led by good export returns in the face of soft global conditions and prices. The clear focus of our economic plan has been on improving the state's domestic economy, particularly our many regional economies, some of which are not transitioning to a post-mining boom economy as well as others. The latest state final demand figures vindicate that approach and they show a stronger and growing domestic economy. This rebound in domestic activity in Queensland in the first half of 2016 unfortunately follows eight consecutive quarterly falls across 2014 and 2015. We are back in positive territory after reaching the depths of negative growth in state final demand in recent years. These depths included the worst state final demand results in recent years in the September and December quarters of 2014 of minus 0.9 per cent and minus 0.8 per cent respectively.

Last week's data showed housing construction continues to go from strength to strength. Trend dwelling investment rose for the 13th consecutive quarter to be 14.3 per cent higher in 2015-16. Boosted by this strong housing construction activity in the latest June quarter 2016, Queensland recorded the highest quarterly total of building work done in almost eight years, up 13.9 per cent over the year and the largest rise in the nation. The future remains bright for this sector, with a record amount of residential construction still in the pipeline.

Public infrastructure investment and government spending on service delivery saw public final demand rise 1.9 per cent in the June quarter to be 4.8 per cent higher over the year. Infrastructure has always been a key part of our economic plan. This government's infrastructure spending has been the largest contributor to growth in the state final demand figures, and I know that the Deputy Premier will be very pleased to provide more detail on that.

While these state final demand figures are a sign that the Queensland economy has turned a corner, we know that not all of Queensland's regions are benefitting as well as others from these stronger economic conditions. This is why we will continue to focus our efforts and energies on providing essential services and infrastructure and driving more job opportunities and growth to support all Queenslanders in all regions of our state.

### Capital Works Program

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.56 am): The Palaszczuk government's Capital Works Program is a key part of our plan to create jobs and drive the economy. That is why in the last state budget we saw a significant increase in our Capital Works Program, growing from \$35 billion over four years to more than \$40 billion in this year's budget over the forward estimates. This means more jobs for Queenslanders and it means building important productive infrastructure sooner. This year alone our building program will support some 31,000 jobs and it means we are delivering new projects like Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 2, the Townsville stadium, Ipswich Motorway upgrade between Darra and Rocklea and the duplication of the Bill Fulton Bridge in Cairns, just to name a few.

At the same time as investing in delivering important community infrastructure, we are also driving a major infrastructure reform agenda. This reform agenda is all about ensuring we make smarter investment decisions to ensure we deliver the right infrastructure in the right place at the right time. Labor has never shied away from making real reform and we are continuing this tradition as we transform the way we plan, prioritise and invest in infrastructure.

That is why we have established Building Queensland, our first independent infrastructure adviser. It is why we have established the State Infrastructure Fund to back in the recommendations of Building Queensland and to respond to areas of emerging need. It is why we have delivered the first State Infrastructure Plan in more than four years, providing a pipeline of projects that will build investment certainty for the private sector. It is why we have established an infrastructure portfolio office in my agency to accurately monitor the rollout of the capital program and to tackle the underspend ignored by the former LNP government. While this may not sound as exciting as cutting the ribbon on one of our finished projects, it is absolutely essential. It is about ensuring our capital budget gets out the door and into local communities to deliver the jobs and the projects we say we will.

As I have told this House before, for too long governments in Queensland have seen the large capital underspend accrue every year. Over the past five years the average variance between the budgeted capital program and the actual spend has been around \$1.8 billion, peaking at \$2.26 billion in 2013-14 under the Newman government of which the member for Clayfield was the treasurer. Whilst there are legitimate reasons for some of the underspend, these kinds of figures are simply too high. We have set about addressing this and it is paying off. Last week we saw the latest state final demand figures improve, rising 0.7 per cent in the June quarter following a 0.1 per cent increase in the March quarter as already outlined by the Treasurer. This is a key measure of the performance of the state economy. Importantly, public gross fixed capital formation, that is, public infrastructure spending in the economy, was the largest contributor to this growth driven by a 17.7 per cent increase in investment by state and local public corporations. This is helping to breed confidence too, with the data showing that private investment is on the up. In fact, the data shows the first increase in private gross fixed capital formation since LNG construction peaked in 2013.

This is why infrastructure reform matters, because it means a more focused spend that is much better monitored. It means that we are getting investment out the door and into local communities, it means a boost to industry confidence to make new investments, and it means jobs and stronger economic growth for Queensland. This is our economic plan for Queensland and it is working.

### Solar Industry

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (10.01 am): The Palaszczuk government is turning the Sunshine State into the solar state, and today we are delivering a new industry for Queensland: a

large-scale renewable energy industry to deliver more than 600 regional jobs and more than \$600 million worth of investment to act on climate change. We are achieving this after only 18 months in power. The Palaszczuk government inherited a renewable energy sector from the previous Newman government, of which the opposition leader was treasurer, which was struggling with low investor confidence and, due to their indifference, had no major projects coming online. At a time of widespread global expansion when we should have been embracing the opportunities of renewable energy, the Newman government shut down the office of clean energy in my department. To put it bluntly, it was a renewable energy blackout.

What a dramatic turnaround we have seen since then, with Queensland now well and truly on the map as a leader in renewable energy. I am pleased to say that, following the ARENA funding announcement last week, ARENA CEO Ivor Frischknecht and I will personally congratulate each of the successful Queensland proponents at a function here at Parliament House between one o'clock and two o'clock on the level 5 colonnade. I invite all members who would like to hear more about these exciting projects, which are worth more than \$600 million for Queensland, to come along to meet them and hear about it.

The Palaszczuk government's Solar 120 program has become the Solar 150 program. We are supporting four of the six projects, which represent 150 megawatts of power and provide financial certainty through long-term revenue contracts. This means that the Palaszczuk government is almost quadrupling our election commitment to deliver a 40-megawatt reverse auction of renewable energy. The Solar 150 program delivers excellent value for money for the people of Queensland, with costs and risks shared with private sector proponents and ARENA. Two of the three largest solar farms will be here in Queensland. In this round we have landed more than 60 per cent of the megawatts in the whole national round in Queensland. There will be no impact on electricity prices despite the scaremongering of the opposition, who either do not understand our energy sector or are deliberately misleading. I would like to pay tribute to ARENA, who have been a fantastic partner throughout this process. ARENA's role in funding innovative renewable energy technology is critical and must continue if we are to transition to a zero emissions future. The Turnbull coalition government should be condemned for their plan to rip \$1.3 billion from ARENA, risking jobs and investment in the renewable energy sector in our state.

This is just the beginning under the Palaszczuk government. It is the dawn of a new large-scale renewable energy industry in our state, and I look forward to the growth of this industry in the months and years ahead to reduce climate change impacts, support regional jobs and build a better Queensland.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Burleigh, you are warned under standing order 253A for your disorderly conduct and continual interjections. That is your first warning under standing order 253A.

### Public Hospitals, Waiting Times

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.05 am): Last week I had the pleasure of formally launching the Palaszczuk government's *Specialist outpatient strategy: improving the patient journey by 2020*. This strategy is supported by an investment of \$361.2 million over four years, which was the single largest health initiative announced in last year's budget. When I became health minister, I discovered that there are over 100,000 people waiting longer than clinically recommended for a specialist outpatient appointment in a Queensland public hospital. I am very pleased to report to the House that a little over a year into our strategy that number has fallen to 55,355. That is a reduction of over 45 per cent.

Our government's commitment has been to take on the challenge of the waiting list for the waiting list, which was a bridge too far for the previous Liberal National Party government. In doing so, we have set out to deliver a strategy that is genuine, balanced and realistic and a strategy that is properly resourced and properly targeted. Our strategy places the patient at the centre of the system. This strategy outlines 11 key investment initiatives to be implemented by 2020. By 2020 we will, among other things: introduce clinical prioritisation criteria, which will provide a standardised approach to the referral process; provide GPs with access to an online service directory, which will help them send their patients to the care best suited to their needs; increase the use of allied health professionals to provide alternative referral pathways so that patients get the most appropriate care; provide more specialist appointments with increased funding to deliver more specialist services; expand telehealth services so that patients living in rural and remote areas will have greater access to specialists without having to travel to a larger centre; and continue to invest in more elective surgeries to help patients get their surgery as soon as possible.

I cannot and will not promise that Queenslanders will never have to wait for an appointment or treatment in a Queensland public hospital. It simply would not be right for me to make such a promise. What we will do as a government is support the extraordinarily talented staff in our state's public health system and continually improve our systems with the aim of ensuring that by 2020 patients receive their appointment or treatment within clinically recommended time frames. Ultimately, the specialist outpatient strategy is about more than just reducing waiting lists, as important as that is; it is about enduring systemic structural change and making life better for the patient by looking at the system through their eyes.

### Aurukun, School

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (10.08 am): As members are aware, we are delivering all 27 recommendations of the Aurukun school review to improve education outcomes and access to schooling for children in Aurukun. I visited the school last week, and I am pleased to inform the House that we are already making a difference. Our teachers are leading the way in providing safe and positive learning for students. Acting principal Scott Fatnowna says there is a new pride and energy at the school and attendance is at an all-time high. Our team is lifting student attendance through a new partnership approach including home visits, community barbecues, a walking bus, a school bus service, celebrating high attendance with families and working more closely with the Families Responsibilities Commission.

The Aurukun school now offers junior secondary for students remaining in the community, with 15 students now enrolled in years 7 and 8. The P&C is also being re-established and will next meet on 17 October. We are continuing to work with parents and community leaders to ensure they are more involved in the school. We have begun consultation with the Aurukun community to develop a new first language curriculum in the early years. This curriculum will teach students to read and write in their first language, which will support their transition to school. Aurukun students also competed in their first sports day last week, and by all reports it was a great success. I am proud to say that the blue house, known as Ward, won the sports carnival, and teachers, students and parents had a great day.

**Mr Stewart** interjected.

**Ms JONES:** Thank you very much. I take that interjection from the member for Townsville, because it is actually a Townsville designer. It was done by Tyler Giudes, an emerging designer.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Ms JONES:** We are supporting all industries here in Queensland. A job is a job is a job, and we are focused on it.

I also met with Aurukun mayor Dereck Walpo and Wik Women's Group member and school teacher aide Phyllis Yunkaporta. I have also been working very closely with federal Indigenous affairs minister Nigel Scullion, who also was in Aurukun last week. He advised me—and I thank him for his bipartisan approach to supporting the best outcomes for the people of Aurukun—that he had not seen the school so good in 20 years.

### Social Housing

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (10.10 am): When this government went to Queenslanders and asked them to vote for a new way for Queensland, we made it clear that we would be a government that delivered essential services for Queenslanders. We made it clear that outsourcing and privatisation of essential services is not our policy. To be clear, the mass transfer of public housing assets was not and is not our policy. Members on this side of the House, and Queenslanders more broadly, believe that public housing assistance is a responsibility of government. Queenslanders believe in the important role of government in the delivery of essential services. Our principles have always been clear. They have been clear in this place and they were clear when we stood up before the last election and said that we were opposed to asset giveaways and the privatisation of essential services.

We have been preparing to finalise our new 10-year Housing Strategy for Queenslanders. That strategy will recognise the role of government in housing assistance for all vulnerable Queenslanders. It will recognise that role in Logan, on the Gold Coast, in Mount Isa and in Redlands. In fact, it will recognise that role across the state.

The mass privatisation of housing is a legacy policy of the previous government and it is gone. As a responsible government having inherited that legacy, we commit to deliver \$100 million worth of public housing this year—a plan to deliver more affordable housing, a plan to redevelop Queensland housing on a precinct-by-precinct basis and build better neighbourhoods.

We worked through the baggage of the LNP privatisation legacy to Queenslanders in the responsible and careful way that Queenslanders would expect of a good government—in a prudent and measured way. This included the former minister, the Minister for Science and Innovation, taking the sensible step of initiating an independent readiness review of those legacy programs in late 2015. I table that report.

*Tabled paper:* Document, dated 23 December 2015, by the Nous Group titled 'Readiness for service review: Logan Renewal Initiative Final Report, Department of Housing and Public Works, Queensland' [\[1478\]](#).

Let me be clear: Labor believes in the responsibility of government to deliver essential services to Queenslanders. Queenslanders expect government to build better neighbourhoods and more sustainable and prosperous communities. I am advised that this year over 109,950 Queenslanders looked to this government for support. We will not turn our backs on them. Some 36,000 of those individuals were aged under 18. We on this side of the House understand that a measure of our society is how we treat the most vulnerable among us. We will not turn our backs on them. We will build better neighbourhoods.

Our 2016-17 program will support 2,000 trades jobs across the state. Job creation is our responsibility, as is housing. In Logan just last Tuesday I met with 85 Queensland based building contractors. I outlined our early plans involving the beautification, upgrade and refurbishment of existing housing. I announced the largest maintenance and upgrade investment for housing since Labor was last in government. We will deliver \$34 million worth of upgrades and maintenance in Logan over the next two years. This investment will support real jobs in Logan—real jobs for Queenslanders—a commitment to housing investment, better neighbourhoods and real jobs. That is the measure by which Queenslanders will assess this government.

### Mining Exploration

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (10.13 am): Exploration is the vital first step towards future production that creates jobs and attracts economic investment, which are so valuable for our regional communities. I am pleased to advise the House that mineral explorers around the globe are invited to participate in a competitive tender to explore the world's richest base metal region. A competitive tender process will formally open this Friday, 16 September, for exploration of 102 square kilometres in the north-west minerals province, with the potential for copper, gold, lead and zinc. The successful tenderer will be required to meet environmental conditions and negotiate land access and compensation agreements with landholders, including any relevant native title, before on-ground exploration can commence. These tenders close on 2 February 2017.

The Palaszczuk government has supported and will continue to support communities in north-west Queensland through the commodity price slump, including through the establishment of the North West Minerals Province Taskforce. The land release in the north-west is the first of three planned for the year, ahead of the Palaszczuk government's inaugural annual exploration program. The development of Queensland's first exploration forward plan is delivering certainty and opportunity to the state's resource sector and international players. Importantly, regional communities do not miss out. We are continuing to nurture green shoots across Queensland's resource sector by extending our royalties freeze, offering the lowest payroll tax in the country and investing heavily in innovation.

Earlier this year I announced a 50 per cent expenditure concession for mineral and coal explorers. I am pleased to advise that, as of 1 September, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines has received 350 applications. As a result, mineral and coal explorers are expected to receive more than \$30 million in financial relief over the next two years.

All the information on the north-west Queensland minerals tender process and Queensland's annual exploration program is available on the Department of Natural Resources and Mines website. Queensland is one of the world's leading destinations for mining and resources investment. I look forward to hearing of intense interest in this tender.

### Townsville, Youth Crime

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (10.15 am): Police in Townsville continue to be actively engaged in targeted enforcement activities to tackle youth offending. The Tactical Crime Squad and the Townsville RAP conduct high-visibility patrols and case-manage offenders on court offered curfews. We have established Project Booyah, which aims to prevent antisocial behaviour, substance abuse and offending by at-risk young people. It is about addressing their disengagement from their family, community and education. There is the police intervention initiative, whereby police prosecutors seek orders aimed at better supervision of young people before the courts and helping parents and carers manage the offending behaviour of young people in their care. We have school based police officers, Adopt-a-School and Adopt-a-Cop programs that provide a vital link between police and young people.

Last week I met with police on the ground in Townsville to ensure they have the resources they need to tackle juvenile crime. We have established a mobile police facility in key areas to ensure a high-visibility policing presence in those communities. Fifteen new police recruits will be deployed to Townsville when they graduate from the academy at the end of the year. We have delivered 20 additional police to Townsville since we have come to government. There are more police in Townsville than ever before.

Police have had significant successes with operations Lorry, Enchase and Conflate, with 1,990 charges against 606 offenders this year and 2,446 charges against 694 offenders last year. Also, 138 body worn cameras will be rolled out to front-line police officers in Townsville in the coming months. We have established a community policing board to give to the local community direct access and the opportunity to work with police on local justice issues.

I commend the Queensland Police Service officers involved, particularly for their unwavering efforts to keep Queenslanders safe. We know that by working at the grassroots level we are well placed and will be well placed to achieve the best outcomes for Townsville and all Queensland's communities.

### Townsville, Youth Crime

 **Hon. CJ O'ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland) (10.18 am): As a Townsville local and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland I would like to continue on from the police minister's comments regarding local crime. I understand that the issue of crime in Townsville, particularly youth crime, is a significant worry to our community. We as a government are united with the community. Enough is enough with serious youth reoffenders. We believe that we need to strongly invest in breaking the cycle, and early intervention is the key. We know that boot camps do not work, and locking these kids up and throwing away the key is not the answer.

In order to break the cycle of reoffending, we need to look at the issues these young offenders face before and after they enter the justice system. I am pleased to advise the House today that the Palaszczuk government has listened to the concerns that I have raised on behalf of North Queenslanders, along with the members for Townsville and Thuringowa, and as a result we are launching a whole-of-government Stronger Communities initiative where key agencies across government will work together in collaboration with the community policing board to break the youth crime cycle. Local police do a fantastic job in our community and we are proud to support them with additional resources including 15 new police recruits and 138 body worn cameras by the end of the year, but police cannot do this alone. I have been in constant discussion with the Premier and key ministers to find effective, holistic solutions that work. As a follow-up to the previous meetings held at the Townsville youth justice forum, this week I will be facilitating a meeting with all relevant ministers and directors-general. At this meeting we will nominate Townsville based members for each department to join the Stronger Communities group; commit to a stocktake of each agency's resources and programs, including partnerships with NGOs and the community; and set time frames on further actions.

We know that the reasons for youth crime are complex and we need to understand where the majority of these kids have come from. They are faced with drugs, alcohol, domestic violence and abuse in their family home and tackling these issues will require never before seen levels of policy coordination and investment to build on strong, long-term strategies that we have already committed to. I strongly believe it is time we stopped talking down Townsville and started focusing on solutions. I have spoken many times in this House about being a proud North Queenslander. I love the city I call home because I truly believe that Townsville is the best place in Queensland to live and raise a family, and I want it to stay that way. We will lock down a clear, strong plan based on evidence that we know works to see real outcomes for Townsville.

## Climate Change

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (10.21 am): The Premier and the Minister for Energy have already outlined to the House how the Palaszczuk Labor government is creating a new industry here in Queensland—a new large-scale renewable industry. That is important because those six projects will create jobs in our regions—600 direct jobs. I am not sure why the LNP is so concerned about all of these new jobs in the regions, but Labor is for them. We support these projects because they are creating new jobs in Queensland regions and because they will reduce our carbon pollution. July 2016 was the 15th month in a row where global temperatures were higher than the 20th century average. Global land and ocean July temperatures have now continuously exceeded the 20th century average since 1976. The international community—those opposite may not—has accepted that action to reduce carbon pollution by midcentury is required from all nations. Queensland was once a national leader on climate change, but at a time when other states were rapidly embracing the transition we were left unprepared by the former LNP government's systemic dismantling of these forward-looking policies.

In contrast, the Palaszczuk government is revitalising climate change action and embracing the solutions already available so we can build a more sustainable and prosperous Queensland. The government is revitalising action on climate change and has committed a further \$6.8 million over four years to develop and implement a Queensland climate change strategy. We have heard Queenslanders loud and clear. They want us to do our fair share to reduce the pollution we generate here in Queensland. Earlier this month submissions closed on our 'Advancing climate action in Queensland' discussion paper and we received more than 6,000 submissions. At its peak we were receiving two submissions a minute. This incredible response came from across industry, business and community and it demonstrates just how strongly Queenslanders feel about transitioning our state to a low-carbon future. At the Climate Action Round Table in Canberra last month—which was attended by state and territory ministers from Victoria, South Australia and the ACT as well as city council representatives from Brisbane, Darwin and Hobart—it was agreed that we would all work together to deliver low-carbon social and economic benefits to our jurisdictions. I am pleased to advise the House that, in recognition of the emerging leadership role of the Palaszczuk Queensland Labor government, the next Climate Action Round Table will be held here in Queensland.

## MOTION

### Order of Business

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.25 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, notwithstanding anything contained in standing and sessional orders, the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply be permitted to move at 5.30 this afternoon the motion of which he gave notice this morning, with time limits for speeches and debate as follows—

- 5 minutes for each member;
- total debate time before question put—½ hour.

## NOTICES OF MOTION

### Disallowance of Statutory Instrument

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (10.26 am): I give notice that I will move—

That the following provisions and parts of provisions of the Transport and Other Legislation (Hire Services) Amendment Regulation 2016, subordinate legislation No. 161 of 2016, tabled in the House on 13 September 2016, as described below be disallowed—

- (a) Section 8(1), the words—  
'67(1)' and '70(2)' only;
- (b) Section 20—in its entirety;
- (c) Section 22, the words—  
'67 to' only;
- (d) Section 23—in its entirety.

## Australian Building and Construction Commission



**Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (10.26 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House calls on all Queensland senators to support the reintroduction of the Australian Building and Construction Commission.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Townsville, Crime



**Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (10.27 am): This week there are two big issues in Townsville. First of all there is the grand final rematch between the Broncos and the Cowboys, and we will all be watching that with a lot of enthusiasm. There is another thing happening in Townsville at the moment which is causing great alarm in that community, and that is the escalating crime rate. The locals have had a gutful of the inaction of this Labor government.

This morning we heard the rhetoric from two ministers about another plan—another plan to tackle the escalating crime rates in Townsville. The best way to battle that rhetoric is to talk about the facts. If we compare the crime rates in this last 12 months under the Labor government with the last 12 months under the LNP government, the figures are absolutely startling. In that period of time homicides have increased by 150 per cent, robbery has increased by 36 per cent, break and enters have increased by 36 per cent and motor vehicle theft has increased by a whopping 81 per cent. Three months ago the police minister and the Attorney-General held a crime forum and promised the people of Townsville that they would have a comprehensive strategy to deal with the escalating crime rate.

Last week, we heard the response from the police minister. The comprehensive plan to tackle the escalating crime rate in Townsville is a doorknocking strategy—a hyped-up Neighbourhood Watch program that supposedly is going to address the increased criminal activity in Townsville. In fact, the minister said that it is not the perpetrator's fault; it is the fault of the law-abiding citizens of Townsville. I table an article in the *Townsville Bulletin* in which the minister said—

... people must accept a level of personal responsibility ...

*Tabled paper:* Front page of the *Townsville Bulletin*, dated 7 September 2016, with the headline 'Crimewave is Your Fault: Minister says unlocked doors behind theft spike' [\[1479\]](#).

Forget about the criminals. It is not their fault. They are not doing anything wrong whatsoever! This government continues to be soft on criminals and the criminals know it. The citizens of Townsville do not want advice on how to lock up their houses and their cars; they want this police minister to lock up the criminals.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members, before I call the Minister for Police, member for Chatsworth, drumming on the table with your hands is disorderly conduct. You are warned under standing order 253A and I will continue to name members.

### Law and Order



**Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (10.30 am): What an exhibition we have just seen from the member! It was unbelievable. This morning, I mapped out what the Queensland Police Service is doing in Townsville in particular and Queensland more broadly. The first thing that the member did was stand up and stick it to the Queensland Police Service.

The program that we ran last week is an initiative—and a successful one—that is part of a range of measures that are being developed and delivered across Queensland. It is interesting to hear the contribution of those opposite. I remember when, back in 2012, youth justice was subject to electioneering. I remember when the previous premier—a certain Mr Newman—stood up in Cairns and talked about this marvellous boot camp process. This was the opposition's response to youth justice issues in North Queensland.

When Campbell Newman was asked to give one example across the world where boot camps worked, the then premier in waiting, the leader of the Liberal National Party—they could not find anybody in the House to lead them—stood up and said, 'I can't give you an example of where this program works, but my adviser down the back would be able to point it out.' That is the start point of the policy that those opposite brought forward repeatedly—a mantra based on sound bites with not an ounce of substance to support anything. It is all about the 10-second sound bite. It is all nonsense. There is no evidence, no justice, no real outcomes to speak of.

The Auditor-General made very specific commentary about the boot camp process run by the Liberal National Party. It was a complete failure. Over the past 4½ years we have made where we stand on youth justice issues very clear. As I revealed earlier, the Queensland Police Service is doing exactly what it should be doing,

More broadly, there is no question about this government's commitment to tackling crime. There are more police and more resources. Today, the Attorney-General will introduce to this House the most comprehensive organised crime legislation that this state has ever seen—legislation developed in consultation with stakeholders, legislation that we know will have an operational effect, legislation that we know will end up in arrests. What a bizarre concept: to have arrests come from action on organised crime! I am proud of our record. What the member for Everton said was a disgrace.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Everton, the minister listened in silence to your contribution. You were provocative in your interjections. If you persist, you will be warned under standing orders 253A or 252.

I am informed that we have students from Heights College in the electorate of Rockhampton observing our proceedings in the gallery. Welcome, students.

### Palaszczuk Labor Government, Leadership

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.34 am): Over recent days we have seen yet another instance of this Labor government standing in the way of vital infrastructure projects that would get Queensland moving. Whether that be—

**A government member** interjected.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I will tell the member. Whether that be the bikie laws, tree-clearing legislation or other key policy areas, the senior ranks of this deeply divided Labor government cannot seem to do anything but fight among themselves. We now have the Premier and the Deputy Premier crossing swords over the Brisbane metro proposal.

We heard the Deputy Premier on ABC Radio say that she was working to assist the Lord Mayor, Graham Quirk, and the Brisbane City Council on the metro project. She said that the metro and Cross River Rail could be complementary. We have also learned that the transport minister and the Lord Mayor had been working together constructively to match up the two plans, but the Premier, Anastacia Palaszczuk, sees the situation completely differently. The Premier announces that both the Lord Mayor and the Brisbane City Council should completely ditch the project, but then she declared that she was not a dictator.

Instead of fighting for Queenslanders, this Labor government is obsessed with fighting amongst itself. There is infighting over the bikie laws, juvenile detention and tree clearing. It is now fighting with itself over the Brisbane metro project. The Labor government is also clearly fighting with itself over who should be the Premier of this state. In front of a packed audience at the Queensland Media Club, the Deputy Premier dismissed these references as low-level gossip. She said that she had to be 100 per cent honest and that there was no prospect of a spill. Obviously, she has done the numbers and does not have them. The Deputy Premier had more to say. She said—

I don't want the job ... I love the job that I'm doing and I'm completely focused on delivering on our big reform agenda.

We might ask: what reform agenda in Queensland? We have had the proposed call-in of West Village and the failure to get the Adani mine off the ground.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I would urge members not to continue their discussions whilst I am on my feet.

### Queensland Economy

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (10.38 am): It was amazing to hear the member for Nanango talking about crossing swords. She crossed swords with the bloke sitting next to her and took his job. I do not understand where she is coming from.

Last week, when it comes to state final demand, Queensland returned to positive territory. Our domestic economy has turned the corner. This is a body blow to the opposition members. Their credibility is on the line, because this result is a complete repudiation of their scaremongering. I refer to an online ABC article, which I will table, in which the shadow Treasurer claimed that the economy had

declined over the past year. That deserves a rebuttal. That is wrong. The current forecast for the 2015-16 year is 3½ per cent growth in Queensland. Where did the members opposite leave it? At 0.8 per cent—below one per cent. The economy is growing.

*Tabled paper:* Article from *ABC News* online, dated 8 September 2016, titled 'Queensland Treasurer claims new ABS figures show economy is surging' [[1480](#)].

The Queensland domestic economy, he says, has shrunk by 1.2 per cent. I think Mr Emerson, the member for Indooroopilly, needs to look at the bloke next to him and ask him where he shrunk domestic growth. The domestic economy under the member for Clayfield went down by 3.3 per cent in the final five quarters of their government. Shame! Shame! The article also cites the shadow Treasurer where he says the unemployment rate has continued to rise. It has not continued to rise! We brought it down from 6.6 per cent to 6.3 per cent.

He wants to be the Treasurer of this state and he cannot even get three simple facts right. These are three economic indicators and he has got all of them wrong. We know that after two successive state budgets we have seen so much in terms of delivery: front-line services have been restored; more police; more teachers; more nurses; more paramedics. That is what we on this side of the House have done; we have restored things. I am going to take a leaf out of Chris Bowen's book. Chris Bowen said, 'Budget repair that is fair.' Their definition of fiscal repair is to sack everyone. They will not tell us what their plan for asset sales is. The Leader of the Opposition has had 100 days to tell us about his plan for asset sales. He is silent. At the LNP convention he was silent. In the budget reply he was silent.

We do know that he wants to sack 8,000 government workers so he can right-size the Public Service. We know that the Leader of the Opposition has failed as a Treasurer and now he is failing as the Leader of the Opposition. We do know this: the member for Clayfield has had every opportunity to tell Queenslanders what his position is on asset sales but on every occasion he has squibbed it. The voters of Queensland said that Strong Choices were the wrong choices. We know that to be true. The Leader of the Opposition is obviously, very simply, too lazy to learn from his mistakes.

### Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.42 am): Honourable members will recall that around about 22 August there was the filming of a movie here in Brisbane, the movie *Thor: Ragnarok*. *Ragnarok*, for those who are unaware of it, portends the end of days. We had the opportunity to see people like Chris Hemsworth, Tom Hiddleston and Anthony Hopkins. A couple of days after that visit the Premier announced an opportunity for a Queenslanders to have a walk-on role in the *Thor* movie. That must have stirred the loins of some people over there because only a few days later we saw the auditioning start. We saw none other than the member for Woodridge put his hand up for a role. We are not sure what he wants to be. Does he want to be Loki, the evil prince, who wants to bring down the house of Asgard and destroy everything that the gods of the realms have done? Or do we want to see the return of Bloodaxe. Bloodaxe was a mortal named Jackie who found a mysterious axe and then proceeded to take down the house—or which of the other nine realms that form the factions of the Labor Party that wants to take on the Premier.

We saw the health minister stand up. He immediately took aim at the Attorney-General, the justice minister, who, only days before, had said something along the lines of, 'We do not want to move 17-year-olds out. We do not have the space for them'. Three days later the health minister was working the phones, talking to the media, trying to force a change in policy from somewhere completely different from his usual area of responsibility.

We have the health minister auditioning for Loki. We have the Deputy Premier auditioning for the role of Bloodaxe. What we are really looking for is the hapless god that does everything wrong. I think we have found the hapless god. The hapless god is the member for Mulgrave, the hapless god who is blind and cannot shoot an arrow straight. He is firing his arrows all over the place trying to get through.

We have had 10 days of disunity, 10 days of ruling out challenges, 10 days of saying the Premier is clear, 10 days of ministers consistently rolling out the same old lines. We know what is going on over there and truly they are the ding-a-ling gang.

**Mr SPEAKER:** We will now commence question time. Question time will finish at 11.44 am this morning.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Criminal Motorcycle Gangs

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (10.44 am): My first question without notice is to the Premier. The Labor government in South Australia has adopted the LNP's laws to crack down on criminal bikie gangs. The Labor Attorney-General said—

In other words, our community is a safer place thanks to these laws.

I table two reports of those comments.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Courier-Mail* online, dated 8 April 2016, titled 'South Australia's Labor government says anti-bikie laws have made state safer' [\[1481\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Gold Coast Bulletin* online, dated 8 April 2016, titled 'South Australian Government poaches our anti-bikie laws and intends to keep them' [\[1482\]](#).

Why is the Premier winding back laws that are already working in Queensland and South Australia?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. Obviously he was not listening at all when I gave a ministerial statement here in this chamber about an hour ago. He obviously did not read the *Courier-Mail* today either. It was on the front page of the *Courier-Mail*. I want Queensland to have not just the toughest laws when it comes to dealing with all aspects of serious organised crime in this state, but I want the toughest laws across the nation. My point very clearly this morning was that if we can have national consistency, uniformity, when it comes to combating terrorism—counterterrorism measures—in this nation, we can have national consistency when it comes to combating serious organised crime in this nation.

Shortly the Attorney-General will be introducing the Serious and Organised Crime Legislation Amendment Bill into this House. It will deal with not just outlaw motorcycle gangs, but illicit drugs, child sexual exploitation and illicit trafficking. We have listened to the experts in the field. These laws are not rushed. These laws will go to a parliamentary committee, unlike those laws introduced by the member for Kawana under the former LNP government.

The challenge for those opposite is will they support a comprehensive suite of laws that target all forms of serious organised crime in this state or will they vote against it? That is going to be the real test for those opposite and the test for the Leader of the Opposition. My government has taken its time to get these laws right. We have consulted with stakeholders—unlike with the former laws that were introduced in this House and passed that night. As I said clearly in this House this morning, and I will say it again for those opposite who may have been asleep and not listening: I will take this issue to COAG and put it on the national agenda because it is the right thing to do. I will stand up for Queensland, unlike those opposite, because once our laws are introduced we will see the movement of crime gangs across the nation. Let us stop the cherrypicking. Let us stand up and do the right thing and together let us send a very clear message to the rest of the nation that we can have the toughest laws targeting all forms of serious organised crime in this nation, not just this state.

### Criminal Motorcycle Gangs

**Mr NICHOLLS:** My second question is to the Premier. If the Premier's stated ambition is to lead the nation in antigang laws, why is the Premier winding back the LNP's laws which have already been supported—

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members will be warned if they interrupt the questioner. I call the Leader of the Opposition. Will you repeat your question, please?

**Mr NICHOLLS:** If the Premier's stated ambition is to lead the nation in antigang laws, why is the Premier winding back the LNP's laws which have already been supported by the Commonwealth and all other mainland states in the High Court of Australia?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Let us put the facts on the table. How many criminal motorcycle gangs have been convicted under the VLAD laws? Zero! We are doing the right thing by Queenslanders in terms of tackling all forms of serious organised crime. I have answered this question at length. The Attorney-General has taken the time to get these laws right. She has been consulting with the Law

Society and the Bar Association. She has commissioned an inquiry report into organised crime. We have looked at a review of the VLAD laws and we are presenting a suite of comprehensive laws to this parliament.

I want more convictions, not less and I have been very clear about that. We have seen that the laws of those opposite have resulted in zero convictions. As I said previously, and I will say it again, the real test for the Leader of the Opposition—and I know his background is in law, as well—is this: will he support these tough measures? What do those opposite think about the serious issue of child exploitation? Will they support the laws to protect the most vulnerable children in our society? Will they support increased trafficking laws to deal with illicit drugs in this state? The real test is going to come by the end of this year and it is whether those opposite are going to stand up and do the right thing or whether they are going to bury their heads in the sand and not support our robust—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, Premier. I think you have answered the question.

*(Time expired)*

### Queensland Economy

**Mr KING:** My question is for the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on factors that have influenced Queensland state final demand since 2009?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Kallangur for the question. As we have seen today, the Treasurer has reported to this House great results in relation to the state final demand that prove clearly that our economy is turning the corner. Why is it turning the corner? Because under the Newman-Nicholls government we had three years of cuts to services and cuts to front-line staff. This week marks the fourth anniversary of the first budget of the Newman government, which was brought in by Tim Nicholls, the member for Clayfield.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I take that interjection: it was a very dark day for the Queensland people, because we saw massive cuts. There were 14,000 cuts to our Public Service across the state. Those were men and women with families. I look back to that time, when I was the Leader of the Opposition in this House, and my budget reply speech. I said—

The flow-on effects of this government's mass sackings and savage cuts to front-line services are bad enough in our big cities, but they also hit hard in the many smaller centres in rural and regional Queensland. When this government cuts jobs, families or individuals leave town looking for a new one. When that happens children are taken out of local schools. In turn, school enrolments drop so fewer teachers are posted to local schools ... This is the anti regional, anti rural economic blueprint the LNP is delivering to Queensland—or, more correctly, inflicting on Queensland.

I reflect back on those words. It is timely that everyone in this House remembers those bleak days when we saw a cut of more than 4,000 health workers, including front-line nurses; \$1,6 billion cut from the Queensland Health budget; the slashing of \$288 million from employment programs, including Skilling Queenslanders for Work; the axing of \$368 million in community grants to support Queenslanders in need of assistance; the removal of another \$120 million in funding to Queensland Health community organisations; the cutting of local government grants and subsidies by \$60 million; and the slashing of RoadTek, QBuild and the tenant advisory centre, just to name a few. That is the legacy of the person who now sits there as Leader of the Opposition. They were massive cuts.

The Queensland economy has turned the corner. We have now turned the corner from the savage cuts that we saw under the former LNP government.

*(Time expired)*

### Townsville, Crime

**Mr LAST:** My question is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to the shocking revelation in the *Townsville Bulletin* today that a person is more likely to be bashed in Townsville than anywhere else in the state. Does the Premier endorse the police minister's recent comments that victims of crime should take more responsibility?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for the question. He must not have been listening to ministerial statements this morning, because the Minister for Police and the minister assisting me in North Queensland talked extensively about issues in Townsville. I also want to make special mention of the member for Thuringowa and the member for Townsville, who have been raising these issues with me and the two ministers. Obviously we are going to be focusing on a whole-of-government solution to break the cycle of crime that exists in the Townsville community.

On the weekend I was in Townsville for the 150th anniversary of Townsville becoming a city. Many members of the Townsville community, including local members, talked to me about the seriousness of this issue. It is such a serious issue that my government is taking action. Later tomorrow, the members from Townsville, the police minister and the minister assisting me in North Queensland will be meeting with the heads of our different agencies to put in place a clear plan to tackle the issues of crime in the Townsville region. As the police minister outlined very clearly today, 15 extra recruits will be going to Townsville. We are putting on extra police officers—

**Mr LAST:** I rise to a point of order. It goes to relevance. My question was very specific: does the Premier endorse the police minister's recent comments that victims of crime should take more responsibility?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I rise to a point of order. The member has raised a point of order asking that you take note of the relevance. He has then proceeded to restate a part of the question. It was only a part, but it was a part that does raise some question as to whether it is actually seeking an opinion.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members, I rule that the member's answer is relevant. I call the Premier for anything further she may want to add.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Of course, my government will work with the community in relation to this serious issue. As I was saying previously, 15 new police recruits will be deployed to Townsville by the end of the year. Over the coming months in Townsville, 138 body worn cameras will be rolled out to front-line police officers. We are maintaining a highly visible policing presence through the tactical crime squad and the Townsville Rapid Action and Patrols.

I take this opportunity to commend our hardworking police officers in Townsville—that is, the men and women who are doing their jobs.

**An honourable member:** Support them.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Yes, we are supporting them, unlike those opposite who slashed their budget.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, Premier. I think you have answered the question, unless you have something new to add?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Finally, I reiterate that tomorrow we will be meeting to discuss this issue at length and to provide more feedback to the Townsville community. I want to put in place a clear path. Once again, this clearly shows that those opposite were not listening this morning.

### Solar Industry

**Mr BUTCHER:** My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the government's strategy to create a new large-scale solar industry in Queensland and is the Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Gladstone very much for this question. I have had great delight this morning, as has the Minister for Energy, to talk about the new solar industry for Queensland. What it means is over 600 jobs in regional Queensland. I have detailed where in regional Queensland they will be. The solar farm at Dalby will be the largest one in Australia. We know that Queensland is leading the nation when it comes to developing a solar industry.

When we talk about diversifying the economy and we look at our state final demand figures we know that diversifying the economy also means that we need to create new industries. That is exactly what this government is doing, whether it is in biofuels with the new plant that has been established in Gladstone—and I thank the member for Gladstone for his support—or whether it is growing that industry or whether it is, as we have said today, this brand-new solar industry which will create over 600 jobs where it counts.

I note that in Collinsville there will be over 80 jobs created. We know how hard hit Collinsville has been over the years—

**An opposition member:** These are your mates in the CFMEU.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** You are so ignorant.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I would urge members to make their interjections relevant or they will be warned.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Let us go back briefly to the Newman-Nicholls government when they withdrew funding for the Solar Dawn solar research and power plant at Chinchilla on the Darling Downs.

The member for Clayfield summed up the LNP's position on solar power. What did he say? He described those users as 'champagne sippers and the latte set'. I do not think the people in Oakey, Collinsville, Whitsunday or the Darling Downs would see themselves as 'latte sippers'. He went further and described it as 'middle class welfare'. He said—

So those people who were paying for the middle class welfare that Labor was putting out there—for the champagne sippers and the latte set—with whom they hang around all the time in terms of making themselves feel good, but making the rest of Queenslanders pay for it.

The tables have now been turned. It is my Labor government that is delivering a bright solar industry and jobs for Queenslanders.

### **Cairns, Crime**

**Mr MANDER:** My question is to the Premier. Over the past 12 months robberies in Cairns have risen by 28.6 per cent. Does the Premier stand by her police minister's comments that victims should take more responsibility for their own security?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for the question. We recognise that there are issues that are relevant to different communities right across our state, whether it is Cairns, whether it is Townsville, whether it is my electorate of Inala or whether it is other electorates, when it comes to dealing with crime. First and foremost, what is definitely needed is that we support our Police Service. We must 100 per cent support our Police Service. It is the Police Commissioner who decides the operational numbers that serve those communities. We understand that policing and crime need to be addressed not just at a state level but also at a community level and at the federal level. The best solutions in terms of dealing with locally based issues is for the community to work together.

I have every confidence in the Minister for Police as he delivers more for police as part of my government than was delivered by the former police minister under the LNP government. That is why we are restoring front-line services in this state, so savagely cut by those opposite.

**Ms Grace:** Not wasting money on boot camps.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right. I will take that interjection. We can all go back to the way they dealt with the issues of crime. It was about boot camps where you send young kids—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** We will wait. Pause the clock.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** You sent young kids off to isolated properties. The Auditor-General found your dealing with it very questionable.

The police minister is travelling the length and breadth of this state. We are focused on restoring front-line services. We will deliver for the people of Queensland as the community expects us to do.

### **Local Government, Jobs**

**Mr WHITING:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier inform the House of any steps she is taking to support local jobs and local government in Queensland?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for the Murrumba for the question. I know that the member for Murrumba and this side of the House are very supportive, interested and active around creating jobs in regional Queensland. That is why I was very pleased to announce last Friday that the Palaszczuk Labor government would be putting out a number of programs to local councils for jobs and infrastructure projects in their local communities through a streamlined process. This includes the Community Resilience Fund, which was established by the Palaszczuk Labor government. This includes the Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program and the Natural Disaster Resilience Program, which we partner with the Commonwealth in delivering.

This will be a streamlined process. We want to get money out the door to local communities through local councils as quickly as possible. Applications will close at the end of this month. This will be delivered just as we have delivered additional funding to local councils through the TIDS program, just as we have delivered additional funding through the western roads package and just as we have delivered additional money to local councils through Building our Regions. How does this compare to those opposite when they were in government? Let me tell members.

**Mr Seeney** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I am having difficulty hearing the Deputy Premier, but I can hear the member for Callide loud and clear. I know the Deputy Premier has not taken your interjections, member for Callide.

**Ms TRAD:** How does this compare to those opposite when the member for Clayfield was treasurer? What did he do in his first budget four years ago to local councils and local communities? Firstly, he sacked 14,000 hardworking public servants who supported local councils and local communities. What he also did was slash the Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program by over 60 per cent. He slashed by half the Get Ready Queensland program which local councils implement. He cut the number of local government employees by over 25 per cent. No wonder the Local Government Association said of our budget this year that 'it was the best budget for local councils in many, many years'.

On this side of the House we are focused on getting money out the door, getting important projects built and getting jobs in regional communities. Those on that side of the House are only interested in cuts, sackings and trashing local communities. On this side of the House we will make sure that we continue to build the infrastructure that local communities need and continue to support local councils in their delivery of important infrastructure and important services to Queenslanders.

### Gold Coast, Crime

**Mr HART:** My question without notice is to the Premier. Given that the past year's assaults on the Gold Coast have risen by 47.4 per cent, will the Premier be following the police minister's example and advise victims that they should take more responsibility for their personal security?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for the question. I want to double-check the statistics he is referring to because I do know that there has been a higher level of incidents relating to domestic and family violence. I want to be very cautious in the response that I provide. We know that, as a government, we are tackling those issues of domestic and family violence. We are putting extra money in. We have the specialised court in relation to—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** They do not want to hear the answer. We have the specialised domestic and family violence court at Southport, working with the services. We are seeing a higher level of people reporting those issues because it is such an—

**A government member** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I take the interjection from the minister; it is a good thing because public and community awareness has been raised around that very important issue.

Getting back to the issue of crime statistics generally, it is my government that has decided to publish those statistics. We might recall that under the former government those statistics disappeared. They just disappeared.

**Mr HART:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. The Premier has refused to answer this question twice now. The question is very clear. Does she agree with the police minister's comments about people having to take care of their own personal safety?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member for Burleigh rose on a point of order where, firstly, he was delving into making arguments and expressing an opinion about the Premier's answer as opposed to seeking your guidance and ruling. Further, part of the way in which he did that was to suggest that the Premier had already not answered a previous question. He was therefore suggesting some lack of confidence in the way that you were guiding and ruling in the House.

**Mr SPEAKER:** For a start, there is no point of order. In relation to the member for Burleigh's point of order, unfortunately I was distracted by the cross-argument between the Minister for Police and, I think, the shadow minister for police. I urge you to continue your discussions outside or you will both be on notice. I am advised that there is no point of order.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Just to sum up, as I said, my government is publishing the crime statistics, as opposed to those opposite when they stopped that practice when they were in government because they did not want Queenslanders to know the truth. They did not have the ticker to do it.

Whilst I am on my feet, I am more than happy to talk about how my government is restoring front-line services. Over 300 new police—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Thank you, Premier. I think you have answered the question.

**Mr Boothman** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Albert, you are now warned under standing order 253A. If you persist, I will take the appropriate action for your disorderly interjections. I call the member for Sunnybank and I understand that it is his birthday today!

### **Queensland First Home Owners' Grant**

**Mr RUSSO:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question is to the Treasurer. I refer to the Queensland First Home Owners' Grant outlined in the state budget. Will the Treasurer outline the response to the grant so far?

**Mr PITT:** I thank the honourable member for the question. Can I say happy birthday—it is fantastic that he has a question on his birthday. The housing construction sector is a really important sector for the Queensland economy. That is why the state budget included the First Home Owners' Grant—a boost from \$15,000 to \$20,000 and a time limited, 12-month initiative for houses with a value of up to \$750,000. This is an initiative that is making and will make a real difference to people trying to get into their home for the first time. We hope that this is going to be especially so in the regions, given what percentage of the overall median house price that \$20,000 will be as their deposit. We think it will have a particular emphasis there.

I can report to the House that, since 1 July, 577 applications worth more than \$11.5 million have been received. That is more than 60 applications per week under our First Home Owners' Grant. Of those, 213 grants have been approved so far to the value of \$4.3 million. Last week I visited Stockland's new Pallara development, which I believe is in the state electorate of the member for Algeester. It is great because about half of the 100 homes in that development have been utilising the First Home Owners' Grant. That is a fantastic result. It is making a real difference to that particular area.

At Pallara I met Hannah. Hannah is getting into her first home with her husband and their two kids. Hannah was very excited. She told me that the grant had helped her, saying that getting a deposit was so hard. That is something that all Queenslanders can relate to when they are trying to get into their home for the first time. She said that saving for the deposit was so hard but for them the \$20,000 grant was 'a huge helping hand'. She said that it helped her and her husband 'get their foot in the door'. Essentially without this grant they may not be getting into their first home. That is a great outcome for Hannah and her family. It is typical of so many families applying under this grant.

The time limited nature of the grant is important. That is what we have heard Kingsley Andrew from Stockland Group say, that that is one of the things that is focusing buyers' minds. I echo his sentiments. The time limited initiative is very important. Of course, the low interest rates, combined with our \$20,000 First Home Owners' Grant, make this a great time for people to get into home ownership. This is a very real and direct part of our economic plan that I outlined in the budget. It is making a difference to people getting into their first home. The \$20,000 grant is a great initiative of the Palaszczuk government and it is one that I hope all Queenslanders, particularly those in regional Queensland, get behind.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before I call the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I am informed that we have another group of students from the Heights College in the electorate of Rockhampton observing our proceedings from the gallery.

### **Corrective Services**

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** My question without notice is to the Premier. Last week Queenslanders heard three different policy positions—one from the Attorney-General, one from the member for Woodridge and then one from the Premier—on the issue of jailing 17-year-old offenders. Will the Premier explain why her cabinet is so divided over keeping Queenslanders safe?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member very much for the question. It is with some regret that I do inform the House that, yes, there is a division and that division is over whether the Broncos or the Cowboys are going to win on Friday night! I have a Treasurer who is backing in the Cowboys and so is the minister assisting me on North Queensland. I have a health minister and a Deputy Premier who are backing in the Broncos, as well as the Minister for Tourism. I have the members for Thuringowa and Townsville going for the Cowboys. There is deep division about who is going to win on Friday night. May the best team win!

**Mr SPEAKER:** Back to the question, Premier.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I was provoked by the member for Callide.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Let's be serious.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, members. Pause the clock. We will wait.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** My government made an historic decision. That historic decision is to move 17-year-olds out of our adult correctional facilities in this state, bringing us in line with other jurisdictions but also adhering to the UN convention about treating a 17-year-old as a child. This is a very important issue. As I said at the press conference with the Attorney-General, it has been put in the too-hard basket for too long. Successive governments of both political persuasions have failed to tackle this issue.

We are prepared to step up and say when something needs to happen and when it needs to be done. Later this week the Attorney-General will be introducing this landmark historic reform into the House. I expect all members of parliament to support this historic legislative change. What a strong signal that would send to the rest of the Queensland community and the rest of Australia that we are united when it comes to moving 17-year-olds out of adult correctional facilities. It will come into effect 12 months after assent, and we will be working extensively with stakeholders and with the cabinet subcommittee to ensure—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No-one is listening to me.

*(Time expired)*

### Public Hospitals, Waiting Times

**Mrs GILBERT:** My question is to the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services. Will the minister please update the House on what the Palaszczuk government is doing to address the number of Queensland patients waiting longer than clinically recommended for specialist outpatient appointments? Is he aware of any other approaches to managing the health system?

**Mr DICK:** I am delighted to take the question from the member for Mackay, because she knows how hard staff in our public health system in Queensland have worked to get outpatient long waits down. When we came to government, 100,000 people were waiting longer than clinically recommended for a specialist outpatient appointment.

**Mr Saunders:** Shame!

**Mr DICK:** I take the interjection from the member for Maryborough. It was a shame. Why? Because there was absolutely no focus on that issue. There were 100,000 people left in the waiting room by the LNP when in government. The member for Mackay knows that by application, by money, by resourcing and by supporting our staff we have been able to reduce that waitlist to around 55,000, a reduction of 45 per cent.

What has been the result in Mackay? Just after we came to government, in Mackay on 1 March 2015, 1,985 people were waiting longer than clinically recommended for specialist outpatient appointments. As of 1 July this year, it is 193—a reduction of 90 per cent of individuals waiting longer than clinically recommended. I want to pay tribute to the staff members in Mackay in relation to that. We inherited that problem. We have invested \$361 million over four years to get that waitlist down. That was one of the many problems we have inherited in Health—problems that were simply ignored by the LNP. We will be genuine, realistic, balanced and fair dinkum about it.

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr DICK:** I take the interjection from the member for Logan. What about the budgets delivered by the LNP? It was a special night on Sunday night at the Leader of the Opposition's house in Clayfield. What was that? No, it was not celebrating the member for Sunnybank's birthday but the fourth anniversary of the first Nicholls budget. On Sunday night he got the budget papers down and read them—his shining moment in 2012. What was the big debate in 2012 about health care? It was not about getting the outpatient waitlist down, it was not front-line services; it was a fight between the member for Southern Downs and the member for Clayfield about how many people they were going to sack from the health system. Budget Paper No. 2—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Minister, come back to answering the question please.

**Mr DICK:** If you take 4,140 people out of the public health system in Queensland, which is what was in Budget Paper No. 2 in 2012, it ends up impacting on patient care, patient quality and patient safety. Thankfully, the member for Southern Downs said, 'We are only going to sack 2,745.' They were fighting then. They are still fighting now. Only Labor will focus on the front line, putting more money into the specialist outpatient system when demand is going up. We still have demand going up. We are getting patients treated because that is what Labor governments do.

### **Palaszczuk Labor Government, Leadership**

**Mr WALKER:** My question is to the Premier. Given the Premier has supported the member for Woodridge in his call to remove 17-year-olds from adult prisons, will the Premier also be supporting the member for Woodridge in attaining a cabinet promotion as another step in his leadership ambitions?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. Certainly the Premier's responsibilities are wide in relation to the government, but I think the question was full of ridiculous speculation and I ask you to rule it out of order.

**Mr SEENEY:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Leader of the House's strategy of giving the Premier and ministers time to think when questions are asked is becoming patently obvious.

**Mr SPEAKER:** What is your point of order?

**Mr SEENEY:** I understand, Mr Speaker, that some ministers need considerable time to think, but in this case the question was about the promotion of a minister within the Premier's cabinet. That cannot possibly not be an issue that the Premier needs to answer.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I certainly need some time to think about relevance, but I rule the question is relevant. I call the Premier.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. All of my cabinet ministers are doing an excellent job in the portfolios that they have.

### **Tourism Industry**

**Mrs LAUGA:** My question is to the Minister for Tourism and Major Events. Will the minister inform the House how the former government's cuts to the state's tourism budget hurt the tourism industry?

**Ms JONES:** I thank the honourable member for the question, because I know how passionate the member for Keppel, like me, is about growing the tourism industry in Queensland. We know that when you grow tourism you grow jobs. The former LNP government under the leadership of the Treasurer, who is now sitting opposite as the Leader of the Opposition, slashed \$176 million from the tourism industry. All those members opposite can go back to their communities and pretend that they care about the tourism industry, but we know what they did when in government—\$176 million slashed from the tourism budget which meant we could not negotiate in good faith.

**Mr Nicholls** interjected.

**Ms JONES:** I take the interjection from the Leader of the Opposition, who is continuing to interject while I remind people of his record. There has been a lot of speculation this morning about leadership and contested leadership ballots. How many leadership ballots have there been since the honourable member for Keppel has been alive? There have been 14. How many were done by the Labor Party in a Labor government? None. All 14 leadership ballots and contests were done by the LNP. They are more divided than the Great Dividing Range. We know who they are.

There has been a lot of leadership speculation this morning. We know that the only reason the member for Clayfield is sitting is that he stabbed his mate in the back. It was disgraceful. That is what you can expect from him. In 27 years, there have been 13 leadership challenges all by the deeply divided LNP and zero for Labor.

**Mr SEENEY:** I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. While it is obvious that the member for Ashgrove is answering the question that was asked of the Premier a moment ago, I suspect it is completely irrelevant to the question.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! What is your point of order?

**Mr SEENEY:** I suggest that the member for Ashgrove is out of order on the issue of relevance.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The question does relate to tourism.

**Ms JONES:** I really do apologise to the honourable member for Callide. I am really sorry if the member for Callide could not handle my answer.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Minister, do you have anything further that you wish to add?

**Ms JONES:** I do. I think it is extremely relevant because maybe if the contender, always wanting the leadership job, the member for Maroochydore, had managed to be the treasurer she would not have cut \$176 million.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, resume your seat, please. The issue is about relevance to the question. Do you have anything further to add that is relevant to the question?

**Ms JONES:** Yes, I do. The question was about the cuts by the former LNP government to tourism. We know they cut \$176 million. What I am saying is relevant is would we have had the same outcome if we had not had 'Toe Cutter' Tim on the Treasury bench? That is what we saw—\$176 million cut from an industry that is delivering jobs for Queenslanders right up and down this coast. That is why since we got into government under the great leadership of our Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk, we have been delivering record spending in tourism. What does that mean? That means that we are connecting new airlines to Queensland. That means we are forging new relationships in Asia. It means that we are creating jobs in regional Queensland whether it is in cruising in Gladstone, in Townsville or in Cairns.

**Mr Mander:** You're really impressing the school kids!

**Ms JONES:** Thank you. I thank the member for Everton. What I am saying very clearly is that under the LNP and under the treasurer Tim Nicholls we saw tourism take a dive. We saw money ripped out of an industry that is creating jobs.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, you have been around here for a while. You know what language is appropriate. Would you please withdraw the comments you made in relation to the Leader of the Opposition? Those words were unparliamentary and out of order.

**Ms JONES:** I apologise.

**Mr SPEAKER:** You withdraw unequivocally.

**Ms JONES:** I withdraw and I apologise.

### **Brisbane City Council, Metro Project**

**Mr POWELL:** My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier advise how the Palaszczuk government will address the current chronic bus congestion problem in the Brisbane CBD given the Premier has told the Brisbane City Council to scrap its Metro project?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** What has been clearly put on the public record is that the Lord Mayor's proposal for a Metro cannot go ahead whilst the Goprint area is in play. What the Deputy Premier and I have said very clearly is that we need to see a business case from the Lord Mayor.

I have had a personal conversation with the Lord Mayor about his Metro system as well and I have said—and this government has said very clearly time and time again—that our No. 1 infrastructure project for Queensland is the Cross River Rail project. As a former transport minister, yes, I do understand that there are issues in relation to the number of buses that are coming into the city. The transport minister is working very closely with the Brisbane City Council to address these issues.

What we would like to know from those opposite is whether or not they are going to support the Cross River Rail project. We know that Scott Emerson supported it.

**Ms Trad:** They haven't supported an infrastructure project yet.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right; we are yet to see what other infrastructure projects in Queensland those opposite would like to support.

**Ms Trad:** 1 William Street.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I take that interjection. We all know about 1 William Street, the legacy of the Leader of the Opposition. We know how much that is going to cost taxpayers over the next 20 years—in excess of \$2 billion and requiring over seven buildings in our Brisbane CBD to be sold off.

My government will continue to work with the Brisbane City Council and will continue to work with the Lord Mayor. I have undertaken to have regular meetings with him. We will do everything we can to tackle the issues collectively with the Brisbane City Council.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Thuringowa, I am informed that we have student leaders from the Burleigh Heads State School in the electorate of Burleigh observing our proceedings in the gallery. Welcome.

### Townsville, Stadium

**Mr HARPER:** My question is to the Minister for State Development. I ask: will the minister please inform the House of the progress made on the North Queensland stadium?

**Dr LYNHAM:** Happily. I thank the member for Thuringowa for his question. I know the member knows too well the importance of creating jobs and economic opportunities for the people of his electorate. I am pleased to share that the momentum continues to build for the \$250 million North Queensland stadium. It is a catalyst for local jobs and business opportunities.

Last Friday locally based staff from RPS Group concluded a contour and detail survey of the stadium site. Yesterday expressions of interest opened for a programmer and quantity surveyor. These close on Monday, 26 September and contracts are expected to be awarded by the end of the year. Almost 500 businesses have sought information online about working on this project. Expression of interest for the principal consultant closes at 2 pm next Monday, 19 September 2016. Short-listed consortia will be released in October to participate in a design tender. Each consortia will be required to submit a concept design for the new stadium and a master plan of the stadium site. We are looking for innovative design using local capability that will create a city-changing stadium.

The project's role as a catalyst for growth is already playing out. Last Tuesday a record 350 North Queensland businesses attended the sold-out Townsville industry breakfast to hear about the stadium and other major projects in this region. The strong turnout demonstrates the enormous interest in the North Queensland business community and the prospect of jobs for regional Queensland. My Department of State Development will continue to mentor and run workshops to build local tendering and supply chain capability so businesses can make the most of these opportunities.

The Palaszczuk government is delivering on our commitment to create a best practice regional stadium in North Queensland by the start of the 2020 NRL season. May I just add that my team in my department are the same team that built Suncorp Stadium, the same team that built Robina stadium, the same team that built the velodrome for the Commonwealth Games. I am glad that that same team survived the Leader of the Opposition's budget cutbacks in 2012 because without that team we would be struggling to build this stadium.

I remind honourable members of the statement of the Leader of the Opposition on his 2012 budget. He stated—

Anyone who thinks this Government wanted to take this path is grievously mistaken.

He is talking about cuts to public servants. He goes on—

They don't really know me ...

We know the Leader of the Opposition. We know what he is on about. We know about the 6,000 possible job cuts if they ever get up and we know that we need these valuable public servants to create stadiums such as the one we are building in North Queensland.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Hervey Bay I am informed that we have students from the Cooloola Christian College in the electorate of Gympie observing our proceedings. Welcome.

### Fraser Coast Regional Council

**Mr SORENSEN:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. Will the minister release any reports into the operation of the Fraser Coast Regional Council compiled by Mr Steve Johnston, the deputy director-general of the department of local government, who had been appointed as an adviser to the council?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for Hervey Bay for the question. I think it is the first question I have had in a very long time, so I thank him most sincerely for it.

The issues confronting Fraser Coast council are pretty significant and I want to acknowledge that in this House. That is why my director-general moved swiftly to appoint a deputy director-general as the adviser to Fraser Coast Regional Council to assist them with the issues that they were confronting. The deputy director-general has been returned to my agency for additional duties and we have another adviser, a very experienced former CEO of the Cassowary Coast Regional Council who is assisting Fraser Coast with their current issues.

In terms of any information that results from the assistance that my agency gives Fraser Coast, I will inform the House at the time that that information is concluded. There is currently not a review in train. What we have done is provided expert departmental assistance to the Fraser Coast council as opposed to compiling, investigating and reviewing the council.

### Jobs Queensland

**Mr MADDEN:** My question is of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills. I ask: will the minister please update the House about the great work being done by Jobs Queensland?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for his question and acknowledge the interest that our Ipswich MPs have in Jobs Queensland being based in the Ipswich CBD and the interest of all MPs on this side of the House about the work of Jobs Queensland. Today I am pleased to announce the members of the Jobs Queensland board. Jobs Queensland is an important element in the Palaszczuk government's plan to create jobs and drive Queensland's future economic prosperity. Jobs Queensland plays an important role in providing advice on priority and emerging skills needs, future workforce planning and the apprenticeship and traineeship system in Queensland. Jobs Queensland will deliver a voice for industry, the regions and the community on these issues.

Following a widely advertised expression of interest and a direct nomination process for representative roles, we have assembled a strong and diverse group of members. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members for making this commitment to provide strategic industry advice to government on skills demand and future workforce planning. The members representing employers are: Mr Daniel Gschwind from the Queensland Tourism Industry Council; Ms Kristine Skippington, representing the National Retail Association; and Mr David Norris, representing the Queensland Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Members representing employees are: Ms Charis Mullen from the Australian Workers' Union; Mr Rohan Webb from the AMWU; and Ms Jennifer Thomas from the Services Union. These appointees provide a wide range of experience across industries, skill sets and regions.

Additional expert members with a mix of skills relevant to Jobs Queensland were also selected. These members are: Mr Peter Henneken AM, who has vast experience in labour market and skilling issues and has been recognised for his contribution to the training sector; Ms Tamilyn Brennan, who has extensive experience in employment, training and Indigenous initiatives in regional locations; Mr Alan Sparks, who brings a vast wealth of experience in the VET sector and the role of group training organisations; and Emeritus Professor Paul Boreham from the University of Queensland. Dr Scott Davis, who has a comprehensive background in workforce development, education and health in regional locations, has also been appointed. Ms Rachel Hunter, a highly eminent figure in the Queensland vocational education and training sector, was formally appointed as the chair of Jobs Queensland on 14 July 2016 for a three-year term. No-one who has any knowledge of the vocational education training sector can question the merit of Ms Rachel Hunter to chair Jobs Queensland. Many of these representatives were part of the interim reference group that has been working tirelessly to see skills and training—

*(Time expired)*

### Cattle Brands

**Mr MILLAR:** My question is of the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries. My question relates to cattle brands and delays of two months or more in processing new applications and transferring ownership of brands, and I ask: how does this unacceptable delay fit in with the minister's promise, contained in a press statement of 25 May this year, to better support producers and what, if anything, is being done to address the situation?

**Mr SPEAKER:** I call the minister. Two minutes.

**Ms DONALDSON:** I thank the member for the question. That is not an issue that I have previously had raised with me by anyone. I am very happy to take that question on notice and get back to the member with an answer.

### Small and Medium Enterprises

**Mr BROWN:** My question is of the Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business. Will the minister please update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is helping Queensland small and medium enterprises grow and employ through collaboration and innovation?

**Mr SPEAKER:** I call the minister. One minute.

**Ms ENOCH:** I thank the member for the question. I accept that the member for Capalaba, along with all members on this side of the House, is committed to ensuring that small business has the opportunity to collaborate in order to grow and employ in this state. We are committed to assisting small business under our Advance Queensland initiative through a number of programs which are designed to help provide support and see great ideas turned into commercial outcomes. One of the programs is the Knowledge Transfer Partnership program—\$8 million to build collaboration between researchers and small businesses by funding up to two-thirds of the cost of bringing an honours, masters or PhD level university graduate into a business to work on an innovative project.

This side of the House is standing up for innovation and small business: the member for Logan is standing up for small business and innovation; the member for Pine Rivers is standing up for small business and innovation; the member for Murrumba is standing up for small business and innovation. If only those opposite would stand up for small business and innovation!

**Mr SPEAKER:** Question time has expired.

## MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

### Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.45 am): It has been interesting to see the efforts of those opposite over the last little period of time. We saw them all marching out from their pep talk at about 9.15 this morning. Columns of them streamed out from small group gatherings around the place as they filed into parliament. Obviously the lacklustre performance of the team 10 days ago left something to be desired, so they have tried to gee up the troops to get them to come out and speak up in their loudest voices. It is all designed to hide the deep divisions that have wracked the Labor Party since this government was elected. The unbridled ambition sitting over there in the member for Woodridge and the member for South Brisbane is evident for all to see, and we have seen that over the past 10 days or so.

Let me deal with a couple of issues that are of significant concern to the people of Queensland and which have not been dealt with and will not be as long as this government continues to focus on itself and not the needs of Queenslanders. Firstly let us talk about what we are seeing in regional Queensland this morning concerning crime. This morning we woke to disturbing front-page reports in the *Townsville Bulletin* that crime in Townsville is worse than ever. Three months ago reports in the same newspaper revealed that people are more likely to be bashed or have their car stolen in Townsville than anywhere else in the state, and today's report reveals that nothing has changed. In fact, things are far worse. Townsville is now topping the state per capita for murders, break and enters, car theft and drug crime, and on average almost 10 drug offences are committed in the region each day.

When alarms bells were rung three months ago, the asleep-at-the-wheel Palaszczuk Labor government held a public forum to discuss the skyrocketing crime rate and the Attorney-General and police minister vowed to comprehensively tackle crime in the city. Three months ago they were going to have a plan to comprehensively tackle the rising crime rate in the city. Just last week Tim Mander, the shadow police minister, and Ian Walker, the shadow Attorney-General, were travelling in the regions speaking to locals who have been affected by crime, speaking to locals who are afraid to go out because of crime and speaking to locals who do not want another talkfest. They want something done about it. My deputy, the member for Nanango, and I travelled to Cairns where the same issues were raised by members of the media and members of the public. Indeed, the situation had become so bad that on the day that we were there residents in certain streets were proposing to set up their own vigilant action groups to protect themselves from the ravages of crime in Cairns.

This is in North Queensland, where this government is letting the people of Queensland down and, importantly, where this government chooses to blame the victims and not the criminals. They are proposing to simply go out there, knock on doors and tell people to lock up. As the shadow police minister said so eloquently earlier today, you cannot blame the victims for crime; you have to get on and do something about it. This is a troubling and dangerous situation that cannot go on. All we heard from the police minister today was, and all we heard from the minister who supposedly represents the Premier in North Queensland—who is never seen in North Queensland and is certainly not seen to be addressing this issue—is that she knows that something is going on and she wants to have another meeting about it.

If the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland were actually doing something, this would not be a problem. We would not be seeing this on the front page of the *Townsville Bulletin*, we would not be reading about vigilante groups in Cairns, we would not be hearing about the increasing crime rate and we would not be seeing the papers describing Townsville as the crime capital of Queensland. The Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland is hopelessly missing in action and the Minister for Police is dangerously asleep at the wheel. The result is that people in North Queensland are paying the price.

Today we wake up to find that the government is talking about yet another plan to tackle the crime wave. It is setting up a community group to investigate the root of the problem. This is a government that is yet again opting to review instead of getting out there to do.

The question has to be asked: when will the Labor government get the message that the police need the resources to lock up the criminals who are causing the fear in the community? The police need the support of a government that is strong on crime, not like this Palaszczuk Labor government, a government that is soft on crime—a government that will be rolling back the toughest laws in Australia to deal with all sorts of organised crime, including bikie crime. It will be giving the green light to the bikies who are waiting at the border to come back into Queensland. These are laws that have been proved, sustained in the High Court after challenge and supported by all of the mainland states.

In yet another classic diversion, today the Premier talked about wanting to make these laws uniform throughout Australia. I simply say to the Premier: make the laws effective in Queensland. Protect Queenslanders first. Do your job. Do not grandstand on the national stage. Do not wind back the laws that were working. Provide the police with the resources. Do not rip \$20 million out of Taskforce Maxima. Make sure the police can do the job. Make sure the police know that they have the support of the government of the day when they go about doing their job.

As we go around the state and talk to the coppers on the beat, they tell us that the best thing that happened to them in the past three years was the introduction of our laws. It gave them the authority, the power and the wherewithal to put the frighteners on the crooks, to get them out of the state. It was not the bleeding hearts of the Labor Party who did that, notwithstanding the fact that they did vote in favour of those laws. Let us make that abundantly clear.

**Ms Grace** interjected.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** The member for Brisbane Central was not here then so she might not recall. I think she was marking time at the Nurses' Union. The Labor Party voted for those laws in this place, but as soon as they did they started recanting and winding back. Those laws were effective. They gave the police on the beat the powers and the confidence to go out and tackle crims. The police knew it, we know it and the Labor Party knows it.

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Ms Grace** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): Order! Could I please ask the minister and the member for Kawana to cease their conversations across the chamber. The member for Clayfield has the call.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** What have we also seen in the past 10 days? We have seen a Palaszczuk Labor government divided, more caught up in its own infighting than in the best interests of Queenslanders. We got a firsthand glimpse of that last week, when the Premier and the Deputy Premier clashed over the provisions of the Brisbane Metro project. We know that there is a problem with buses in Brisbane. We know that they are backing up. We know that this government does not have a plan to do something about it. We had a plan in which we would have been able to get both buses and trains across the river, but this government scrapped that plan, even though it did not have one of its own. It has no solution to the problems that assail 70 per cent of commuters in this city. They catch the bus; they do not catch the train. We have a clear and present problem.

What has happened? A solution has been put forward by the Brisbane City Council because the Labor state government is ducking its responsibilities. What did this government do? The Premier came out and said to the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, 'Ditch your plan. It ain't going to fly.' The following day the Deputy Premier came out and said, 'We want to work with the Lord Mayor on his plan. They can be complementary. By the way, the member for Sandgate has been working cooperatively with the Lord Mayor on that plan.' Then at four o'clock in the afternoon they were compelled into issuing a joint press release saying, 'There is no difference of opinion between us. We are all singing off the same song sheet. The Lord Mayor should ditch part of his plan but build the rest of it and work with us on the remainder.' That is a sign of a government that does not know where it is going.

While those opposite are fighting amongst themselves—while the venom and vitriol are flying between the Bernays Room and the Premier's office and between level 15 and level 13 of the Executive Building—who is paying the price? The commuters of Brisbane and the people of Queensland.

At the press club meeting last week the Deputy Premier almost unbelievably denied that she ever wanted the job. I do not think anyone believed that! The one bit of truth was when she said, 'I have to be 100 per cent honest here. There is no prospect of a spill.' There is no prospect of a spill because the numbers are not there. The member for South Brisbane does not have the numbers. In the meantime, Queenslanders pay the price for a divided government.

*(Time expired)*

### Cornerstone Living

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (11.55 am): Contrary to recent comments by the shadow minister for housing that we have a failed Cornerstone Living project as a guide for Queensland's long-term provision of social housing, the truth is that Cornerstone Living is a very successful partnership between the Department of Housing and Public Works and the private sector. Cornerstone Living at Coopers Plains within my electorate is a development which comprises 10 hectares of land which was unsustainable in its prior form of public housing. The land was once occupied by houses built largely by Dutch immigrants when they moved into the area just after the Second World War. Over time, many of the houses had fallen into disrepair. As a result, there were large parcels of land at Coopers Plains that were able to be renewed for public and private housing initiatives. Brisbane City Council adopted the Acacia Ridge/Archerfield Neighbourhood Plan, which allowed for multistorey apartments to be built on land where previously only detached dwellings had been allowed.

The renewal project provides considerable financial and social wins for the government. The Palaszczuk government has committed to the creation of jobs since winning government, and the Cornerstone project is a good example of this commitment in action. Some 4,600 jobs are being created at Cornerstone Living over the life of the 10-year project. Four hundred jobs have been created by the project so far. Consolidated Properties has completed 149 properties out of the 1,200 apartments and townhomes that are planned for the site.

The project has been very successful in delivering beautiful, affordable housing. Under the government contract, 15 per cent of the dwellings were required to be affordable housing; however, Consolidated Properties has far exceeded that, with over 60 per cent of the properties meeting the 'affordable' criteria in the first seven stages. The project has so far delivered \$14 million into the Queensland housing fund, and the structured agreement with Consolidated Properties means the state government gets to reap some of the uplift in property prices in Coopers Plains as a result of the development's positive impact on the suburb.

Approximately \$127 million has been invested in the Cornerstone Living development to date, and it provides community services in addition to new housing. Cornerstone Living is becoming a community hub, with a very busy cafe operating seven days a week; a community hall providing a meeting place for cards groups, chess groups and art classes; and a community garden with 45 garden beds. Garden members come from within the Cornerstone Living apartments as well as the wider community. I can strongly recommend the coffee at the cafe, as I often call in there to grab a quick cup on the way to my electorate office.

The community garden has been very well received and is tended to by new and old residents alike. This is another example of the Cornerstone project bringing the community together. Sixty per cent of sales have been to owner-occupiers and more than half of those buyers are first home owners. All stages sold out either at the point of release or very soon after. Owners and tenants have generally been from the local area working in local businesses or studying at nearby institutions, including Griffith University and QEII Hospital. The locality at Coopers Plains was ideally suited to urban regeneration and renewal. Further regeneration of the area will facilitate increases in housing supply, including affordable housing to first home buyers. The 2016 budget saw increases in grants for first home buyers, who will be able to take advantage of this initiative by the Palaszczuk government. Cornerstone Living has been recognised by receiving an award from the—

*(Time expired)*

### Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.00 pm): Another day, another example of the Labor Party in Queensland being divided and divisive on issues of critical importance to everyday Queenslanders, and there is no more obvious example of Labor's division and

its divisiveness than the conduct of the member for South Brisbane. If the member for South Brisbane is not trying to roll the member for Inala she is trying to hold Queensland back, and there is no better example of this than the proposed call-in of West Village. The member for South Brisbane has allowed a dark cloud of uncertainty to descend over the Queensland property industry through her unprecedented potential call-in of a project in her own electorate. It is hard to recall a more blatant example of an inappropriate use of potential ministerial call-in power to delay a construction project at a time when 24,000 full-time jobs have been lost in Queensland. Again, Labor is putting its own self-interest ahead of the interests of Queenslanders in what is nothing more than an obvious political attempt to appease the green vote in the electorate of South Brisbane.

We know the member for South Brisbane failed to appease the extreme greens when she lost the debate on vegetation management—a personal blow to the Deputy Premier after she made it a personal priority to overturn the LNP's sensible vegetation laws that supported farming families and protected the environment. The proposed call-in of the West Village project is yet another example of division towards the Brisbane City Council, which had approved the West Village project after consultation with the state government. The member for South Brisbane needs to end the uncertainty, stem the bleeding of confidence from the development industry in this state and not call the West Village project in.

Another great example is the foreign investor tax. The Queensland property industry is still reeling after 'Captain Risky' broke an election promise—broke statements that he publicly made as Queensland's Treasurer—and imposed a surcharge on Queensland's property industry.

**Mr WHITING:** I rise to a point of order. I ask that the member refer to members by their correct title.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): Thank you. I did not hear that, but I warn all members that that is the protocol.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Surely after 18 months as Treasurer even the Treasurer, who is known as 'Captain Risky', knows by now that if you do not want something you tax it. What has Labor done?

**Mr WHITING:** I rise to a point of order. That is certainly breaching that same rule.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** The media have even referred to the Treasurer as that.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I do not think there is a point of order.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The 'closed for business' sign is firmly up under this do-nothing Palaszczuk Labor government. Let us look at the ASF project on the Gold Coast. There have been no formal statements and no announcements after 18 months of delay with the ASF casino proposal. There has been no consultation with the community about traffic or master planning on the Gold Coast Spit. When the LNP left government the \$7 billion Wave Break Island project was ready to go and would have boosted the Gold Coast economy. We worked with stakeholders to develop a clear plan for a casino and cruise ship terminal that would have delivered jobs for Queensland. Instead, Labor in its wisdom scrapped the project and now it is sitting on the fence feigning support for this but taking no action.

Today we have heard again about the Metro. If it were not bad enough that Labor has no plan for bus congestion in the city, it is actively going out of its way to stop other levels of government from planning to get this moving. We have heard the Premier saying that the Lord Mayor should ditch the project. How incredible! This is a project that Brisbane City Council is pursuing out of frustration because this state government is doing absolutely nothing to ease bus congestion in the city. It is clear that it has absolutely no plan to address bus congestion in Brisbane's CBD. All Labor wants to do is fight and divide instead of fighting for all Queenslanders.

Labor is now refusing to provide basic information to the federal government so that the federal government can release \$20 million to Queensland for feasibility studies into 14 dams that could boost agricultural production by \$1 billion and create more than 2,000 jobs. Labor is blocking vital projects like the Rookwood Weir. Even the federal government wants to give Queensland projects money—projects that would generate jobs—but this Labor government's first response is to fight and divide. We on this side of the House have a record to work with the federal government in producing infrastructure projects. We only need to look at the \$6.8 billion—

*(Time expired)*

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): Order! Before I call the member for Thuringowa, I welcome to the gallery student leaders from Pine Rivers State High School in the electorate of Pine Rivers.

## Townsville, Youth Crime

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (12.06 pm): Youth crime in Townsville has been an issue over a number of years and continues to challenge the Townsville community. The former LNP Newman government could not fix the problem. Its failed holiday boot camps simply cost millions of dollars and our community continued to see and feel the effects of recidivism. However, after listening and working with our community, including respected Indigenous elders, department representatives from Child Safety, youth justice and police, the Palaszczuk government has a real plan to tackle the issues of youth crime in Townsville. Our Townsville Stronger Communities plan means a whole-of-government response to tackle the issues at the very core—the causes of youth crime that the Newman government did not have the guts or the intestinal fortitude to tackle. It was in the too-hard basket for the LNP. It was weak. The LNP failed. We know that this multiagency response will assist in reducing youth crime rates in the Townsville area. The LNP only wished it had thought of it.

This is the response following the community crime forum that we as government members in Townsville co-hosted just three months ago. Recent media has painted a negative and damaging image of Townsville, which in fact is a proud city for a number of reasons. We are a major economic driver through various industries such as our port, Lavarack Barracks, health in terms of our tertiary hospitals, science and innovation through our two universities and not to mention home to the premiership-winning North Queensland Cowboys—and may they win over the Broncos on Friday. We also enjoy being a major tourism contributor through many activities.

Like the 200,000 residents in our fine city, we choose to live and raise our families in our city in North Queensland. No-one should talk Townsville down. We are indeed a proud city that has challenges in employment and crime and our government has a clear plan to address both, particularly in the area of youth crime. Some in this place, like the member for Everton, seem to think that they have solved the issues through their holiday boot camps. They failed! Our government will build a stronger community in Townsville. We are getting on with the job of tackling the causes, particularly around youth crime, and building safer communities. Our plan includes tackling the problem from the bottom up, not from the top down, starting at the community level and assisting families in building a safer community.

I know that we can build stronger communities through having increased community policing visibility, like the community consultation groups that I worked hard to deliver in Thuringowa, or the mobile police facility, where our local police play an integral role in informing the community of issues of crime in our suburbs and capacity building by engaging with stakeholders in implementing crime prevention programs like Lock it or Lose it, or Neighbourhood Watch in our communities.

My goodness, who would not welcome an increased police presence in their community? It seems the LNP. The responses that we heard this morning from the member for Everton and the member for Clayfield to this QPS initiative sets back the validity of community policing, who are engaging with members of our community about crime prevention. Do those members, along with the negative reports in the *Townsville Bulletin*, realise that they are doing harm to these important Queensland Police Service initiatives? It means that the LNP does not support our police.

I know that the community policing board will offer much direction in providing a strategic plan to build a stronger community. I thank the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland. Like the member for Townsville, I also look forward to meeting with the directors-general of departments in the coming days to hear in detail how their agencies can play a role in identifying and targeting those high-offending youth and how strategies will be implemented to develop our real, on-the-ground, cross-agency Stronger Communities group. It is not, as the member for Clayfield said, a community forum; it is a departmental response to provide a safer and stronger community. The residents of Townsville should have faith that this Stronger Communities group will be an integral piece in our plan to manage youth crime. Once it is in operation, I believe that it will complement our community policing board.

## Queensland Economy

 **Mr EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (12.11 pm): Again, we have had another week in which the Treasurer tells Queenslanders that they have never had it so good. He told them that today in this parliament. In fact, we heard the Premier say that things are great in Queensland. The member for Mulgrave keeps wanting to tell us all that everything is great in the Sunshine State.

**Mr BAILEY:** I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is misleading the House by misquoting the Treasurer. I ask that he withdraw.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr EMERSON:** The members opposite are so sensitive, because they know that the Treasurer tells Queenslanders that they have never had it so good and that everything is great in the Sunshine State, but when we look at the latest state final demand figures—which the Treasurer kept wanting to refer to today—they confirm that under Labor and the policies of the Palaszczuk-Pitt government Queenslanders are doing it tough.

Those figures show that, in the last financial year under the Treasurer's watch, the Queensland economy contracted. Queensland was only one of two states to experience negative growth. It fell by 1.2 per cent. Our domestic economy shrank by \$4 billion. The Premier and the Treasurer are telling people that Queensland has never had it so good when in 2015-16 the economy contracted by \$4 billion. That \$4 billion contraction means less investment, less activity and thousands of fewer jobs across Queensland.

**Ms Grace** interjected.

**Mr EMERSON:** I hear the Minister for Employment trying to defend the fact that employment fell every month for the past six months and the Treasurer telling Queenslanders that it is great out there. That is the deception that we see from this government.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Ms Grace** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Could I ask members to cease their conversations across the chamber, and I ask the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations in particular to do so.

**Mr EMERSON:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. That is what we hear from the Minister for Employment—trying to tell people that everything is great and that everything is good when employment falls every month for six months in a row. Month after month, after month, after month, after month, employment falls in Queensland.

**Ms Grace** interjected.

**Mr EMERSON:** The minister considers that a joke. She laughs about it. That is the attitude we see. As I said, for six straight months in Queensland, the labour force figures show that employment has declined. Unemployment remains 0.6 per cent above the national average, at 1.1 per cent above that of New South Wales—south of the border. The members opposite like to defend their record. They say how well we are doing, but Queensland's unemployment rate is trailing that of New South Wales by 1.1 per cent. That means that, across Queensland, jobs are not there because of this government—but, according to the Treasurer and the Premier, those standing in the unemployment queue have never had it so good.

The Treasurer is even determined to ignore the reality in his own backyard of Cairns. In Cairns, the youth unemployment rate is 27.3 per cent. That is a tragedy, yet all the Treasurer can say, 'You've never had it so good.' The situation is so tough that across Queensland people are even giving up looking for jobs. While employment has fallen for six straight months, so has the participation rate, which means that more and more people have given up looking for work. If the participation rate were at the same level as it was when the Palaszczuk government came into office, the unemployment rate would be almost seven per cent in Queensland. People have fallen into such despair over the policies of the Palaszczuk-Pitt government and their ministers that they have given up looking for work.

The reality is that, since the beginning of the year, in Queensland, 24,000 full-time jobs have been lost, yet across-the-board we are hearing this government tell Queenslanders, 'You've never had it so good.' The members opposite should tell them that 24,000 full-time jobs have been lost in Queensland this year. Despite the reality that Queenslanders are doing it tough, the Treasurer keeps saying that everything is great. The only job that this Treasurer is interested in, the only one that he cares about, is his own. No-one on his back bench supports him. No-one in his cabinet supports him.

*(Time expired)*

### **Preventative Health and Health Promotion**

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (12.17 pm): I rise to speak about preventative health and health promotion in Queensland. This is a very appropriate week in which to talk about this topic, because this is National Stroke Week. I hope that all members of this House and the parliamentary staff will attend

the event that I have organised with the National Stroke Foundation on Thursday. The theme of this year's Stroke Week is Speed Saves and to think FAST. I challenge every member of this House to learn the meaning of FAST. It could save someone's life.

Over the past 30 years the manner in which we diagnose, treat and rehabilitate people who have had a stroke has changed dramatically. Thanks to the persistent work of the National Stroke Foundation, we now have unified, streamlined and evidence based approaches to stroke diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation. Perhaps the biggest contribution that the National Stroke Foundation has made is in the area of stroke education and prevention. As a volunteer for the Stroke Foundation, I have all the resources and the support that I need to educate the public and to provide clinical assessments. I play a small role in an army of people who educate the community and help people to realise that making the healthy choice can be the easy choice.

This week has made me reflect on the significant achievements of the Palaszczuk government in the area of preventive health and health promotion. On the weekend, I had the great pleasure of watching the Under-17 Coorparoo Women's Australian Rules Football Team win their grand final. On the sidelines, I watched the club president asking people to stop smoking or move outside the grounds. He came up to me and thanked me for the new laws that we had passed. Research demonstrates that children who are not exposed to cigarette smoke are much less likely to commence smoking. We also know that, if people have to walk further to smoke, they will cut down on the amount they smoke and will be more likely to succeed at quitting.

The government and the public health system must work in partnership with the non-profit and private sectors in the area of health promotion. Diabetes Queensland is leading the Health for Life! program to tackle chronic diseases. The government is working with the Heart Foundation, the Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland, the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Council, the Queensland University of Technology and the Queensland primary health networks—a \$27 million investment over four years by the Palaszczuk government to tackle chronic illness.

I have spoken before about the young men who I nursed in the eighties who died of AIDS, a disease we can now prevent and manage. I am so proud to be part of a government that is supporting the Queensland Aids Council, an organisation with 30 years of cutting-edge work in this field, with the Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis program, or PrEP program, just the latest initiative of QuAC to prevent the spread of HIV—a \$6 million investment by this government.

These and many other initiatives are making a huge difference to the people of Queensland. Compare this to the record of those opposite: cuts to preventative health services delivered by Queensland Health; cuts to safety and quality units in Queensland Health that were crucial in rolling out programs aimed at health promotion; cuts to funding for community sector organisations that led the way on health promotion and gag clauses inserted to silence their advocacy works; cuts to school based nurses; and, perhaps the most tragic cut of all, Queenslanders should never forget the shutting of the Barrett centre for adolescent mental health. They should also never forget the damage that those opposite did to our health system. They should never forget that the member for Clayfield was the driving force behind this damage.

I was so pleased recently to see Dr Michael Marmot in Australia to speak at the Boyer Lectures. Anyone who follows his work will know that he is a leader in the field of social determinants of health. While the Palaszczuk government can be proud of the achievements in the area of preventative health, it is the Advancing Education action plan that may actually have the greatest influence on health. Research clearly demonstrates the link between an individual's level of education and their lifetime health outcomes. Professor Sir Marmot is also a strong advocate, based on research, of investing and commencing education as early as possible. I was pleased to vote in support of the compulsory prep participation just two weeks ago. In my electorate I am privileged to have so many fine schools, including the School of Distance Education and a leading special school, schools that demonstrate the commitment of this government to providing high-quality educational opportunities for every student in every circumstance.

In health and in education the Palaszczuk government has a proud record of delivering outcomes—outcomes that will deliver better health for existing and future Queenslanders. This government has rejected the short-sighted cuts of the previous government and understands that Queenslanders can only be healthy if we invest in good preventative health and health promotion programs, as well as continuing our investment in the Advancing Education action plan. Finally, I pay tribute to all volunteers and staff of the National Stroke Foundation and the many other health promotion community organisations that help to make the healthy choices the easy choices.

## Disability Action Week

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (12.21 pm): I rise today to show my support for Disability Action Week 2016. As the shadow minister for disability services, it is a great privilege to raise awareness of this important week and help support people living with a disability by promoting the amazing things that they accomplish every day. Disability Action Week is currently underway and runs from 11 to 17 September, with this year's theme being 'Inclusion; it's a game changer'. The theme is aimed at helping to champion inclusion of people with disabilities in all levels of sport and also within our communities. It is no coincidence that this week's celebration aligns with the 2016 Paralympic Games happening in Rio. In Queensland at least one in five people are living with some form of disability. I do not believe there would be many Queenslanders whose lives are not touched in some way by a friend or family member who is living with a disability. It was Helen Keller who once said—

I am conscious of a soul-sense that lifts me above the narrow, cramping circumstances of my life. My physical limitations are forgotten—my world lies upward, the length and the breadth and the sweep of the heavens are mine!

Every day across Queensland people are achieving amazing feats while living with a disability. In this very chamber the member for Cairns has shown that being an elected representative in the Queensland parliament is a very real possibility for a person living with a disability. Right now half a world away in Rio hundreds of Australian athletes are proving that being a Paralympian is not out of reach.

As we talk about game changers and Disability Action Week, it would be remiss of me not to mention the disability reforms happening right now in Queensland and around Australia through the National Disability Insurance Scheme. This is a real game changer for the thousands if not millions of Australians whose lives are affected in some way by disability. The NDIS is changing and will continue to change the way people live their lives, while giving individuals more choice and more control over how they live their lives. People are now being able to self-direct the way in which they tailor support to ensure they are able to live their lives to the fullest. It has been a privilege to be able to visit service providers and talk to people and hear their stories of how the NDIS will change their lives.

I also want to put on record my support for those who work tirelessly as carers, support workers and associated roles to support people living with a disability and help them to reach their potential. I am proud to have been part of a government that took the first steps to implementing this historic reform for Queenslanders. As with all major reforms, we must not lose sight of what we are trying to achieve and we cannot stop working together to achieve this. As I have said, when it comes to support and inclusion, we do not have to look very far to see how amazing Australians are. At the 2016 Paralympics in Rio, Aussies are mixing it with the world's best and winning medals of all colours. As at the latest count, our Australian Paralympians have eclipsed the medal tally won by Olympians only a month ago. With seven gold, 13 silver and 14 bronze, our Aussie athletes are proving a sporting force on the world stage. Our Queensland Paralympians have been working hard in the lead-up to the games. I want to make special mention of one particular Gold Coast athlete. Curtis McGrath is competing for the first time at the Rio Paralympics in canoeing. Curtis almost lost his life fighting for his country and he will once again go into battle for Australia. This courageous young man and former soldier lost his legs in a landmine explosion in Afghanistan. His courage and strength to make it to the Games is amazing and I want to express my support.

The most exciting part of this week's Disability Action Week theme is to think that in less than two years the Gold Coast will play host to many para-athletes who will be competing in front of a home crowd. This will be the first time since the Sydney Paralympics we will see such a major sporting event and I hope this week's action week theme is motivation for our many aspiring athletes.

I conclude today by acknowledging all the organisers of Disability Action Week events. I am very much looking forward to attending the post school options expo tomorrow at the Chandler complex. This is a week to celebrate and I encourage every Queenslanders to get behind this week and ensure we deliver an inclusive community, not just in sport but in every facet of our lives.

## Social Cohesion Implementation Committee

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (12.26 pm): I am pleased to inform the House on the progress of the work of the Queensland government's Social Cohesion Implementation Committee. The committee was appointed in June and has been tasked by the government with developing a draft action plan to strengthen the cohesion and resilience of our communities and reduce the risk of antisocial behaviours and associated violence. We have seen an enormous amount of antisocial behaviour and associated violence not only across the world, in places like Turkey, more recently in

France on Bastille Day and also in Belgium, but also in Australia. Recently we have seen it in Melbourne, we have seen it in Parramatta, and on the weekend we saw it in Sydney. This is real. This is on our shores. The Queensland government is committed to a fair and equitable society with a strong focus on harmony, unity and inclusion. The government is also committed to seeing a safer Queensland. This is an important part of that work. Having strong social connections is also important for building a strong economy, tackling crime and being resilient to natural disasters.

As chair of the committee, I am honoured to be leading this body of work with the support of one of Australia's leading social work and disability scholars Professor Lesley Chenoweth—Professor Chenoweth is also deputy chair—and a committee membership with representation across a range of areas, including academia, community services, sport and youth. I am pleased to report that the committee has been out listening to members of the community on how we can strengthen our social cohesion. As honourable members appreciate, Queensland is a diverse and culturally rich community. While here in Queensland we have a remarkable degree of social cohesion given our diversity, maintaining this cohesion requires effort, and joint effort at that.

Last month the committee held consultation round tables in Townsville and on the Gold Coast. The committee has also heard from community members in other regions, including Logan and Toowoomba. We have also met with government agencies and community service providers. We have heard from a diverse range of people: people from different faiths, different cultures, different abilities, different ages and the LGBTI sector about what social cohesion means to them and how together we can build the cohesion of our communities.

The committee's work is also being formed by research support from Griffith University. We have heard how crucial it is for the members of our community to have a sense of belonging and to have opportunities to participate and to be engaged with the community, whether this be through training, employment, volunteering or social activities. Pathways to employment through volunteering, support and art were also recognised as important to building confidence, skills and social networks. We have also heard how important it is to bring people and communities together, to open up dialogue, promote understanding, create connections and, more importantly, break down fears, stereotypes and prejudices that may exist within our very own communities. This might start with getting to know just one new person. It might start with getting to know the family living right next door to us.

We also heard about the impact of education and media. Education needs to start early, building an understanding of the benefits of differences and positive relationships. Mainstream media needs to be cognisant of providing a balanced impartial view and we also need to use social media to link in with young people and hear their stories. It is clear that there is already a lot of work being done by government and within communities that we can build on to create more connected and inclusive environments. It is also clear that it is at the local or grassroots level where we need to invest our efforts.

The committee is in the process of identifying possible strategies to recommend to the government, to strengthen community cohesion and resilience and reduce marginalisation in our communities. This may include initially focusing on one or more communities so that we can centre our efforts on learning and building.

### **Mining Industry, Labour Hire**

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (12.31 pm): In the past year in Queensland, four coalminers died—the highest death toll in 20 years. Three weeks ago there was another death. A 55-year-old worker died after a fatal accident at the Newlands coalmine. Safety at work is one of the most critical issues that anybody will face. The ramifications of workplace deaths impact not only the family but also the whole community.

I have to question the multinational coalmining companies risking the safety of their workers for the sake of the big buck. The vested interest of the mining companies to use labour hire companies reveals that there is no respect or regard for the employees, their families or the community. It is evident that the mining companies have no intention of resolving the serious issue of the casualisation of the workforce through the use of labour hire companies. I condemn the actions of the labour hire companies and their draconian approach to their employees, families and communities.

The people I have spoken to all want the same thing: to know that when they turn up to work they will have a job, they will be safe and they will go home to their families at the end of their shift. They want to know that the contract they signed yesterday will still be valid today. They want to rent or buy a

house without the fear that they will not be able to make the rent or mortgage payments next week or that they will not be forced into breaking their leases so that they can look for employment in a new town. They want to feed and educate their children and not have to relocate at the whim of a mining or labour hire company that has no compassion or sympathy. Madam Deputy Speaker, they are not asking for any more than you or I would.

There are many stories, many of them untold, about the treatment of employees by labour hire companies on mine sites. There is no compassion, no consideration for families or their long-term plans, because there is no job security. It is evident that labour hire company employees are being exploited, especially when it comes to wages. We have been informed that some shifts have dropped from 12 hours to eight, translating to a pay cut of \$36,000 a year. Labour hire staff are receiving less and less pay, with some suffering a drop from \$70 per hour to \$36 per hour.

We have heard heartbreaking stories about the personal impact on exploited workers. One woman, a casual employee of a labour hire company, asked to have time off to attend her father's funeral. To her disbelief, the labour hire company informed her that she had only one day to attend the funeral and one day to travel the 2,000-kilometre round trip. That mine worker has years of experience, but under those devastating circumstances she had no choice but to quit her job, lay off the nanny who took care of her children while she was at work and break the lease on her home. The woman is currently not working as she fears that if she takes another job with a mining labour company she could lose it with an hour's notice and have to uproot her family again.

Another female employee spoke of her fear of reporting incidents. She said that labour hire staff are treated worse and work in environments that are unsafe because they fear that reporting safety incidents could mean that they will lose their jobs for causing trouble. I have been advised that the labour hire employees are powerless to protect themselves and they plead with permanent employers to report safety issues.

A man standing on a picket line at Middlemount told me that they had been on strike for 25 days. They are only asking for something simple: fair employment contracts, the right to job security and for the mining companies to stop shifting the goalposts and twisting policy to suit their own profit driven agendas. In the past, governments have set strong conditions on mining companies and reminded them that the resources belonged to Queensland. If they did mine the resources, it was on condition that they keep the workforce safe, build homes, bring in families and create robust communities.

The only real action successive governments have taken is the Inquiry into the practices of the labour hire industry in Queensland. Disappointingly, it made only one recommendation, that the minister progress the issue through COAG meetings. That is just not good enough. I call on the state government to do something, stop talking and take action.

### Queensland Economy

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (12.36 pm): I start by acknowledging in the gallery this morning one of my constituents, Justin Jackson, who the Treasurer will be very pleased to hear is a massive Cowboys supporter. Justin, welcome to the Queensland parliament. It is good to have another Cowboys supporter in the House today.

Last week in the *Brisbane Times* I was very interested to see an article by Ross Gittins titled, 'The economic numbers game—it's not as bad you might think'. It is good reading and I encourage the economic confidence busters from the opposition benches to check it out, because it might just knock the doom and gloom out of them. In the article, Ross Gittins says—

Just about everyone who doesn't look at the numbers ... is convinced the economy is "slowing", suggesting disaster may be just around the corner.

However, he continues—

Of course, if you do look at the figures you find little sign the economy is slowing. Indeed, the national accounts we got from the Bureau of Statistics this week show that real gross domestic product grew by 3.3 per cent over the year to June.

Therefore, this week when we hear the opposition bleat, in their negative way, about the negative economic outlook that they hold, they are either not looking at the numbers, are lazy, are deliberately misleading Queenslanders or are obsessed with undermining confidence in the Queensland economy.

**Mr Powell:** All of them.

**Mr RYAN:** I take that interjection from the member for Logan, because I agree: I think it is all of those things. The facts are that recent ABS figures for state final demand show that the Palaszczuk government's economic plan is kicking in and helping our economy recover from the horror of the Newman-Nicholls years.

Queensland will never forget the Newman-Nicholls nightmare. It was only four years ago on 11 September 2012 that the then treasurer and current opposition leader, Tim Nicholls, forced Queensland into an economic tornado. The opposition leader will never be able to hide from what he did to Queensland and to hardworking Queenslanders. Fourteen thousand direct jobs were gone with the stroke of a pen, which was an outrageous and economically irresponsible approach to supporting confidence in the Queensland economy. We must always remember what the then treasurer and current opposition leader said when he handed down the 2012 state budget and confirmed that the number of full-time-equivalent job losses in the Public Service would be 14,000. He acknowledged that it had been a difficult and challenging time for many people and families, but that they needed the 'right sized' Public Service. I repeat: the 'right sized' Public Service. He said that in 2012. True to form, the opposition leader maintains his mantra of 'right sizing' the Public Service and has recently repeated his comments about that objective.

We only have to look back four years to see what that would mean for Queensland. It means job losses, it means reduced confidence in our economy and it means a slower economy. Queensland just cannot afford to go back to the austerity driven economic ideology of the opposition leader. However, there is a better way for Queensland. The Palaszczuk government's economic plan is not only delivering jobs for Queenslanders but also restoring confidence and supporting economic activity. The latest ABS data for the June quarter 2016 shows that Queensland's state final demand rose by 0.3 per cent in trend terms and 0.7 per cent in seasonally adjusted terms. This is above the national average. The national rate was 0.6 per cent in seasonally adjusted terms. In other words, the Queensland domestic economy is growing stronger than the national rate.

Interestingly, the then treasurer and current opposition leader, Tim Nicholls, in response to the ABS data for the June quarter 2013, which showed a seasonally adjusted quarterly increase of 0.6 per cent in state final demand, said that the data pointed to a surge in the Queensland economy. With the higher quarterly growth in this quarter, the June 2016 quarter, as compared to that quarter, the June 2013 quarter, I cannot wait to hear the opposition leader give his glowing endorsement of the Palaszczuk government's economic plan, which is certainly surging the Queensland economy.

The growth in state final demand for Queensland is good news because it highlights an improving domestic economy which means stronger economic activity and more jobs for Queenslanders. This compares to the vision of those opposite—those opposite who destroy confidence in our community with their negativity, are obsessed with an agenda of reducing jobs in our state and have no economic plan except for asset sales.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): The time for matters of public interest is over.

## REPORT

### Consolidated Fund Financial Report

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (12.41 pm): The *Consolidated Fund financial report* is tabled in accordance with the requirements of the Financial Accountability Act 2009. The CFFR provides a statement containing particulars of transactions of the Consolidated Fund and details of the appropriation paid to each department during that financial year.

The CFFR outlines by department total appropriation from the Consolidated Fund for the financial year. It includes unforeseen expenditure—that is, expenditure from the Consolidated Fund above the amount approved by the annual appropriation on an individual department basis—and provides explanations for variations in the approved annual appropriation amount.

The CFFR also contains a number of other disclosures, including a statement of receipts and payments, opening and closing balances of the Consolidated Fund bank account and investment accounts and collections by department paid to the Consolidated Fund. I table the *Consolidated Fund financial report*.

*Tabled paper:* Consolidated Fund Financial Report 2015-16 [[1483](#)].

## APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 2)

### Message from Governor

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (12.42 pm): I present a message from His Excellency the Governor.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): The message from His Excellency recommends the Appropriation Bill (No. 2). The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

MESSAGE

APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 2) 2016

*Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68*

I, PAUL de JERSEY AC, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intituled—

A Bill for an Act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the consolidated fund for particular departments for the financial year starting 1 July 2015

(sgd)

GOVERNOR

Date: 13 SEP 2016

*Tabled paper:* Message, dated 13 September 2016, from His Excellency the Governor recommending the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2016 [[1484](#)].

### Introduction

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (12.43 pm): I present a bill for an act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the Consolidated Fund for particular departments for the financial year starting 1 July 2015. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Finance and Administration Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2016 [[1485](#)].

*Tabled paper:* Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2016, explanatory notes [[1486](#)].

The Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2016 provides supplementary appropriation for unforeseen expenditure in 2015-16. Unforeseen expenditure is the term used to describe payments from the Consolidated Fund above the amount approved by annual appropriation on an individual department basis. Although called ‘expenditure’ it can also relate to the additional repayment of debt.

Today, I tabled the 2015-16 *Consolidated Fund financial report*, or CFFR, which outlines, by department, total appropriation from the Consolidated Fund for the financial year. The CFFR includes any unforeseen expenditure and provides explanations on a department basis for variations from the approved annual appropriation amount.

The bill seeks parliamentary approval of supplementary appropriation for unforeseen expenditure incurred by eight departments in the 2015-16 financial year of \$390.126 million. Of the total \$390.126 million, \$296.985 million was for Queensland Treasury which it used to pay down debt under this government’s enhanced Debt Action Plan. The \$296.985 million came from extra dividends received from government owned corporations—the corporations those opposite were so eager to sell. The additional funds were then appropriated to Queensland Treasury which it used to pay down debt.

The additional unforeseen expenditure required in this bill is a good-news story for the Queensland budget as it shows yet again that debt reduction does not need to rely on taking the easy option of asset sales. Under Labor debt is lower, unemployment is lower and economic growth is higher. The Palaszczuk government has undertaken budget repair that is fair.

In contrast, what the opposition leader called ‘fiscal repair’ was code for sackings and cuts. It has been four years since the opposition leader delivered his first budget, where he acted like the grim reaper and sacked 14,000 public servants who Campbell Newman had previously promised had nothing to fear. During this time, Queenslanders, particularly in regional Queensland, closed their wallets and stopped spending. By 2014-15, under the member for Clayfield as treasurer, economic growth had slowed to 0.8 per cent.

In addition to the debt repayment by Treasury, for other departments the appropriation in 2015-16 was \$1.963 billion less than originally expected. The introduction into parliament of the bill for supplementary appropriation on the same day as the tabling of the CFFR enables parliamentary scrutiny of unforeseen expenditure.

### First Reading

**Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (12.46 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### Referral to the Finance and Administration Committee

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Finance and Administration Committee.

## RAIL SAFETY NATIONAL LAW (QUEENSLAND) BILL

### Message from Governor



**Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (12.46 pm): I present a message from His Excellency the Governor.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): The message from His Excellency recommends the Rail Safety National Law (Queensland) Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

MESSAGE

RAIL SAFETY NATIONAL LAW (QUEENSLAND) BILL 2016

*Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68*

I, PAUL de JERSEY AC, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intituled—

A Bill for an Act to apply a national law that provides for a national system of rail safety, to repeal the Transport (Rail Safety) Act 2010, and to amend this Act, the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999, the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999, the Queensland Rail Transit Authority Act 2013, the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and the Acts mentioned in schedule 1 for particular purposes

(sgd)

GOVERNOR

Date: 13 SEP 2016

*Tabled paper:* Message, dated 13 September 2016, from His Excellency the Governor recommending the Rail Safety National Law (Queensland) Bill 2016 [[1487](#)].

### Introduction



**Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (12.46 pm): I present a bill for an act to apply a national law that provides for a national system of rail safety, to repeal the Transport (Rail Safety) Act 2010, and to amend this act, the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999, the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999, the Queensland Rail Transit Authority Act 2013, the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and the acts mentioned in schedule 1 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Transportation and Utilities Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Rail Safety National Law (Queensland) Bill 2016 [[1488](#)].

*Tabled paper:* Rail Safety National Law (Queensland) Bill 2016, explanatory notes [[1489](#)].

I am pleased to introduce the Rail Safety National Law (Queensland) Bill 2016 to the Queensland parliament. This bill supports the Palaszczuk government's commitment to rail safety and delivers regulatory harmonisation across the Australian states and territories.

Queensland has one of the most extensive rail networks of any state in Australia, growing to more than 9,500 kilometres of operational track and 67 accredited rail operators over the last 150 years. Our rail network provides the basis for a vital transport system, delivering connectivity to strategic areas in regional Queensland, supporting agricultural, mining, manufacturing, retail and tourism industries and mass commuter transport services in South-East Queensland. It is recognised as an efficient mode of transport for moving bulk commodities, coal, minerals, agricultural products, livestock and large volumes of passengers across a geographically vast state. We boast Australia's largest export coal rail network, as well as some of the country's most remote and iconic passenger trains, including the *Spirit of the Outback*, the *Gulflander* and the *Savannahlander* services.

Queensland's rail transport industry is made up of a very diverse group of organisations. Rail transport operators range from major corporations operating thousands of kilometres of freight, coal or passenger services to the enthusiastic volunteers who operate small historic and tourist railways. There are also 31 registered private sidings owned by organisations that are not rail transport operators—for example, mining companies—but are used to load bulk commodities onto rail wagons.

The Palaszczuk government recognises the importance of rail. This is reflected in the following three major new rail infrastructure projects: the Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 2, which will open in time for the Commonwealth Games in 2018; the Redcliffe Peninsula line from Petrie to Kippa-Ring, which will provide affordable and efficient transport links to Brisbane's north; and the duplication of the Gold Coast line between Helensvale and Coomera, providing the missing link for that line to provide more services for the Gold Coast.

To meet the challenges and capitalise on the opportunities presented by our size, population growth and diverse economic base, Queensland needs a safe, efficient and reliable rail network. Rail transport operators in Queensland must be accredited in accordance with the Transport (Rail Safety) Act 2010. The act specifically requires operators to demonstrate that they have the competence and capacity to operate rail, that they have appropriate funding, effective management and control of their operations and a safety management system in place. Once accredited, rail transport operators are required to demonstrate ongoing compliance with the requirements of the act through regular audits and compliance inspections.

In Queensland rail regulation is conducted in a co-regulatory environment. This means that rail operators are responsible for determining and maintaining safety standards in their own operations, while the rail regulator is responsible for reviewing and checking that safety standards are met. Co-regulation is intended to boost productivity and facilitate economic growth by empowering rail transport operators to take active responsibility for setting and meeting appropriate safety standards.

Since 2010 Queensland has recorded a continued trend of improvement in rail safety. While rail kilometres and passenger journeys continued to increase in 2015-16, there were no rail related fatalities in Queensland, which is a fantastic outcome that rail operators, railway workers and passengers should be proud of. The safe, efficient and seamless operation of rail transport networks will be further reinforced by the Queensland government's decision to adopt the national reforms. Queenslanders can be confident that our high safety standards will be retained following commencement of the bill.

Historically, Australian states and territories have regulated railways differently, including after the development of the model rail safety law in 2006. These jurisdictional differences were about not just differences in the laws but also differences in how the laws were interpreted and applied by the rail safety regulator in each jurisdiction. Industry operating railways across jurisdictional boundaries were required to work with a number of different rail safety regulators in order to carry out their operations. This created additional work for the operators with no discernible benefit.

The move to a single national law and one set of processes and procedures will result in significant efficiency and productivity improvements for commercial rail organisations operating in more than one state. It will build on the substantial progress in rail safety achieved in Queensland since 2010 and underpin a culture of continuous improvement in rail safety across Australia. This bill will also benefit workers, including contractors who by choice or by contract will be working in different states and territories. These workers will better understand their responsibilities under the law and they might find the transition easier.

Across Australia significant work has happened in relation to the national harmonisation of rail safety regulation and investigation from as far back as 2009, when the Council of Australian Governments agreed to the establishment of the National Rail Safety Regulator, the development of a single Rail Safety National Law, and the expansion of the role of the Australian Transport Safety Bureau as the national rail safety investigator. The bill I am introducing today reflects many years of work, both

in Queensland and nationally, to ensure a more consistent approach to policy and regulation across jurisdictions, and remove inefficiencies resulting from varying inconsistencies between states and territories.

The main purpose of the bill is to apply the Rail Safety National Law as a law of Queensland. The Rail Safety National Law was prepared and passed by South Australia in 2012, as the host jurisdiction, with the intention that all other states and territories pass legislation to apply the Rail Safety National Law as a law of their own jurisdiction. The bill does not incorporate the Rail Safety National Law within its provisions but rather applies the Rail Safety National Law, as modified by the bill, as a law of Queensland. Therefore, any future amendments made to the Rail Safety National Law will not be considered by the Queensland parliament. However, changes to the Rail Safety National Law can only be made by unanimous agreement at the Transport and Infrastructure Council before progressing through the South Australian parliament.

By applying the Rail Safety National Law, the bill will provide that the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator will act as the rail safety regulator in Queensland. The Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator commenced operations in South Australia, New South Wales, Tasmania, and the Northern Territory in January 2013, Victoria in May 2014, the Australian Capital Territory in November 2014, and Western Australia in November 2015. Therefore, should parliament support this bill, there will be greater national consistency in rail safety regulation for all Australian rail transport operations. While some functions of the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator will be based in South Australia, Queensland will retain a branch office, which will continue to do the day-to-day functions of rail safety regulation and retain the relationships they have with the rail industry, which is vital in a co-regulatory environment.

As the Rail Safety National Law was based on a model law, which also formed the basis of the Transport (Rail Safety) Act 2010, there are only a small number of substantive changes for Queensland. The major differences are that the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator must undertake a cost-benefit analysis if a particular decision is likely to result in significant costs or expenses to the rail transport operator. Further, a mining railway in Weipa is currently excluded under the Transport (Rail Safety) Act 2010 but will not be excluded under the Rail Safety National Law due to their aboveground operation. However, a transitional provision will provide a period of three years to enable this railway to comply with the Rail Safety National Law. Rio Tinto, which operates the mining railway in Weipa, has been involved in discussions and has indicated that it will ensure it complies with any requirements under the bill.

The other differences are: persons who load or unload freight on rolling stock will have an obligation to ensure that such operations are carried out safely to recognise that there is a shared responsibility to ensure the safety of railway operations; and some penalties are significantly higher than the penalties currently contained within the Transport (Rail Safety) Act 2010 because the penalties have been aligned to penalty amounts contained in work health and safety legislation and also reflect the national harmonisation of rail safety law.

The bill, by applying the Rail Safety National Law, will also introduce drug and alcohol testing by the regulator in Queensland. Rail safety workers will be able to be tested, in particular circumstances, by authorised persons who are appointed by the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator. The drug and alcohol testing procedures contained in the bill are largely consistent with the road testing rules under the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995. Queensland police officers will continue to test train drivers, as they currently do, under the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995. Drug and alcohol testing by the National Rail Safety Regulator is in addition to the requirement for rail transport operators to prepare and implement a drug and alcohol management plan.

In July this year, Queensland amended the Transport (Rail Safety) Regulation 2010 to introduce work hours and rest period provisions for train drivers as a fatigue risk safety net. To ensure that there is no reduction in safety in Queensland, the work hours and rest period provisions will be included in the Rail Safety National Law National Regulations 2012. These provisions will only apply to Queensland operators and are similar to the New South Wales fatigue provisions that are already contained in the national regulations. The amendment to the national regulations to include Queensland's fatigue provisions is expected to receive support from the Transport Infrastructure Council in November 2017 and will commence simultaneously with this bill.

As part of the national rail safety reforms, the Australian Transport Safety Bureau will commence conducting necessary no-blame rail safety investigations in Queensland. These no-blame rail safety investigations are currently undertaken by the rail safety regulation unit in the Department of Transport

and Main Roads under the Transport (Rail Safety) Act 2010. Following the repeal of the Transport (Rail Safety) Act 2010, investigations will be done by the Australian Transport Safety Bureau under the national Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003.

The fee model currently in the Transport (Rail Safety) Act 2010 reflects that the Department of Transport and Main Roads currently undertakes both regulatory and investigation functions. The Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator will collect annual accreditation fees from accredited rail transport operators to cover the costs to undertake regulatory functions only. They do not collect the investigation component of the fee that rail operators currently pay in Queensland. Therefore, the bill includes an adjusted rail safety investigation fee, which the Department of Transport and Main Roads will collect from high-frequency accredited rail transport operators to cover the costs of the Australian Transport Safety Bureau undertaking no-blame rail safety investigations in Queensland. In recognition of the important contribution tourist and heritage railways make to Queensland's tourism industry and cultural heritage, the Department of Transport and Main Roads will pay the annual accreditation fees for tourist and heritage rail operations in Queensland for the foreseeable future.

The bill includes a commencement date of the end of 30 June 2017 to give industry, the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator and the Department of Transport and Main Roads certainty to aid in the transition. Both the Department of Transport and Main Roads and the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator have dedicated resources to manage the implementation and transition to the Rail Safety National Law.

The Rail Safety National Law was developed in consultation with all Australian states and territories and also the rail industry, unions and other representative groups. I will briefly reflect on the consultation that has occurred. The Australasian Railway Association, the Association of Tourist and Heritage Rail Australia, and the Rail, Tram and Bus Union were members of the National Rail Safety Regulator Advisory Committee during the development of the Rail safety National Law. This is testament to this being a piece of legislation that will bring the rail safety environment in Queensland into a nationally harmonised and safe environment that will endure for more than 150 years into the future.

### First Reading

**Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (1.00 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### Referral to the Transportation and Utilities Committee

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Farmer): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Transportation and Utilities Committee.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

## SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (2.30 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Bail Act 1980, the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004, the Corrective Services Act 2006, the Crime and Corruption Act 2001, the Crime and Corruption Regulation 2015, the Criminal Code, the Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013, the Criminal Proceeds Confiscation Act 2002, the Disability Services Act 2006, the District Court of Queensland Act 1967, the Drugs Misuse Act 1986, the Evidence Act 1977, the Liquor Act 1992, the Liquor Regulation 2002, the Motor Dealers and Chattel Auctioneers Act 2014, the Peace and Good Behaviour Act 1982, the Peace and Good Behaviour Regulation 2010, the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992, the Penalties and Sentences Regulation 2015, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Regulation 2012, the Police Service Administration Act 1990, the Racing Act 2002, the

Racing Integrity Act 2016, the Second-hand Dealers and Pawnbrokers Act 2003, the Security Providers Act 1993, the State Penalties Enforcement Regulation 2014, the Summary Offences Act 2005, the Tattoo Parlours Act 2013, the Tow Truck Act 1973, the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, the Weapons Act 1990 and the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000, to amend the legislation mentioned in schedule 1 and to make a regulation under the Criminal Code, for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Serious and Organised Crime Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 [\[1490\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Serious and Organised Crime Legislation Amendment Bill 2016, explanatory notes [\[1491\]](#).

I am pleased to introduce the Serious and Organised Crime Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. The main objective of the Serious and Organised Crime Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 is to implement a new organised crime regime in Queensland to tackle serious and organised crime in all its forms. The regime draws on the recommendations of the three reviews commissioned by the government into organised crime: the Queensland Organised Crime Commission of Inquiry; the Taskforce on Organised Crime Legislation; and the statutory review of the Criminal Organisation Act 2009. A further object is to improve the clarity, administration and operation of particular occupational and industry licensing acts through a number of technical and editorial amendments.

Prior to the last election, the Palaszczuk government promised the people of Queensland that in government we would establish a commission of inquiry into the extent and nature of organised crime in Queensland and its economic and societal impacts. The commission, headed by Mr Michael Byrne QC, identified the illicit drug market, online child sex offending, including the child exploitation material market, and sophisticated financial crimes such as cold-call or 'boiler room' investment frauds as key organised crime threats in Queensland.

The Palaszczuk government also committed to review the suite of 2013 legislation known as the VLAD laws, which were introduced by the LNP government. The task force was chaired by the Hon. Alan Wilson QC and its membership consisted of senior representatives from the Queensland Police Service, the Queensland Police Union, the Queensland Police Commissioned Officers' Union of Employees, the Queensland Law Society, the Bar Association of Queensland, the Public Interest Monitor, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. The task force was given broad terms of reference to consider whether the suite of legislation introduced in 2013 by the Newman government was effectively facilitating the successful detection, investigation, prevention and deterrence of organised crime and how it should be repealed or amended.

A statutory review was also conducted of the Criminal Organisation Act 2009. The new organised crime regime is informed by the careful and considered recommendations of these three bodies of work commissioned by the government. This new regime is being introduced to be operationally strong and legally robust. The regime heralds a return to traditional criminal law approaches and well-proven methods of crime detection, investigation and prosecution.

The initiatives in the bill are not limited to outlaw motorcycle gangs because, as the commission of inquiry identified, serious criminal activity and organised crime extends far beyond those gangs. A proper response to serious and organised crime must be agile enough to counter the threats to the community posed by all forms of organised crime including child exploitation, drug trafficking and financial crimes.

The regime in this bill is built to withstand all stages of the criminal justice system and, ultimately, is designed to secure actual convictions of serious and organised criminals which will act as a strong deterrent factor against future criminal activity. The regime draws on the ideas and initiatives underpinning the three reviews but with some crucial enhancements to ensure it meets the community's expectations, prioritises police officer and public safety, and injects judicial oversight across key elements of the regime.

The bill will repeal some elements of the 2013 laws which the task force found to be unnecessary, excessive and disproportionate. What the new regime delivers is a comprehensive approach to serious and organised crime. The key elements of the new regime are:

- a new consorting offence;
- public safety protection orders consisting of public safety orders, restricted premises orders and fortification removal orders;
- extension of the banning of 'colours' to all public places, not just licensed venues;

- new offences and increased penalties for child exploitation material offences, sophisticated financial crimes and drug trafficking; and
- improved powers for police to utilise the new organised crime regime and to investigate and gather evidence of crimes associated with child exploitation and financial crimes.

Importantly, this bill will ensure appropriate safeguards and oversight of these new powers, ensuring that the community can have confidence in the laws and the administration of justice as well as empowering police to target serious and organised crime to keep our communities safe.

The new consorting offence inserted into the Criminal Code by the bill will prevent and deter convicted criminals from establishing, building and maintaining criminal networks. The consorting offence is substantially based on the New South Wales approach, which has survived a constitutional challenge and been used successfully against organised crime groups including securing actual convictions. It will be an offence for a person to consort with two convicted offenders on two or more occasions. A convicted offender must be a person convicted of an offence that is punishable by a maximum penalty of at least five years imprisonment or another prescribed offence often associated with organised crime. Before a person can be convicted of the new consorting offence, they must receive an official written warning from a police officer. The offence will not apply to persons under 18 years of age. There is a specific defence that allows for participation in civic life.

The bill provides an important and practical safeguard requiring the Public Interest Monitor to provide an annual report on these official warnings which must be tabled in parliament. The bill also creates a new comprehensive public safety protection order scheme in the Peace and Good Behaviour Act to provide a multilevel strike against organised crime.

The scheme contains three new orders: restricted premises orders, public safety orders and fortification removal orders. A breach of any one of these three orders will be an indictable criminal offence. The restricted premises order will enable a premises to be declared by the Magistrates Court to be 'restricted' if a police officer has a reasonable suspicion that certain unlawful or disorderly conduct is occurring there. The declaration will enable police to enter and search the premises without a warrant at any time and to seize certain property including furniture, entertainment systems, pool tables, stripper poles and the like. The Police Commissioner may forfeit any property that is lawfully seized under the order to the state.

The outlaw motorcycle gang clubhouses that were 'closed' under the 2013 laws will be automatically declared to be restricted premises to ensure they cannot reopen. The task force report noted that a similar scheme operating in New South Wales was used successfully to dismantle 30 outlaw motorcycle gang clubhouses in its first 20 months of operation. Public safety orders will allow a commissioned police officer or the Magistrates Court to order that a person or a group of persons is prohibited from entering or attending an event or place if their presence is a serious risk to public safety. Police will be empowered to make these public safety orders for up to seven days. For any order longer than seven days an application must be made to the Magistrates Court. This ensures that police are fully equipped to rapidly respond to changing environments to protect the Queensland community. The Public Interest Monitor will provide an annual report on the police issued public safety orders which must be tabled in parliament.

Fortification removal orders empower police to apply to the Magistrates Court to seek an order directing the removal or modification of fortifications that are excessive for the lawful use of a property. If a person does not comply with the court order, police can enter the property and use any force or equipment necessary to remove or modify the fortifications. Police are further empowered to issue stop-and-desist notices if they observe excessive fortifications being built on a property. Police will have 14 days from issuing the notice to make an application to the court for a fortification removal order.

If a person breaches the stop-and-desist notice during this period, an evidentiary presumption will provide that the grounds for the court to make a fortification removal order are satisfied unless a person can prove otherwise. The new consorting offence, public safety protection orders and associated police powers must be reviewed by a retired Supreme Court or District Court judge five years after their commencement.

The task force accepted that members of the public have the right to enjoy themselves in licensed premises free from any fear or intimidation that the presence of colour-wearing outlaw motorcycle gang members might incite. The government considers that the same should apply to public places generally. The bill creates a new offence in the Summary Offences Act that criminalises the wearing or carrying

of prohibited items in a way that they can be seen in any public place and makes it clear that this includes in or on a vehicle in a public place. This extends the prohibition on wearing these items that already exists in relation to licensed venues.

This initiative builds on the acknowledgement in the task force report that colours are used to intimidate, influence, recruit and mark out territory. Our initiative fixes the glaring inconsistency with the LNP's suite of laws. That is, under the LNP's laws the intimidation by outlaw motorcycle gang members wearing colours towards a family eating dinner in a licensed restaurant is recognised but it is not if they are eating next door in an unlicensed cafe with the same outlaw motorcycle gang behaviour occurring.

The wearing of colours is tightly controlled by outlaw motorcycle gangs. They make a deliberate statement of membership and are designed to create a climate of fear and intimidation among members of the general community with an implicit threat of violence in the event of any confrontation with the wearer. This can facilitate criminal activity by members of outlaw motorcycle gangs because of a reluctance on the part of the public to report crime committed by such members. The QPS has advised of several incidents where witnesses have been reluctant to come forward due to the fear and intimidation caused by the wearing of colours.

The Australian Crime and Intelligence Commission has identified outlaw motorcycle gangs as one of the most high-profile manifestations of organised crime which have an active presence in all Australian states and territories. Outlaw motorcycle gangs have become one of the most identifiable components of Australia's criminal landscape and identify themselves through the use of colours. To provide additional deterrence against repeat offending, the maximum penalty for the offence will escalate upon a second and subsequent offences. The offences relating to colours contained in the Liquor Act will be retained, except for the offence prohibiting people from wearing colours in licensed venues as this conduct will be covered by the new Summary Offences Act offence.

In accordance with the recommendations of the task force, the maximum penalties for certain offences will be reduced. The bill will also provide adequate and appropriate protections for licensees and their employees. To facilitate these offences, a regulation, sitting under the Liquor Act, will list identified organisations including the 26 outlaw motorcycle gangs currently declared as criminal organisations. In cases where new criminal organisations appear, or existing organisations seek to change names, the regulation also allows for further entities to be added to the list of identified organisations if certain criteria are met. The Attorney-General will need to be satisfied that if the colours of the organisation were worn in any public place it would cause people to feel threatened, fearful or intimidated or would adversely impact people's health and safety. In determining this, the Attorney-General will need to look at whether anyone, while they were a participant in the organisation, engaged in serious criminal activity, or committed offences relating to public acts of violence, damage to property or disorderly or threatening behaviour.

In response to the findings of the commission of inquiry, the bill creates new offences and increases penalties for existing offences in relation to child exploitation material, sophisticated financial crimes and illicit drugs. The bill provides for significant amendments to the offence of trafficking in illicit drugs. The amendments acknowledge the criminality of trafficking in illicit drugs and the health and social concerns associated with the illicit drug trade.

Given the seriousness of the offence and its known links to organised crime, the bill provides that the maximum penalty of 25 years imprisonment will apply to all dangerous drugs, regardless of whether the drug is heroin, steroids or cannabis. Additionally, the current mandatory minimum 80 per cent non-parole period, which applies for offences of trafficking, will be removed by the bill and the offence will be restored to the serious violent offence regime under the Penalties and Sentences Act. This restores the court's sentencing discretion and addresses the recent adverse comments of the Court of Appeal, which highlighted, among other concerns, that the mandatory 80 per cent non-parole period created delays in our criminal justice system and potential inequity in sentencing.

The bill will make the following amendments in response to the increasing prevalence and seriousness of cold call investment or 'boiler room' fraud and evolving threats in financial crimes, particularly identity crime, that may not be adequately deterred by existing penalties:

- an increase in the maximum penalties for existing aggravated offences of fraud from 12 to 14 years imprisonment;
- the creation of a new circumstance of aggravation for the offence of fraud, carrying a maximum penalty of 20 years imprisonment, where the property or yield to the offender from the fraud is \$100,000 or more;

- the creation of a new circumstance of aggravation for the offence of fraud, carrying a maximum penalty of 20 years imprisonment, where the offender participates in carrying on the business of committing fraud; and
- an increase in the maximum penalties for the offences relating to obtaining or dealing with identification information, from three to five years imprisonment.

The bill will enable police and Crime and Corruption Commission officers to apply for a warrant to require a person, either the suspect or a specified person with the necessary information, to provide information necessary, such as passwords, to gain access to information stored electronically. Police and CCC officers will also be able to seek a further order if a person of interest has more than one level of security hiding relevant evidence.

One of the most worrying aspects raised in the commission of inquiry was the expansion of the child exploitation material market and the utilisation of technology to produce and distribute material. This bill provides new offences and expanded powers in response to the proliferation of child exploitation material over the internet, the increased use of technology to promote and distribute offending material as well as to conceal offending. The bill creates three new offences in the Criminal Code that target administrators of websites connected with child exploitation material. Each new offence has a maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment. The new offences will target persons who:

- knowingly administer websites used to distribute child exploitation material;
- knowingly encourage the use of, promote or advertise websites used to distribute child exploitation material;
- and distribute information about how to avoid detection of, or prosecution for, an offence involving child exploitation material.

The bill will also increase the maximum penalties for the offence of involving a child in making child exploitation material and the offence of making child exploitation material from 14 to 20 years imprisonment.

In recognition that this market and these offences are prevalent on the internet, the bill establishes a new circumstance of aggravation for each of the existing child exploitation offences as well as the new offences that will apply where the darknet—or a similar hidden network or anonymising service—is used in the commission of the offence. The new circumstance of aggravation will increase the relevant maximum penalty. For the offence of involving a child in making child exploitation material and the offence of making child exploitation material the penalty will increase from 20 years to 25 years imprisonment. For the remaining offences the penalty will increase from 14 years to 20 years imprisonment.

The bill also creates a new offence in the Criminal Code which will support the new child exploitation and criminal crime offences and increased penalties by providing that it is an offence for a person to fail to comply with an order in a search warrant requiring them to provide access information. This offence is punishable by a maximum of five years imprisonment. The bill also delivers key sentencing reforms for serious and organised criminals, whether they be involved in OMCGs, child exploitation material, sophisticated financial crimes or drug trafficking.

The bill implements the unanimous recommendation of the task force that the VLAD Act be repealed. The VLAD Act is excessive and disproportionate and riddled with serious prosecutorial challenges. The bill replaces the VLAD Act and circumstances of aggravation introduced into the Criminal Code in 2013 with a new serious organised crime circumstance of aggravation. This new circumstance of aggravation will be placed in the Penalties and Sentences Act and will apply to a specific, targeted list of offences.

The 2013 laws placed varying definitions of ‘criminal organisation’ and ‘participant’ across Queensland’s statute book, and this was properly criticised in the High Court of Australia. The new circumstance of aggravation introduces consistent definitions of ‘criminal organisation’ and ‘participant’ for all Queensland legislation. This will assist judges, legal practitioners and law enforcement and will generally aid the better administration of justice in Queensland. The new definition of ‘criminal organisation’ will capture both traditional, hierarchical organised crime groups like OMCGs as well as shapeshifting, opportunistic groups of offenders like paedophile rings and boiler room frauds. The new definition of ‘participant’ will focus on individuals who are actively involved in a criminal organisation or who identify and promote themselves as being involved in a criminal organisation.

The circumstance of aggravation will capture offending by participants that is committed at the direction of, in association with, or for the benefit of a criminal organisation. Persons convicted of this circumstance of aggravation will be punished by a tough mandatory sentencing regime that can only be avoided if the defendant cooperates with law enforcement. In addition to the term of imprisonment imposed for the prescribed offence, a person whose offending is aggravated by the new serious organised crime circumstance of aggravation will serve an additional fixed mandatory component of their sentence of seven years imprisonment or the equivalent of the maximum penalty of the offence, whichever is lesser. This seven years imprisonment will be served wholly in a corrective services facility without any eligibility for parole and cannot be mitigated or reduced in any way in the absence of cooperation with law enforcement agencies.

The court will also be required to make an organised crime control order for the convicted person. This new sentencing regime utilises elements of the VLAD Act that law enforcement found to be effective; that is, it deters and punishes participation in criminal organisations but also encourages cooperation with law enforcement. However, the sentencing regime in the bill does not include sentences that are completely disproportionate to the criminal conduct of the offender as the VLAD Act did. The bill provides for transitional arrangements for any individuals that have pleaded guilty and who have been sentenced under the VLAD Act.

The new organised crime control order, which I mentioned earlier, makes Queensland the first Australian jurisdiction to inject this initiative into its sentencing regime to target serious organised crime offenders. Other Australian jurisdictions and the United Kingdom have introduced civil law based pre-conviction control orders but, as identified by the task force and COA review, these non-conviction orders have been rarely used. These post-conviction organised crime control orders reflect the findings of the task force and the COA review that utilisation of the criminal justice process provides the most efficient and effective means of issuing these orders. Based on the data released in July 2016 by the United Kingdom National Crime Agency there are 155 current serious crime prevention orders in place, which is the initiative that inspired Queensland's new control order regime. All are conviction based; that is, to the best of our knowledge there are currently no non-conviction based control orders in place in the UK. The success of that regime lies with its conviction based focus.

The control order will be a mandatory consequence of a conviction of the new serious organised crime circumstance of aggravation. The court will be empowered to set any conditions it considers appropriate to protect the public by preventing, restricting and disrupting the offender's involvement in serious criminal activity. For example, conditions in a control order could be used to prohibit who an offender mixes with, or to prevent the person from attending certain places, or to place restrictions on their use of electronic devices or to restrict where they may work. An organised crime control order can be up to five years, and any breach will be a serious criminal offence punishable by escalating terms of imprisonment.

The court will also have the power to make control orders on a discretionary basis in three circumstances: firstly, when sentencing a person for any indictable offence if the court is satisfied on the balance of probabilities that the offender was a participant in a criminal organisation at the time. It does not matter if the criminal offence for which they have been convicted does not relate to their participation in a criminal organisation; secondly, when sentencing a person for the consorting offence the court may make a limited control order which can only include place restrictions and conditions that prohibit who the offender can keep company with; thirdly, in sentencing an offender for contravention of a control order, or alternatively the court may extend the length or conditions of the existing control order. This is in addition to any other penalty that may be imposed. These particular control orders will be limited to two years in duration.

The bill provides the Queensland Police Service and the Crime and Corruption Commission with extensive powers to ensure they have all the tools they need to enforce the new regime. The powers provided to police under the bill are also intended to protect the safety of front-line officers who must engage with serious and organised criminals as part of their duties. Associated with the new consorting offence, police will have the power to stop and search a person or a vehicle without a warrant. Police will also have the power to require a person to provide their name, address and date of birth. If it is necessary to confirm a person's identity, police can detain a person in order to take their identifying particulars, for example, fingerprints or a photograph. Police will be required to destroy these identifying particulars as soon as possible after a person's identity has been confirmed.

Police will also have the power to issue a 'move on' direction after issuing an official consorting warning in order to disrupt the interaction. Police will also have the power to stop, search and detain a person or a vehicle without a warrant if they reasonably suspect a person to be committing the new

offence of wearing or carrying prohibited items in a public place. Police will also have the power to seize anything that may be evidence of the commission of this offence. Police are provided with powers to enforce the new public safety protection orders in the Peace and Good Behaviour Act and the control orders in the Penalties and Sentences Act. These powers include being able to require persons to provide their name and address and stopping persons and their vehicles for the purpose of serving the orders. In terms of a contravention of control orders, the police will also have the power to search a person and/or vehicle.

The bill amends the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act to allow police officers to apply for a search warrant for a premises if they reasonably believe disorderly activities are taking place and are likely to take place again. Further, police may make an application for a search warrant for a premises on the basis that they reasonably suspect there is property at that premises that a person is prohibited from possessing under a control order. In recognition of the extensive, but necessary, new powers being provided to police, the bill importantly also amends the Police Powers and Responsibilities Regulation to provide that certain new powers provided to police as part of this legislation are 'enforcement acts' for the purposes of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act. This means that a person will be able to obtain information from the register about the use of the powers against themselves or their property. It also means that information about the exercise of these powers will be kept by the Commissioner of Police in a register that will be able to be utilised by the person appointed to review some of the initiatives in this bill five years from their commencement.

The Crime and Corruption Commission's immediate response function will be retained under the bill, but amendments will require the Crime Reference Committee to have oversight of this important function. The bill amends the penalty regime for contempt of the CCC. It replaces the mandatory minimum penalties introduced in 2013 with an escalating maximum penalty scheme for repeated contempt. This new penalty scheme implements the task force recommendation and was designed in consultation with the CCC.

As I said before, the bill provides for the repeal of a number of elements in the 2013 laws which are excessive and unnecessary. Notably with respect to the Crime and Corruption Act, the bill repeals the exclusion of fear of retribution as a reasonable excuse for not complying with orders under the CCC's powers of compulsion; the ability of the CCC to withhold potentially exculpatory evidence from persons charged with criminal offences; and the exclusion of a person's right to apply for financial assistance for legal representation at a crime hearing under the immediate response function.

The bill also provides for the repeal of the Criminal Organisation Act and makes amendments consequential to its repeal. It also repeals the 2013 circumstance of aggravation whereby a participant in a criminal organisation is liable to a greater penalty for evading police. Importantly the mandatory minimum sentencing regime that was introduced in 2012 to support the 'no police pursuit' policy will not be impacted in any way by the removal of the 2013 circumstance of aggravation.

The bill also repeals the 2013 changes to the Corrective Services Act which established the criminal organisation segregation order scheme; the 2013 amendments to the Bail Act which placed participants in a criminal organisation in a show-cause position when applying for bail in all cases; the 2013 recruitment offence under section 60C of the Criminal Code—the offence at section 60C is replaced with an offence based on the recruitment which currently sits at section 100 of the Criminal Organisation Act and adopts the corresponding increased maximum penalty; and the 2013 changes to the Police Service Administration Act that provided the Police Commissioner with the ability to publish the criminal history of participants in criminal organisations.

The task force found that sections 60A and 60B of the Criminal Code were vulnerable to constitutional challenge and very difficult to prosecute successfully. Nevertheless, the government has listened to the Queensland Police Service's advice that there needs to be a seamless operational transition to the new regime. The bill provides for sections 60A and 60B of the Criminal Code to be repealed after two years to ensure a smooth transition from the old laws to the new and that an operational gap, as accepted by the task force as a possibility, does not eventuate. Ultimately, the new consorting offence, the public safety protection order scheme and the new post-conviction control orders will deliver this under the new regime. The transitional arrangements simply ensure sufficient time for these new initiatives to come into operation and to properly come into their own. Recognising the criticisms of section 60A and 60B by the task force, the bill amends those offences to ensure that during this transitional period they will be indictable offences and punishable by maximum penalties rather than mandatory minimum penalties.

The 2013 laws also made substantial changes to occupational and industry licensing laws in Queensland. The result was a hasty approach that fails to properly balance the rights of individuals with the need to protect the community. Accordingly, the bill will restore robust, fair and transparent occupational and industry licensing frameworks in Queensland. It will ensure that people wanting to work in a regulated industry will be assessed on the basis of their past behaviour, as well as actual convictions for offences, particularly those associated with organised crime. In the event that a licence or approval is refused or cancelled on grounds of suitability, the affected person will be afforded natural justice. These amendments will effectively integrate licensing laws with its comprehensive approach to dealing with serious and organised crime in all its forms.

The new organised crime regime draws upon the expertise of the three inquiries commissioned by the government. It also reflects the government's commitment to provide the community with strong laws that protect their safety and wellbeing. Importantly, it protects the safety of our law enforcement officers, who every day risk their own safety to protect ours.

This new regime represents the Palaszczuk government delivering yet another election commitment to the people of Queensland. We promised to take a mature, evidence based approach to tackling organised crime, and that is exactly what we have done. I would like to thank Michael Byrne QC along with Alan Wilson QC and the members of the task force, all of whom brought their particular expertise in the criminal justice system to contribute to an important piece of public policy.

I want to thank Department of Justice and Attorney-General officials for their hard work in delivering this comprehensive package, along with other government agencies, especially the Queensland Police Service, the police minister, the Police Commissioner and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Importantly, this bill will go through a proper parliamentary committee process—an opportunity to participate that members of the House and members of the public were denied under the former government. In contrast, this government is drawing on the evidence of the commission of inquiry, the review of Criminal Organisation Act and the task force report and is happy to involve stakeholders and members of the public in a proper parliamentary process. This government is delivering on our commitment to Queenslanders—delivering a comprehensive and effective new regime to tackle organised crime in all its forms. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading

**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (3.05 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

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

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

## HEAVY VEHICLE NATIONAL LAW AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (3.05 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012 and the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Transportation and Utilities Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 [[1492](#)].

*Tabled paper:* Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016, explanatory notes [[1493](#)].

I am pleased to introduce the Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. The bill amends both the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012 and the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994. The Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012 is administered by the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator and provides for the consistent regulation of heavy vehicles over 4.5 tonnes across most of Australia. The national law establishes requirements for heavy vehicle registration; mass, dimension and loading; fatigue management; vehicle standards; and enforcement. The Heavy Vehicle National Law is part of a program of national reforms advocated by the Council of Australian Governments to establish single regulatory environments across the Australian economy.

The changes proposed in this bill were supported at the Transport and Infrastructure Council in June 2016 by all participating jurisdictions. This endorsement followed extensive consultation undertaken by the National Transport Commission in developing the bill with state and territory transport authorities, police agencies and heavy vehicle industry representatives. As host jurisdiction for the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act the Queensland parliament must first consider and pass amendments to the national law before they can be applied by participating jurisdictions.

The bill before parliament today aims to implement national reforms to chain-of-responsibility obligations and executive officer liabilities as well as introduce key heavy vehicle roadworthiness initiatives. Chain-of-responsibility provisions are designed to ensure that any party in a position to control and influence on-road behaviour is identified and held accountable. These provisions recognise the significance of on-road effects of the actions, inactions and demands of all levels in the transport and supply chain.

Chain of responsibility has been present in transport legislation in one form or another since the late 1990s. The provisions in the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012 were based on the national model compliance and enforcement laws agreed by ministers in 2008. The changes contained in this bill will bring the national law into line with the primary duties approach taken in other national safety legislation, including the model work health and safety law and the Rail Safety National Law. This approach places the focus squarely on achieving real safety outcomes in the transport sector by introducing a positive duty on chain-of-responsibility parties and executive officers to ensure the safety of their operations.

In particular, these reforms amend the national law so that each party in the chain of responsibility has a primary duty of care, so far as reasonably practicable, to ensure the safety of their transport activities. In addition, executive officers are required to exercise due diligence to ensure their operations comply with this primary duty. In effect, chain-of-responsibility parties must ensure that their conduct does not cause or encourage drivers, or another person, to contravene the national law or to exceed a speed limit. While terms and concepts such as 'reasonably practicable' and 'due diligence' are new to the national law, they are familiar to transport operators. The proposed amendments act to harmonise safety initiatives within the national law with the national model Work Health and Safety Act by using the same framework and principles.

Due diligence includes taking reasonable steps to acquire, and keep up to date, knowledge about the safe conduct of transport activities, to gain an understanding of the nature of the legal entity's transport activities, and the hazards and risks associated with those activities. Due to the familiarity of these concepts and their current application through workplace health and safety legislation nationally, the regulatory burden on industry, the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator and enforcement agencies will decrease. By replacing the current standard of 'all reasonable steps' and the reasonable steps defence with the 'so far as reasonably practicable' standard, transport operators will be able to manage all their heavy vehicle safety obligations under one framework. By reframing the chain-of-responsibility provisions in the national law to reflect a principles based approach, the efforts of each relevant party can be focused on proactively identifying and managing safety risks in a way that best meets their individual business needs and allows for innovative responses to safety concerns.

The shift away from existing prescriptive and deemed liability provisions also represents a change to the way chain-of-responsibility offences will be investigated and prosecuted by enforcement agencies. The most significant change will be the shift in the burden of proof for chain-of-responsibility offences. Currently the onus is on the defendant to prove that they took all reasonable steps to avoid the offence, known as reverse onus of proof. Under the proposed primary duties approach, the obligation will be on the prosecution to prove each element of the offence, including that a party did not do everything reasonably practicable in the circumstances to avoid the offence. It is a testament to the importance of this reform that there is almost universal agreement across governments and industry for the adoption of a positive duty on all parties in the chain of responsibility to ensure the safety of road transport operations.

The amendments in this bill also provide for the inclusion of heavy vehicle roadworthiness and vehicle standards as part of the primary duty of care for chain-of-responsibility parties. In addition, the amendments in the bill introduce enforceable undertakings, an innovative tool that will improve compliance outcomes. An enforceable undertaking is a legally binding agreement that is used as an alternative to prosecution for certain offences. They allow an authorised officer to enter into an undertaking with a person or organisation to carry out specific activities to improve workplace health and safety. Their use can lead to positive, long-term change in how a workplace manages its health and safety systems, providing lasting benefits to workers, industry and the community as a whole.

Enforceable undertakings are used to fix a problem and make sure that it does not recur. It would generally be used where an investigation has shown a relevant law has not been followed but that the operator is prepared to voluntarily take steps to fix the issue and agrees to preventative actions. This would typically include an agreement by the operator to take certain actions to prevent future breaches of the law such as implementing maintenance management systems and a commitment by the operator to future compliance measures. Such measures could include regular internal audits, training for managers and staff, or future reporting requirements to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator. If the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator were to decide that an enforceable undertaking is the best way to resolve a breach of roadworthiness requirements, it may negotiate terms with the operator that are practical, effective and can be complied with. If the operator does not complete the actions or implement the specified policies, then enforcement action would be taken.

The bill also makes a number of minor and technical amendments to the national law that will see the removal of unnecessary administrative or regulatory burdens, improved safety outcomes and enforceability, and the minimisation of imposts on the court system. Currently, authorised officers are limited in their ability to issue formal warnings for defective heavy vehicles that do not pose a safety risk. As a result, an increased compliance burden is placed on industry due to the requirements and obligations associated with the issue of minor defect notices. The amendments in this bill provide for the creation of a self-clearing defect notice—an additional type of defect notice—that reduces the compliance burden for industry because the operator of the heavy vehicle is not required to present the vehicle for inspection to have the defect notice cleared. The operation of these provisions does not impact the operation of the current provisions for the issue of minor and major defect notices.

Self-clearing defect notices are a new stand-alone category of defect notice that authorised officers have the discretion to issue where the defect does not pose a safety risk. This new approach will improve roadside enforcement, reduce the compliance burden for industry and reduce the administrative burden for the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator. The maintenance amendments to the national law also include new offences relating to the display of accreditation labels. The national law requires the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator to give an operator an accreditation label for each relevant vehicle for accreditation under the National Heavy Vehicle Accreditation Scheme. However, there are no offences for failing to display and maintain the labels in the primary legislation. These amendments create offences for failing to display and maintain a National Heavy Vehicle Accreditation Scheme label on a nominated heavy vehicle. Requirements to display and maintain relevant accreditation labels assist authorised officers to more effectively target roadside enforcement and compliance activities.

The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator will also be authorised to make minor administrative amendments to road access statutory instruments without the requirement to seek additional road manager consent. In addition, responsible ministers, under certain circumstances, may delegate their approval powers to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator Board to facilitate the making of minor amendments to guidelines and statutory approvals. To realise the full potential of these reforms, the change to a primary duties approach in the national law will require the development of detailed guidelines for industry as well as training for enforcement agencies and prosecutors. The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator will lead the implementation of these reforms and, in consultation with jurisdictions and industry, will develop training programs for enforcement officers and a comprehensive support package for industry. This will provide a range of educational materials on new terms, definitions and amendments to the national law, as well as updating applicable industry codes of practice. The amendments in this bill, in particular reforming the chain-of-responsibility and executive officer liability requirements under the Heavy Vehicle National Law, represent a significant step forward in the way that safety risks are to be identified and managed by the heavy vehicle industry.

I will now address amendments to the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994. The Queensland government is committed to ensuring Queenslanders have access to safe personalised transport services and a sustainable and competitive industry to deliver them. Emerging technologies are shaping customer expectations and changing the personalised transport industry in Queensland and across the globe. As such, there was a need to review existing policy and legislation and deliver a reform program that allows for an agile regulatory framework that is responsive to the changes facing the personalised transport industry. The reforms will strengthen safety standards, encourage competition, provide customers with choice and flexibility, drive innovation and ensure accountability across the industry.

The first stage of the reform program has already commenced. Since 5 September 2016, ride-booking services have been able to operate legally in Queensland, subject to safety requirements. Taxis continue to have exclusive access to rank and hail services. Red tape has also been cut for the taxi and limousine industry so that they have more flexibility to respond to this increase in competition. The government values the services that taxis and limousines provide to the Queensland community and recognise that it is important that these services continue to be competitive into the future. The existing taxi and limousine industry is in a strong position to adapt to increased competition. We acknowledge though that some existing taxi and limousine businesses will face challenges in transitioning to the new framework. The government has announced a \$100 million industry adjustment assistance package to provide support to existing industry participants during this transition. This bill has been introduced to provide for administration of the main elements of the industry adjustment assistance package, being transitional assistance payments and a hardship fund. Some \$60 million will be provided in transitional assistance for taxi and limousine service licence holders. Taxi licence holders will receive a payment of \$20,000 per taxi service licence, capped at two licences per holder, and limousine licence holders will receive \$10,000 for each licence except for special purpose limousine licences, which are annual.

A hardship fund of \$26.7 million will also be made available to assist licence holders who experience financial hardship due to the reforms subject to eligibility criteria. We have moved quickly to introduce this bill so that transitional assistance and hardship payments can be made to licence holders as soon as possible. The bill allows for the eligibility criteria and procedures for accessing these payments to be set out in regulations. This legislation will operate for two years with the delivery of financial assistance expected to be completed in this time.

While access to the transitional assistance payment and the hardship fund is dependent on the passage of this legislation, other assistance is being implemented without legislation as soon as possible. This includes \$4.3 million in fee waivers for the existing industry, \$5.6 million for incentive payments to drivers of wheelchair-accessible taxis and \$3.7 million for business advisory services. Immediate financial relief of approximately \$2.6 million has already been provided to the taxi and limousine industry through the waiving of fees for taxi and limousine licence renewals, taxi and limousine operator accreditation, the annual taxi industry security levy payment and driver authorisation renewals. Further fee waivers will be provided as driver authorisation renewals fall due.

The disruption being experienced by the taxi and limousine industry is not unique to Queensland. Like other states, we will provide a level of assistance to support the industry to transition but, unlike other states, a levy will not be imposed on customers to fund this assistance. While there are some of the view that a levy should be imposed on industry, in practical terms it is likely the industry will pass on this cost to customers, resulting in increased fares. This government does not want to impose a new tax on personalised transport customers. Higher fares may also result in reduced demand for taxi and ride-booking services.

In addition, the experience in other states indicates that the design and administration of a levy is complex and the costs to government and industry in setting up systems to enable administration and collection would be significant. The effective administration of the levy is also dependent on the cooperation of industry participants including ride-booking companies and taxi-booking companies. Coverage is also an issue. Imposing the levy on the taxi industry would mean they effectively self-fund their assistance package, whereas limiting the levy to ride-booking services is inequitable and would significantly increase the time it takes to collect the funds. Modelling indicates that this could take up to 15 years depending on the amount of the levy. For these reasons, funding from consolidated revenue is preferred in terms of having the lowest administration cost and impact on industry and customers and ensuring the timely delivery of assistance.

There are more comprehensive changes to come for the personalised transport industry in the second stage of this reform program, including the introduction of a new licensing framework for taxi and booked hire services. I plan on introducing a bill for these changes into parliament early next year for implementation by August. We will continue to consult with the personalised transport industry and monitor and evaluate the reforms to ensure that we have the balance right. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading

**Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (3.23 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### Referral to the Transportation and Utilities Committee

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Furner): Order! In accordance with standing order 113, the bill is now referred to the Transportation and Utilities Committee.

## WATER (LOCAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS) AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (3.24 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Water Act 2000 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Transportation and Utilities Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Water (Local Management Arrangements) Amendment Bill 2016 [[1494](#)].

*Tabled paper:* Water (Local Management Arrangements) Amendment Bill 2016, explanatory notes [[1495](#)].

This bill establishes a transfer scheme to allow the government to implement local management arrangements for SunWater's channel irrigation schemes. SunWater, a government owned corporation, owns and operates eight channel irrigation schemes across Queensland. Local management arrangements involve the potential transfer of these schemes to local grower control. Transfer of ownership of the scheme will put the responsibility for the ongoing management of the schemes on the primary beneficiaries of the irrigation schemes—the irrigation customers. Those people who know the most about their water supply are the locals and local management is designed to use local knowledge to reduce costs, increase productivity of the irrigation scheme and add value to our agricultural sector. The introduction of local management arrangements will empower local communities and encourage the growth of Queensland's agricultural industry.

The bill inserts a new chapter 4A into the Water Act 2000. The bill applies to the Eton, Emerald, St George and Theodore channel irrigation schemes, which are ready to commence the transition to local management subject to there being agreement on the final terms of the transfer and there being sufficient support from the local irrigation community. The bill allows for regulations to be made for the four remaining channel schemes, namely, Bundaberg, Burdekin, Lower Mary and Mareeba, to be subject to the transfer scheme in the future. Those schemes are not yet ready to commence the transition and will need to prepare revised business proposals for consideration by the government and the local community will need to be consulted to ensure there is sufficient support.

The key objective of the bill is to facilitate and give effect to the transfer of the business, assets and liabilities associated with and related to each irrigation scheme from SunWater to new legal entities, which will be owned and controlled by the irrigation customers in each scheme. The bill applies to irrigation infrastructure such as channels, pipes, pump stations and other infrastructure, plant and equipment necessary to operate the irrigation scheme. The bill does not apply to bulk water infrastructure such as dams; however, some weirs which are integral parts of operating the scheme will be covered by the bill. The transfer scheme will allow for notices to be published in the *Government Gazette*, allowing for the transfer of the business, employees, assets, liabilities, interests in land and the issuing of licenses and authorisations necessary to implement the scheme.

A key issue for the transfer is to ensure that the new entities have appropriate land tenure for the scheme. In order to provide the necessary land tenure the bill allows for the transfer of freehold land and the issue of new perpetual leases for the channel infrastructure, ensuring that the schemes have appropriate tenure to operate the schemes while preserving any existing resource authorities. A range of provisions will ensure that the transfer of the schemes does not impact on the ongoing operations of the channels, which provide an essential service to the irrigation customers in each scheme.

A number of other provisions will facilitate the completion of the project, including a power to issue directions to support the project, as well as providing for the ability to ensure that the irrigators can carry out appropriate due diligence by ensuring access to confidential information in particular circumstances. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading

**Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (3.27 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### Referral to the Transportation and Utilities Committee

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Furner): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Transportation and Utilities Committee.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (UNDERGROUND WATER MANAGEMENT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (3.27 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Mineral Resources Act 1989, the Queensland Heritage Act 1992, the Water Act 2000 and the Water Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2014 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Agriculture and Environment Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Environmental Protection (Underground Water Management) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 [[1496](#)].

*Tabled paper:* Environmental Protection (Underground Water Management) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016, explanatory notes [[1497](#)].

I am pleased to present to the House a bill to better manage the environmental impacts of groundwater take by the mining industry and to protect the interests of farmers and other landholders whose groundwater is impacted by resource industry activities. The Environmental Protection (Underground Water Management) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 will ensure that environmental assessment under the Environmental Protection Act 1994 will scrutinise the environmental impacts of groundwater take by mining activities as part of the application for an environmental authority.

This bill strengthens the assessment of environmental impacts related to groundwater take by resource activities. In doing so, this bill modifies the framework established by the Water Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2014—known as the WROLA. This bill complements other amendments to that act, which will be delivered by the Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2015.

The bill addresses the widespread concern about the WROLA Act's so-called unlimited right to take. If that right to take went ahead it would grant mining operators an unlimited right to take groundwater without adequate regulatory scrutiny or oversight. Members will recall that stakeholders were worried about the impacts of the underground water rights on the environment and also upon other users of underground water resources, particularly farmers and other agricultural users. This bill addresses both these concerns with tailored amendments to existing obligations and processes. This bill moves to address this issue in future under Queensland environmental protection laws administered by the state's environmental regulator.

This bill also strengthens the assessment undertaken as part of an environmental authority application. In future, the environmental impacts of groundwater extraction by any mining operator will be addressed by this process rather than through a water licence. In doing this the bill also provides a streamlined process for the mining industry. In future, new mining project proponents will have the authorisation of their groundwater impacts and other environmental related impacts dealt with by a single regulator giving approval under a single environmental authority and being subject to one process of scrutiny and objections before the courts. This is a common-sense approach.

The bill also provides for proper oversight during the operational phase of mining operations by drawing a clear link between the underground water impact reports performed under the Water Act and the requirements of the environmental authority. The bill requires underground water impact reports to include additional information about impacts on environmental values resulting from the exercise of underground water rights. To ensure that any identified impacts are appropriately managed, the bill provides that the environmental authority may be updated to address the findings of an underground water impact report.

The second major feature of this bill is that it protects the interests of farmers and other landholders whose groundwater is impacted by resource industry activities. This will be achieved by improving the existing make-good obligations under the chapter 3 underground water management framework in the Water Act 2000. This bill strengthens protection for farmers and other rural landholders. That is the right thing to do for those landholders and it is also the right thing to do to secure the long-term future of Queensland's gas industry.

This bill delivers several improvements to make-good obligations. Most important for many farmers, this bill ensures that make-good obligations will be triggered if a bore is impaired by free gas. Free gas is formed during coal seam gas production when the released gas migrates from areas of high pressure to low pressure. A recent report by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines concluded that water bores can become impaired by free gas even if the water level of the bore is unaffected. Impairment by free gas can take the form of damage to infrastructure, resistance to flow, water quality impacts and explosive risk. This bill will ensure that if bores are affected by free gas during coal seam gas extraction the landholder will be protected by the triggering of their make-good agreement. Impairment by free gas and consequent explosion risk can be addressed in the make-good agreement by, for instance, capping a bore and providing a new bore at a better location.

The bill also expressly requires that make-good obligations are to arise where the exercise of underground water rights is the likely cause of the impairment even if there is some scientific uncertainty. This is a significant improvement to the rights of landholders. The bill provides for a cooling-off period for make-good agreements and also provides that resource companies will be required to bear the costs of any alternative dispute resolution process. This will ensure that landholders are not inhibited in fully engaging with the process to obtain good outcomes for both the resource company and the landholder through the make-good provisions.

Finally, the bill provides that resource companies operating under chapter 3 make-good arrangements will be required to pay the landholder's reasonable costs in engaging a hydrogeologist. Access to this expert advice can have critical importance to farmers who are seeking to negotiate an appropriate make-good agreement that will protect their families' future. Access to this advice will enable landholders to engage in the process in an informed manner.

Together these proposed amendments will ensure that landholders are not in a disadvantaged negotiating position and are fairly compensated for impacts on their infrastructure or on their water resources. The bill provides continuity and stability for businesses that have existing project proposals on hand and which are well advanced in their approval process. The bill does this by amending the Water Act to require that these mining projects will be required to seek an associated water licence. This associated water licence will involve an environmental impact test with outcomes comparable to that which will be required for new projects through the EP Act amendments. This approach will ensure environmental scrutiny of groundwater extraction impacts while also affording companies with a project that is underway with stability in completing their assessment process.

Importantly, as part of the approvals process the associated water licence will remain subject to current rights for third parties to be heard, the right to make submissions and the right to merit based appeal. The bill makes an amendment to provide consistency in the general administrative arrangements for environmental authority applications under the Environmental Protection Act. This corrects an oversight from previous amendments which ensured that Queensland has an independent

process for environmental authority decisions, but failed to extend that independence to applications which have been underway for several years. This correction brings ongoing applications in line with contemporary processes.

The bill also makes minor amendments to the Queensland Heritage Act 1992 to ensure that local government has the capacity to appoint appropriate authorised persons to support local government functions in relation to local heritage places under the Queensland Heritage Act. This was an oversight that is now corrected by this bill.

In preparing the bill the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection and the Department of Natural Resources and Mines have consulted with key stakeholders on these issues through the water engagement forums which were held on 7 March, 29 April and 6 September 2016. The water engagement forums include stakeholders such as AgForce, the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies, the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association, the Environmental Defenders Office, the Local Government Association of Queensland, the Queensland Conservation Council, the Queensland Resources Council, the Wilderness Society and the World Wide Fund for Nature Australia. I thank all stakeholders for their valuable input during the forums which has contributed to the constructive changes presented in this bill.

### First Reading

**Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (3.37 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### Referral to the Agriculture and Environment Committee

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Elmes): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Agriculture and Environment Committee.

## CONSTITUTION OF QUEENSLAND AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 21 April (see p. 1343)

### Second Reading

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (3.37 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

At the outset I thank the Committee of the Legislative Assembly for its consideration and report on the bill which it tabled on 15 August 2016. I note that in its report the CLA has recommended that the bill be passed and that the amendment proposed by the government relating to future amendments of the Constitution of Queensland 2001 also be accepted by the House. The government supports these recommendations. I table the government's response to the report.

*Tabled paper:* Committee of the Legislative Assembly: Report No. 18—Constitution of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016, government response [\[1498\]](#).

As I said when I introduced the bill in April, it gives me great pleasure to introduce a bill into the parliament that strengthens the constitutional and parliamentary arrangements of Queensland's democratic system. It similarly gives me great pleasure today to lead the debate as the House considers and passes these reforms into law.

The history of the bill goes back to the Finance and Administration committee's inquiries into possible changes to Queensland's parliamentary terms. In its report, the FAC made certain recommendations relating to entrenchment of the committee system and also for an investigation into the way the portfolio committee system operates in Queensland. Given the significance of those matters, they were referred to the CLA for its consideration as the CLA is the committee that best reflects the make-up of the parliament, being chaired by the independent Speaker and also represented by a member of the crossbench. As part of its investigation into the way the committee system operates,

the CLA was asked to consider how the current parliamentary committee system could be strengthened to increase accountability by examining the role of parliamentary committees in other jurisdictions with unicameral parliaments, including the functions and powers of those committees and how they are exercised, to see if the functions and powers of Queensland parliamentary committees can be further strengthened; and reviewing the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 and the standing and sessional orders of the Legislative Assembly pertaining to parliamentary committee functions, powers and procedures to ensure these functions, powers and procedures are operating as effectively as possible as an accountability mechanism.

Further, as part of this review the committee was also asked to consider the implications and method of entrenching matters as outlined in the report and consider alternative accountability mechanisms in lieu of entrenchment. The CLA conducted a thorough and comprehensive review of these matters and I thank the members of the committee, as well as the committee secretariat, for the report that they tabled in the House. It has been of enormous assistance in addressing these matters.

In its report, the CLA made a number of recommendations, including that: the Legislative Assembly must, at the commencement of every session, establish a minimum of six committees of the Legislative Assembly with responsibility that collectively covers all areas of government activity; every bill introduced into the Legislative Assembly must be referred to a committee of the Legislative Assembly for a review period; and the annual appropriation bills—the budget—must be accompanied by the estimates of expenditure and be referred to committees of the Legislative Assembly for examination in a public hearing. The committee went on to recommend that the appropriate statute for those provisions is the Constitution of Queensland Act 2001. The committee felt that the location of the provision in the Constitution of Queensland Act 2001 will not only emphasise its importance but also place a psychological political impediment to its alteration without just cause.

The committee also considered the issue of entrenchment. The CLA does not support entrenchment of the committee system by any special mechanism at this time. Because the new portfolio committee system is still in its infancy, the CLA was loath to entrench a system that may still evolve. The CLA recommended, at least initially, that the provisions should explicitly enable the Legislative Assembly, by ordinary majority, to declare bills urgent. However, the committee considered that part of the 2003 recommendation of the former Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee regarding the Constitution of Queensland Act 2001 should now be addressed in that an amendment to the Constitution must be passed by a majority of the Legislative Assembly, equal to a majority of the number of seats in the Assembly, that is, an absolute majority of the Legislative Assembly.

Consideration of an amendment to give effect to that recommendation was delayed and was not included in the bill as introduced. However, I later wrote to the committee and asked that it include the amendment in its consideration of the bill, as there was an intention to introduce it as an amendment during consideration in detail. The committee recommended that the House support that amendment.

Before I address the issues around that amendment, I will provide a short summary of the objectives of the bill as introduced. The objectives of the bill are to: statutorily recognise the core matters of the parliamentary committee system in the Constitution and amend the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 to provide the parliament's portfolio committees with the power to initiate inquiries within their area of responsibility on their own motion. This is achieved in the bill by amending the Constitution to provide that.

To further strengthen the parliamentary committee system, the bill also amends the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 to enable the portfolio committees to initiate inquiries on their own motions on matters within their respective portfolio areas. Previously the committee could only consider matters referred to them by this House. These additional powers will provide the greater flexibility and investigative powers that the CLA felt would enhance the role of the committees. These objectives were those recommended to the parliament by the CLA in its report No. 17, titled *Review of the parliamentary committee system*. The CLA has now further reviewed these objectives as part of their review of the bill and has again confirmed their support for them in their report on the bill.

I turn now to the proposed amendment to be introduced during consideration in detail. In its report No. 17, the CLA also recommended that all future amendments to the Constitution should be required to be passed by an absolute majority of the Legislative Assembly. This applies to all amendments to the Constitution, whether direct or implied. In this context, an absolute majority is defined as being equal to a majority of the number of seats in the Assembly, that is, at least 45 votes for the ayes in the current 89-seat Assembly.

When I introduced the bill, I informed the House that the government would seek appropriate advice to ensure the constitutional validity of any necessary amendment to implement this recommendation and that the government would advise the CLA accordingly. As I said at the time, with the Constitution being the foundation document upon which Queensland's system of parliamentary democracy and government is based, we as members should view any proposed amendments with care. To this end, on 16 June I provided a draft amendment about the absolute majority proposal to the CLA for it to consider as part of its review of the bill. The government is pleased that the CLA has recommended that the amendment be accepted by the House.

In short, the amendment that I will formally move during consideration in detail will provide that a bill for an act to amend the Constitution respecting the Constitution, powers or procedures of the parliament must not be presented to the Governor for assent unless the bill has been passed by an absolute majority. The provision will apply only to amendments that respect the Constitution, powers or procedures of the parliament. It means that, in a parliament that is hung or has a slim majority, if there is a vacancy due to the death, disqualification or resignation of a member or a member has a pair or is absent due to ill health, unless they have an approved proxy those votes will not be taken into account. The absolute majority requirement, together with the insertion of the core matters of the parliamentary committee system into the Constitution, will provide more certainty around the continued existence of the parliament's powers through the committee system to scrutinise government activity. As the CLA has generally described it, these amendments will place a psychological impediment on a future parliament from altering these provisions in the Constitution without just cause. These are important amendments that add to the accountability measures that I have already introduced in this state.

Some concerns were expressed about four-year terms of parliament at the time the referendum bill passed, because Queensland is a unicameral system of government and does not have an upper house to provide scrutiny of legislation. That is why a robust committee system is so important to Queensland and why I am pleased to be able to put this bill before the House for its consideration. These are very important reforms and I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (3.45 pm): In rising today, I signal that the opposition will support the changes proposed by the Premier and the amendments that were circulated in her name earlier today. In doing so, I would like to reflect on the process that has brought us here. We have come here following a period of consideration and evolution after the important debate we had regarding the introduction of four-year fixed terms in Queensland. That debate has been going on for as long as I can remember and probably for as long as we have been in this House. As part of the class of 2006, I am sure the Premier will understand that as well. Having come from the Brisbane City Council where four-year terms were introduced some considerable time earlier, I did not need a lot of convincing about the merits of it. However, we also have to be aware of the limitations of this House and strengthening and providing better recognition of the committee system is a key component in the process of ensuring that we do have appropriate protections.

The provision of better recognition of the committee system was not a key objective of the Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Amendment Bill 2015 and the Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Referendum Bill 2015, but the changes that we are talking about today are as a result of that important debate. Like many other important policy debates in the 55th Parliament, it was the LNP that firmly put four-year fixed terms on the agenda. I acknowledge the work of the shadow Attorney-General, Ian Walker, in getting out to communities, talking to people, raising that significant issue and, in fact, submitting the legislation that ultimately, subject to amendment and with the agreement of the government, became the process through which we were able to enshrine four-year fixed terms. That agenda is now wholeheartedly supported by people in the business community and people across the political divide. There are still those who have questions about it and, in some respects, this legislation answers those questions.

There are, of course, significant advantages in having fixed four-year terms of government. They provide for better government and better public policy making, provided the right government is in power, because decisions can be made in the interests of outcomes and better services for Queenslanders rather than short-term political gain or what may be the news of the day. It removes the constant speculation from the political process and provides fairness to all political parties rather than what is in the interests of the government of the day. It provides confidence in government and certainty in government for the public and also for the business community, which drives investment, economic confidence and job creation. We are proud of our record of achievement in driving this important reform in Queensland. We are delighted that the changes we are discussing today have come about as a result of those reforms.

The bill we are debating today is the result of a considerable amount of deliberation from both the Finance and Administration Committee and the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. Its genesis started with the Finance and Administration Committee, which was tasked with looking at the two bills introduced by the member for Mansfield to give Queenslanders the chance to vote on fixed four-year terms. As part of its inquiry, the Finance and Administration Committee found that a referendum for fixed four-year terms would have a better chance of succeeding if the parliament could demonstrate a commitment to greater transparency and accountability.

I well remember—and I see that the member for Southern Downs and the member for Caloundra are here—going back to at least 2007-08, the debate about fixed four-year terms being introduced and, because of the absence of an upper house, the necessity for a committee system to provide that role, if you like. It has been a source of constant debate. It was an issue raised by then Premier Bligh, if I recall correctly, and addressed by Crown Law advice at that stage. As the member for Callide, the member for Southern Downs and the member for Mermaid Beach will know, the introduction of a committee system was meant to address a number of shortcomings in terms of a check on executive power and provide some opportunity to do so.

It has been a longstanding debate and a matter of concern, I believe, for both sides of this House and for this parliament as a whole to drive a higher level of accountability in relation to the actions of executive governments that have majorities on the floor of this House. One of the key points of difference between Queensland and other states is our unicameral system and the absence of the upper house, necessitating the committee system.

The Finance and Administration Committee recommended the parliament enhance the accountability mechanism by entrenching the role of the committees. It made two specific recommendations in relation to those issues. They are reflected in that committee's report. Those issues were referred to the Committee of Legislative Assembly. Those issues are highlighted comprehensively in report No. 17 of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly titled *Review of the parliamentary committee system*.

The referral required the CLA to inquire into and report on issues raised in recommendation 9 regarding entrenchment of the committees and recommendation 10 regarding a review of the parliamentary committee system. Following that extremely thorough review the CLA reported that it did not support the entrenchment of the committee system but did support the statutory recognition of the parliamentary committee system in Queensland and that the appropriate statute for the provision is the Constitution act. The reasons for this recommendation are explained at length in the CLA's review of the parliamentary committee system. I do not propose to re-litigate that particular argument.

Statutory recognition not only emphasises the importance of the committees but also places a psychological impediment to alteration without a just cause. The CLA also recommended that the basic principles and structure of the committee system be recognised but only core matters should be in the Constitution act, leaving the Assembly the flexibility to adopt a committee system that suits the Assembly and allow for adaptability where required. That is an entirely sensible recommendation that makes provision for change in society, change in government and change in the priorities of the day. The core matters are retained, but the flexibility to be adaptable and to meet the needs of the day is left in the hands of the Assembly itself.

The core matters, as highlighted by the CLA, to be included were: the Legislative Assembly must, at the commencement of every session, establish a minimum number of committees of the Legislative Assembly—and that will be set at six; committees established by the Assembly will be allocated areas of responsibility that collectively cover all areas of government activity; every bill introduced into the Assembly must be referred to a committee, with certain exemptions, for a minimum period and this legislation has proposed that it be six weeks. That was in line with the committee's suggestion. The appropriation bills must, of course, always be referred for expenditure review to committees of the Legislative Assembly for examination at a public hearing.

The CLA also made a number of other recommendations including: any amendments to the act must be passed by an absolute majority; and that the Parliament of Queensland Act be amended to provide the power for portfolio committees to initiate their own inquiries on their own motion on matters within their portfolio areas. All those recommendations are reflected in the Constitution of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.

This legislation is the result of much consideration, much thought and much debate. It goes back over many parliaments. It goes back to times when I can remember sitting on the legal, constitutional and administrative review committee. It was part of the review that was carried out by the Committee of the Legislative Assembly when the committees were introduced in 2011. It has been referred to again.

I think the amendments speak for themselves in many regards. We know the importance of having a robust committee system. We acknowledge the ability for committees to commence their own motion inquiries. We also acknowledge the necessity to ensure that those committees are established at the commencement of each Assembly. The opposition will be supporting the legislation.

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (3.53 pm): I take pleasure in rising to support the Constitution of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. As we heard from the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, this bill arises from a range of issues that have been swirling around this parliament over a long period. In essence, they relate to the events of the early 1920s when we saw the changes that resulted in the abolition of the Legislative Council in 1922 and as a consequence the transformation of this parliament from a bicameral parliament, in the purest of Westminster traditions, to a unicameral parliament.

**Mr McArdle** interjected.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I note the interjections. The history around the way in which this parliament changed from being a bicameral parliament to a unicameral parliament is unique. It is a ripping yarn; it is a great story.

**Mr McArdle** interjected.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I hear that the member for Caloundra is really keen to learn more about that. A situation that many people do not appreciate and do not reflect on is that the former Legislative Council was not an elected chamber: It was an appointed chamber. It was a chamber that was, in effect, in place to represent the interests of British capital and not the interests of Queenslanders.

Through the early part of Queensland's history it reined in democratic outcomes and democratic decision-making in this parliament. From the outset of Labor's time as a role player in this parliament, from the early 1890s it had as a position and policy the abolition of the Legislative Council. As a consequence of some opportunities, that occurred in 1922.

**An opposition member:** Opportunities?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Yes, opportunities, when the governor of the day goes on leave and certain people are appointed lieutenant governor. It was organised to make sure that the numbers were there to ensure the abolition of the Legislative Council.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Elmes): Order! We might come back to the essence of bill, Minister, if you do not mind.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Quite right. We are dealing with the Constitution of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. One of the concerns at the time of the debate around the change from three-year terms to fixed four-year terms for this parliament was that we are a unicameral parliament and there is no Legislative Council, no upper house, to check on the power of governments derived in the Legislative Assembly.

The key thing that is the bulwark against that—and should be the bulwark against that and that this legislation enshrines—is the role of a vibrant and capable committee system. The importance of this bill in protecting the people of Queensland and protecting good governance in Queensland by establishing and reinforcing that committee system has evolved over time.

I reflect on the contributions made in the debate so far by the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. We have seen, even in relatively recent times, a significant evolution of our committee system here in the Queensland parliament. That is something that I had the opportunity to see with the introduction of portfolio committees during my time in this place in the 53rd Parliament. I missed out on being in the 54th Parliament and seeing some of the ways those things were abused and some of the ways they were used.

This government understands that it is very important to many Queenslanders that the committee system be enshrined, be valued, be managed and we have provisions in this bill to require bills, unless they are dually and appropriately declared urgent, to be referred to committees for a period of six weeks to ensure that the committee system can do its work and that it can fully and properly engage the broader community on issues that are important to this parliament, important to this state and important to people right across the length and breadth of this state.

It is important that the community have an opportunity to be engaged, to be involved and to have their views heard and considered by appropriately elected members of this parliament who can then refer and deliver a report and advice to the whole of the parliament for consideration and deliberation in the fullness of time when it comes to second reading debates like this one, considering that all of the issues have had a chance to be ventilated and heard. We know that that has not always been the way in which legislation has been dealt with in this House in its history, particularly, many people might say, since about 1922. There have been a number of instances of dark days where governments have used their massive and overwhelming power in this chamber to not listen to the community and to go against the community's wishes without any check or trammel on that.

This legislation enshrines that opportunity for the community to have their say, for the community to be heard, for the community to have a role in the lawmaking of this parliament. It should not be misunderstood as a role that surpasses and is above the decision-making of the parliament, which comprises the elected representatives of the people of Queensland. It is ultimately this parliament's place to make its decisions and determinations. In turn, ultimately the people of Queensland can pass judgement on the decisions that the members of this parliament make at any given time and on any given debate on matters. That is what will occur, as we move into the longer term future, on the last Saturday in October when the quadrennial election cycle kicks in as a consequence of the legislation that was the progenitor to this review and this look at the Constitution and the issue of how we should properly enshrine the committee system and its role in our parliament and in our Constitution.

As a member of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, it was my great honour to have an opportunity to be part of that more fulsome committee experience, to hear from the members of the community who made submissions to the CLA in relation to the Constitution of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. We wanted to ensure that we heard from them on the issues that were important to them and that we reflected upon them in how we framed this legislation and reacted to the issues that were raised by the move to fixed four-year terms. There was very strong and engaged input from those submitters who contributed to the committee's process. I want to thank them all and I want to thank my colleagues on the Committee of the Legislative Assembly for the commitment that they made to the process and to listening and engaging with the community in relation to the matters that were before it as part of the bill.

In particular, the issues that make a significant difference are obviously the enshrining of the committees, as I have mentioned, but also the additional power of the committees to allow for self-referral. If there is agreement across the committee to take a reference on a matter and to conduct an inquiry into a matter that is of significant importance to the committee, then the committee, with the expertise and level of engagement they develop in being connected with their portfolio areas, can do that. If it can add to the public and policy debate within the state then that is a very good thing. Equally, it is important that it be understood that the committee needs to agree to do that. It is not just a referral where anyone can come up with any idea and it goes forward. The committee itself needs to agree and determine that it is something worthwhile pursuing. The committees, in the way that they are framed and made up, have some level of representation of the whole of the parliament as a consequence. It is very important that that is part of the decision-making role that they play.

Further, I want to acknowledge and note the amendment that the Premier will be moving which was considered and recommended by the committee in order to raise the bar in relation to constitutional change in this state. For too long the concern has been that we have had a very low bar and a very high bar of constitutional change. The only two ways in which you can seek constitutional change in the state is by the passage of a bill by a simple majority in this parliament or, alternatively, by a full referendum vote of all of the people of Queensland. There is a big wide gap—a yawning gap people might say—between those two ways in which to engage with and deliver constitutional change in this state.

As a consequence, the proposal from the Premier around the use of the absolute majority is a great step forward that requires, designates and shows that changes to the Constitution cannot just be done ad hoc but that they must be significantly considered and have a special place and a special role—not a special majority, as was recommended by some people who submitted to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. A special majority—some hyper majority or some super number such as 75 per cent of members—would not necessarily bring with it the protections that I think people would be looking for. Also, it would not necessarily ensure that we reflect the democratic will of the people of Queensland.

The parliament is here, with its 89 members at this point in time, to represent all of the people of Queensland. By voting on the legislative requirements that we have across-the-board in the series of policy and political matters that come to our attention, we speak for and on behalf of the people of Queensland right across its length and breadth. It is appropriate that a majority of this House should carry the day in relation to those matters. Requiring an absolute majority in relation to a change to what should be one of our core pieces of legislation, the Constitution of Queensland Act, is a sensible and appropriate provision to protect the good governance and good management of the state going forward.

I want to again reiterate my appreciation to the members of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly for their diligence and commitment to the consideration of this bill. I acknowledge the Clerk and his staff—they are the secretariat to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. One of the ways in which that team have contributed to and supported the work of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly in relation to the consideration of this bill is part of that evolution of the committee system that we have seen since Deputy Speaker Elmes and I were here in the 52nd and 53rd parliaments.

**Mr Minnikin:** You couldn't join us for the 54th Parliament?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** No, I missed out on that. I did mention it earlier. We will have a chance to reflect on that when those of us from both sides of the House who will be celebrating the 10th anniversary of our election in 2006 will have a chat about that and share some of our experiences.

Certainly the evolution of the committee system has played a significant role in the way in which this parliament has evolved and, as a consequence, I commend the Constitution of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill to the House. It will further contribute to the development of our committee system and our parliamentary system.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Before calling the minister, I suggest that Minister Grace and the member for Kawana cease their exchanges across the House.

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (4.10 pm): I rise today in support of the bill before the House, the Constitution of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. In particular, I rise in support of the statutory recognition of the parliamentary committee system. Labor has had a long commitment to the parliamentary committee system. The modern committee system in this place is borne out of the Fitzgerald reforms and the sweeping reforms delivered in this place during the first term of the Goss Labor government. I think any rational assessment of our system demonstrates that our committees work well. Our committee system fulfils its functions of providing scrutiny of legislation and scrutiny of public administration and, importantly, it is a way for the public and for stakeholders to engage meaningfully in the legislative process. Our committees do the hard work, very often while the cameras are off. This work has improved legislation and helped us match legislation more closely to public expectations.

The unicameral nature of our parliament is often a point of discussion, and in my view that discussion is often unfair. I tend towards the view put by Mr Budden of the Law Society when he said in his evidence to the committee inquiry—

I note that a lot of other speakers today have mentioned that it is vital in a unicameral legislature to have this system. That is undoubtedly true. To be honest, I think this system performs a little better than some of the upper houses lately. I strongly suspect that if more people had seen the parliamentary committee system in operation, rather than the snippets of question time they might see on the news, they would have much more faith in our democratic system.

As the Premier has said, our parliamentary committee system has been an evolutionary process. The most recent evolution in 2011 is what really gives the system strength. I will highlight a few points from the Clerk's submission to the committee where he talks about the success of the 2011 reforms. The Clerk says—

There is no doubt that debate on bills is now more informed, relevant and (ironically) shorter than the lengthy and largely irrelevant second reading debates of the past.

His statement goes on—

Hard data provides some evidence of other outcomes. Statistics of portfolio committee activity from August 2011 to December 2015 ... reveal that not only is there an increase in activity (meetings, hearings, reports etc.), but that committee recommendations in relation to bills and other inquiries are being responded to very positively ...

He points out that, of the 369 legislative amendment recommendations over that period, 56.6 per cent were accepted. I think that is a testament to the success of the portfolio committees and the important work done by all of the committee members in this place. It is also important to remember that these recommendations are often informed by the formal consultation with the community that is carried out by our dedicated members of those committees. Once again, I quote the Clerk, who said—

Stakeholder engagement is also very high—coming from a very low base with virtually no formal consultation on legislation prior to 2011. These outcomes in turn suggest a more vigorous legislative process and augur well for better legislative outcomes.

It is very easy to take a theoretical view of how the parliament should operate. Indeed, it is something most undergraduate politics students do on a fairly regular basis, but, as we know, no two parliaments are the same and the theoretical does not always translate into the real world which is why it is so valuable that we have evolved a system that has shown demonstrable value to our democracy, to transparency and to engagement with the community.

It is why our system ought to be entrenched in the Constitution. Entrenchment will secure our committee system as a fundamental principle of this democracy. This bill is a significant and important step in the evolution of parliamentary committees in this state. Further, it is an acknowledgement of the importance, the dedication and the hard work of our parliamentary committees, their role in the review, the separation of powers in this state and the function of our parliamentary democracy. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (4.14 pm): I rise in support of the Constitution of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016, which amends the Constitution to provide that the Legislative Assembly must at the commencement of every session establish at least six portfolio committees which collectively cover all areas of government activity. Every bill introduced into the Legislative Assembly must be referred to a committee for a minimum review period of six weeks, but the Legislative Assembly can declare a bill urgent by ordinary majority under the standing rules and orders of the Legislative Assembly, and the annual appropriation bills must be subject to the budget estimates process.

It is a special privilege to speak on this bill, having chaired the Finance and Administration Committee with my honourable colleagues the member for Barron River; the member for Stretton, the deputy chair at the time; the member for Coomera; the member for Broadwater; and the member for Condamine. Our task as the Finance and Administration Committee was to inquire into the possibility of introducing four-year terms. Since that time, a referendum has been taken to the Queensland people and we have four-year terms in place now.

That committee started off this whole process, I would like to say. I think my honourable colleagues from the committee would agree with that; that this brings closure to our deliberations. That committee conducted wideranging consultation. We went to 11 regional centres. We conducted a survey to which we got over 1,000 responses. We conducted a range of public forums and got expert advice, and we made a number of recommendations about what we thought should happen including around the term itself and the length of the term, the date that a referendum should occur and the circumstances of the referendum, and we made recommendations about the committee system itself. As we all know, we recommended that the committee system be entrenched in the Queensland Constitution and that there be a review of the committee system.

There were some interesting things that came out of those deliberations that are quite pertinent to what we are talking about today. We heard a range of opinions, but I think it is fair to say that the majority of people who opposed lengthening the term to four years—aside from those who thought we only wanted to do it because we were politicians feathering our own nests—were worried about letting government have that kind of power for four years rather than three, and therefore having the unfettered ability to impose on the Queensland people whatever laws they wanted. I know on my side of politics, having come out of three years of the Campbell Newman government, that his name came up a lot by people who had suffered under his regime.

I think it was reflected in some of the consultation that the CLA undertook on this bill. Some of the submitters commented that the average person may not be aware of the committee system and what role it plays, but a lot of the expert witnesses who appeared before the Finance and Administration Committee were extremely aware of how important it was to have some kind of filtering process when you have a unicameral system.

Of course, Queensland is the only unicameral parliament in Australia. At that time Queensland and, in fact, the federal government were the only parliaments with three-year terms. When the Finance and Administration Committee was making our recommendations we were extremely conscious of the historical reasons for the entrenchment of three-year terms in 1934. It was linked to the entrenchment of the abolition of the upper house. When we read the *Hansard* of the deliberations from that time, in 1934 the three-year term maximum was actually entrenched, that is it could not be removed without a referendum, and also the abolition of the Legislative Council was entrenched. It had been abolished in 1922 but it was entrenched which meant that an upper house could not be re-established without a referendum.

It was fascinating to read a lot of the *Hansard* of that time because people were talking about the fact that abolishing the upper house was going to place democracy at risk because it meant there would be no filtering process to keep control of what happened in the lower house. Certainly, that was reflected in some of the evidence from some of our expert witnesses. In fact, there was an excellent submission by Mr Don Willis, who talked about the fact that we needed to take that accountability issue into consideration if we were going to be extending our terms. I want to read out some of what he talked about. He stated—

... it might be said that Queensland now has a well-established parliamentary committee system. Experience in Queensland has shown however, that the reality of organised party discipline in the Parliament is such that this particular accountability mechanism can be subject to interference by the executive. Furthermore, as the 1998 experience in Victoria showed when the independence of that State's Auditor-General was under threat from the changes that were introduced by the then Kennett State Government, such accountability mechanisms are also susceptible to the political whims of the government of the day. Such would especially be the case under a unicameral parliamentary system where a government, in control of the single House of Parliament, can act without the usual bicameral checks and balances.

He probably spoke right to the heart of what people were extremely concerned about who were opposed to going to the four-year terms.

I think we had many examples during the Campbell Newman era of bills going to debate without having gone to committee, with things being rushed through with only hours notice and with the estimates process being extremely stymied. It was very important, certainly to the Finance and Administration Committee, that the committee system was made as sure and as secure as it possibly could be.

I am appreciative of the fact that this bill has the support of members on the other side of the House. As a government member, it makes me very proud to actually support a bill like this. Labor certainly went to the last election promising to be transparent and accountable. Since we came to government we have certainly showed by a number of different measures we have undertaken that that is in fact what our commitment is. We have restored the independence, the Crime and Corruption Commission—

**Mr Watts** interjected.

**Ms Grace** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Elmes): Member for Toowoomba North and the minister.

**Miss Barton** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Broadwater.

**Ms FARMER:** We have restored community objection rights. We have righted the travesty that was the threshold for political donations and introduced transparency in the trust of the Queensland people into that process. We have restored the independence of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. In passing this legislation today we are also going to act in good faith with the Queensland people to make sure there is as much accountability in our committee system, that there is as much filtering, that there is as much ground truthing of our legislation as possible so that Queenslanders can have trust in this government.

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (4.24 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Constitution of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 incorporating the amendment foreshadowed earlier by the Premier in relation to the absolute majority requirement. Under the bill, the core matters of the parliamentary committee system will be enshrined in the Constitution. As the Premier stated in her introductory speech, the Constitution as the foundation document upon which Queensland's system of parliamentary democracy in government is based is the appropriate statute for these provisions.

The bill amends the Constitution to provide that the Legislative Assembly must, at the commencement of every session, establish at least six portfolio committees; that every bill introduced into the Assembly must be referred to a committee for a minimum review period of six weeks unless declared urgent; and provides that annual appropriation bills must be subject to the budget estimates process. This in effect is what is already occurring currently in portfolio committees. However, it is asserted that statutory recognition of the same will, as the Committee of the Legislative Assembly described in their review of the parliamentary committee system, report No. 17, place a psychological political impediment on altering them without just cause. I strongly agree with this assertion.

Queensland's parliamentary committee system has evolved significantly since the Fitzgerald inquiry and report in the late 1980s and significant reform in 2011. I have been merely an observer of its evolution for much of the past 15 years and now have the privilege not only of participating in its

robust processes but also of chairing the challenging and multifaceted Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee. The significant reform of the committee system and introduction of the current portfolio committee system in 2011 was, as the Speaker, Peter Wellington, commented in his foreword to the CLA review of the committee system, 'arguably the most significant reform to the Queensland parliament in over 100 years'.

Since 2011 the number of hearings and briefings conducted by committees in each financial year has increased threefold, a measure indicative of the far greater stakeholder consultation and participation that is now occurring. As a unicameral parliament, there must be checks and balances for the accountability of the parliament to ensure the integrity of our contribution to a robust democracy and for the comfort of the Queensland public and its institutions.

In their submissions to the bill's inquiry, Queensland Advocacy Incorporated and the Queensland Teachers' Union both noted the importance of a strong committee system due to the absence of an upper house. QAI stated that it supports any strengthening of the committee system as one of the key checks and balances that augment the separation of the executive and the legislature. The QTU stated that the absence of an upper house increases the importance of committees in assisting the parliament to effectively hold the government to account on behalf of the Queensland people.

The enshrining of core matters of the parliamentary committee system itself in the Constitution of Queensland will provide more certainty around the continued existence of the parliament's powers through the committee system to scrutinise government activity. Importantly, only the core matters will be captured, allowing the committee system to adapt and evolve, as it has over the past 30 years—and particularly so over the past five years—and as it will continue to do so into the future.

It was interesting to note that some submitters proposed that petitions with a certain minimum number of signatories be referred to the relevant portfolio committee for automatic inquiry. I had the opportunity to hear some of the discussion in this regard firsthand when the member for Logan was convalescing at home with a nasty case of the flu and I took his place in a committee hearing. I note that in the New South Wales parliament the minister is required to respond within 35 calendar days to a petition that has 500 or more signatures. In the case of a petition with 10,000 or more signatures, the petition is set down for discussion in the House at an allotted time with a time limit of 16 minutes I believe. I certainly recognise the importance of petitions; I use them regularly within my own electorate to test and represent the will of my constituents.

I do not support petitions forming an automatic trigger for an inquiry by the relevant committee. Petitions should form an important part of the parliament's consideration and awareness of what is of concern and interest to the community; however, to make it an automatic trigger is to also make it open to capture by highly organised and/or motivated interest groups who may seek to control the debate but who may not be necessarily representative or reflective of community sentiment. This can have the effect of diverting committees from the already significant legislative and inquiry responsibilities they carry, a point made by the CLA in their report on the bill. I look forward to seeing consideration of this idea progress and Queensland learning from other jurisdictions how best to give a voice to community members and groups through this important mechanism.

To further strengthen the parliamentary committee system the bill amends the Parliament of Queensland Act 2011 to give the portfolio committees a general power to initiate inquiries on their own motion on matters within their respective portfolio areas. This will then also further support the proposal regarding petitions, as portfolio committees will have the power to initiate inquiries on their own motion and therefore into a petition related to their portfolio areas.

A robust and active committee system significantly enhances the democratic process and the public's participation in that process. Committees effectively take the parliament to the people by making public the deliberative processes on bills and inquiries through public submission and hearing processes and the tabling of committee reports. Committees enhance the openness and accountability of both the policy and administrative functions of government, provide a forum for the investigation of matters of public importance and allow us as members the opportunity to enhance our understanding and mastery of often complex matters of public policy and legislative reform. They promote bipartisan decision-making when the will is present.

The Health, Communities, Disabilities Services and Domestic and Violence Prevention Committee has conducted 19 inquiries on bills and referrals from the House over the past 15 months with another six currently underway. We have had the opportunity to inquire into significant areas of policy reform including mental health, child safety, disability services, domestic and family violence, preventative health and tobacco reform and there are further medicinal cannabis, domestic violence

reform and abortion law reform proposals. In addition, an inquiry into the operations of the Queensland Health Ombudsman and the Queensland health complaints system overall are currently before the committee.

The current committee system demands compromise and it demands constructive contributions. The system itself is demanding. There is rarely a week that passes when my committee is not conducting hearings—sometimes multiple hearings—and participating in meetings to deliberate on the workload of the committee in both sitting and non-sitting weeks. We read hundreds of pages of submissions, briefs, data and supporting documents in preparation for meetings and hearings and often thousands of pages throughout the course of each inquiry. We are currently conducting hearings concurrently on four separate bills. We do not always have the opportunity to hear from every submitter who would like to come before us; nor are we able to give them as long as they would like when appearing before the committee. The committee has experienced high workloads along with sometimes restricted reporting time frames, which was gratefully acknowledged by the CLA in their report.

None of the work carried out by committees would be possible without the significant contribution that stakeholders and the public make by taking the time to lodge submissions and appear before the committee to assist and inform their deliberations. From experienced professionals and academics to interested parties, our committee system is designed to be robust and dynamic. It would not work without frank and forthright opinions and advice. Committees could also not operate without the significant skill and expertise provided by committee secretariats. They are extremely professional, impartial and show tremendous dedication to the parliamentary process and supporting committee members. They also do long hours in service to the parliament.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I make one final observation. Committee outcomes are often directly reflective of the will and tone brought to deliberations by those members present on the committee. As I said earlier, the current committee system demands compromise and it demands constructive contributions. When members seek to make both, our system works and the public interest is served. When members are obstructive and put politics and point-scoring first, the system fails. I have experienced both. Putting estimates aside, I would like to acknowledge the constructive tone that we have always been able to maintain in the health and communities committee under past and present deputy chairs and I believe our outcomes have been reflective of that constructive approach.

We gave a commitment to Queenslanders at the last election that we would be a government of accountability and transparency, and this bill is a further demonstration of that commitment. The bill strengthens the constitutional and parliamentary arrangements of Queensland's democratic system, and accordingly I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (4.35 pm): I rise to speak in support of the proposed amendment to the Constitution of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. Before I do, I would like to thank the members of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly: the Chair, the Hon. Peter Wellington MP, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly; the members, the Hon. Mick de Brenni MP, Minister for Housing and Public Works and the Deputy Premier's nominee; Mrs Deb Frecklington MP, Deputy Leader of the Opposition; the Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe MP, Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games and Leader of the House; Mr Shane Knuth MP, member for Dalrymple; Mr Tim Nicholls MP, Leader of the Opposition; Mr Linus Power MP, member for Logan and the Premier's nominee; and Mr Jeff Seeney MP, Leader of Opposition Business. I would also like to thank the staff: Mr Neil Laurie, Clerk of the Parliament; Mr Michael Ries, Deputy Clerk of the Parliament; Ms Melissa Salisbury, principal research officer; and Ms Andrea Musch, executive secretary.

In the 19th century Queensland had a strong parliamentary committee system. The Queensland houses of parliament used committees extensively to resolve many issues which came before them. Matters such as legislation, land transactions, the sale of government assets and policy proposals were all subject to scrutiny by committees appointed by the Legislative Assembly. Members of the Legislative Assembly frequently worked jointly with Legislative Council members to deliberate on issues of concern. Unfortunately, the committee system in Queensland went into decline over the course of the 20th century. By the early 1980s there were only a few domestic committees such as the Privileges Committee, the Printing Committee and the Subordinate Legislation Committee, which were established in 1975; however, in the late 1980s a new invigorated committee system began to develop. Legislation was enacted in 1988 to establish the Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts. Other committees were subsequently established by legislation or appointed by resolution of the House to scrutinise various aspects of government policy and administration.

In 1989, the Fitzgerald report—otherwise known as the Commission of Inquiry into Possible Illegal Activities and Associated Police Misconduct—looked at systems in place in the federal Parliament of Australia and the House of Commons in the UK and recommended that Queensland introduce ‘a comprehensive system of parliamentary committees to enhance the ability of parliament to monitor the efficiency of government’. Following the reforms of the Fitzgerald era a modern committee system was established. It remained largely unchanged from 1995 until changes were made in 2009 and again in 2011. As the Premier and Minister for the Arts outlined in her first reading speech on 21 April 2016—

The bill implements the government’s response to report No. 17 of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly titled *Review of the parliamentary committee system*. The bill has two major purposes being to: statutorily recognise the core matters of the parliamentary committee system in the Constitution of Queensland 2001; and amend the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 to provide the parliament’s portfolio committees with the power to initiate inquiries within their area of responsibility on their own motion.

Effectively, the objects of the bills are to amend the Constitution of Queensland 2001 to provide that (1) the Legislative Assembly must, at the commencement of every session, establish at least two portfolio committees; (2) every bill introduced into the Assembly must be referred to a committee for a minimum review period of six weeks, but the Assembly can declare a bill urgent by ordinary majority; and (3) the annual appropriation bills must be subject to the budget estimates process. The bill also amends the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 to give the portfolio committees general power to initiate inquiries on their own motion on matters within their respective portfolio areas.

Our parliamentary committees investigate specific issues and report back to parliament. Some committees also have continuing roles to monitor and review public sector organisations or keep areas of the law or activity under review. We need a strong and active committee system so as to have a functioning parliamentary democracy. A broad range of parliamentary committees means that our parliament is accountable, accessible and transparent. Committees also provide a forum for members of the public and community groups on matters of public importance so that they can influence government policy and legislation. Portfolio committees enhance the democratic process by taking the parliament to the people and giving them a role in its operations.

It is important that Queensland has a strong committee system for the examination of executive action across all policy areas of government as well as for considering proposed legislation. This is particularly important in a unicameral parliament such as we have in Queensland. The proper scrutiny of bills requires examining the expected impact of the bill on particular constituents, groups and areas of the state.

In report No. 18 of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly into the Constitution of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 the committee made two recommendations: firstly, that the Constitution of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 be passed; and, secondly, that the amendment to the bill submitted by the Queensland government requiring an absolute majority for changes to the Constitution of Queensland Act 2001 be accepted by the House. In response to the second recommendation, an amendment is proposed to insert a new section 2A into the Constitution to provide that any bill that amends the Constitution with respect to the Constitution’s powers, procedures or procedures of parliament must not be presented to the Governor for assent unless the bill has been passed by an absolute majority of the Legislative Assembly.

On 19 March 2016 Queenslanders voted in favour of fixed four-year terms for the Legislative Assembly, thereby providing the certainty that Queenslanders and the economy need. That will provide more certainty for government, business and community planning, with a set date for elections. Fewer elections will also bring cost savings to the budget.

As the Premier and Minister for the Arts outlined in her introductory speech, when the Queensland parliamentary committee system was introduced in accordance with the Fitzgerald reforms, the parliamentary committees’ role was to enhance the ability of parliament to monitor the efficiency of the government. The Queensland parliamentary committee system has evolved since the Fitzgerald report and, after the reforms of 2011, the vast majority of bills, with some notable exceptions under the former government, have been referred to committees for inquiry.

In giving their support for fixed four-year terms, Queenslanders rightly expect that there should be more certainty about the continued existence of the parliament’s powers through the committee system to scrutinise government activity and to hold the government of the day to account. The amendment to the Constitution of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 will ensure this is the case. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (4.44 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate of the Constitution of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. As we have heard from previous speakers in the debate this afternoon, this is a bill which will enhance the integrity, accountability and transparency of government and will ensure that this chamber, this Legislative Assembly, is under additional scrutiny by the role of the portfolio committees and the additional powers they will have to initiate inquiries.

I note from the explanatory notes that the objectives of the bill are to statutorily recognise the core matters of the parliamentary committee system in the Constitution of Queensland 2001 and provide the parliament's portfolio committees with the power to initiate inquiries within their area of responsibility on their own motion.

The bill implements certain recommendations made by the Committee of the Legislative Assembly in its report No. 17, titled *Review of the parliamentary committee system*, tabled in this parliament on 25 February 2016. As the explanatory notes state—

To achieve these objectives, the Bill will amend the Constitution to provide statutory recognition of the 'core matters' of the Parliament's committee system in the Constitution. Including these matters in the Constitution will, as the CLA indicated in Report No. 17, not only emphasise their importance, but 'place a psychological political impediment on altering them without just cause'.

The Bill amends the Constitution to provide that:

- the Legislative Assembly must at the commencement of every session establish at least six portfolio committees which collectively cover all areas of government activity;
- every Bill introduced into the Assembly must be referred to a committee for a minimum review period of six weeks, but that the Assembly can declare a Bill urgent by ordinary majority under the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly; and
- the annual Appropriation Bills must be subject to the budget estimates process.

When preparing for this debate I was thinking about the public conversations that occurred in the lead-up to the recent referendum—a referendum which I was very happy to see succeed by a majority vote of the people of Queensland. Those conversations included many debates not only within this chamber but also outside this chamber. One particular debate was in the red chamber. On a particular evening there were proponents for and against. I, along with the member for Mansfield, was able to contribute to that debate in the red chamber and spoke in favour of the proposed referendum. One of the things that those opposing our argument raised in that debate was the issue about oversight of the Legislative Assembly. One of the things they said was, 'If you are going to have fixed four-year terms then it should be accompanied by additional oversight.' Some of them suggested the return of the upper house. There is probably not much appetite in the Queensland community for the return of the upper house.

One of the things that I thought was very encouraging was the recommendation of the CLA in providing that additional oversight. We have heard about the objectives of this bill to not only recognise in statute those portfolio committees but also, importantly, make sure that every bill, unless certain circumstances are supported by this House on the basis of urgency, is referred to the relevant portfolio committee for proper scrutiny for a minimum period of six weeks to allow the people of Queensland not only to be assured of that proper scrutiny but also to participate in that scrutiny. I think that is particularly relevant in this debate.

Further to those conversations about how to provide that additional oversight, whilst taking some people around the parliament today I noted that downstairs there are a number of boards that detail certain events in the parliament's history. I am sure that in due course there will be a board that refers to the introduction of fixed four-year terms and the additional oversight that portfolio committees have as a result of this bill passing the parliament today. One of the boards talks about the abolition of the Legislative Council. I thought it was interesting to note that the then premier, Premier Theodore, or 'Red Ted' to his mates, said—

Parliament, in order to give free and direct expression to the will of the people, must be remodelled. Everyone, I think, recognises that the Legislative Council has outlived its usefulness, and is serving no beneficial purpose at the present time for the people of Queensland. It is known what the Legislative Council has done in recent years in order to prevent popular measures becoming law—measures which were desired by the people. Governments have been returned with a decisive majority and a definite mandate to carry their policy into operation and have been thwarted by the Legislative Council.

That is a very relevant quote to the debate today because it is how we provide good oversight of the processes of the Legislative Assembly. When we look federally we see how that parliament is now operating and has operated for a number of years where the so-called house of review—the Senate—has either been a rubber stamp for the House of Representatives or has been an impediment to the will of the House of Representatives, the lower house. That was the conundrum that was faced by the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council in the 1920s and before—that is, how to provide that

proper oversight. The Legislative Assembly was the house of government that in the 1920s and before was the only House elected by the people of Queensland whereas Legislative Council members were appointed for life and were not accountable to the people of Queensland. How do we ensure that the voice of the people who vote is properly heard by the people of Queensland and ensure that that oversight is properly provided by a good process? Enhancing the parliamentary committee system and making sure those portfolio committees are not only recognised in statute but have the power to initiate their own inquiries and ensure that there is a transparent, accountable process is very important. That is one way that this bill enhances accountability in government.

I must acknowledge the contribution of the CLA for not only the quite detailed work around these particular recommendations that we are seeing implemented today but also ensuring that we communicate those enhancements to the community. A robust parliamentary portfolio committee system is something that we should celebrate. I remember when the portfolio committee system was introduced by the Bligh government and it was quite a change from the previous committee system. For the first time there was more openness and more participation from the public in that they were able to make submissions and they were able to come to meet with members of the committee and have their say, and I think we got better legislation as a result. We see how the portfolio committees operate in this parliament and we see the engagement from the community and we see portfolio committees producing reports that are not only well considered but are well recognised by those relevant ministers in charge of the legislation being considered by the committee.

This bill not only strengthens the role of portfolio committees but also enhances their power to do additional work and provide that additional scrutiny whilst also ensuring that the Legislative Assembly remains accountable to the people of Queensland. The work of the CLA in putting together the recommendations, which we are ultimately considering in this bill in this House today, should be acknowledged, as should the leadership of the Premier on this matter. The Premier has been a trailblazer when it comes to enhancing accountability, transparency and integrity in government and I acknowledge her efforts. Thank goodness that we have a Premier who is committed to all of those values and committed to all of the Fitzgerald reforms and ensures—

**Ms Palaszczuk:** Excellent assistant minister.

**Mr RYAN:** I take that interjection. People have faith in government because of our great Premier and her commitments to those wonderful values of integrity, transparency and accountability. I acknowledge the great work of the Premier and I acknowledge the work of the CLA in bringing these recommendations to the House and encourage all members of the House to support this bill.

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (4.54 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Constitution of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. I, too, commend the Premier for bringing this bill to the House and commend the CLA for its good work in this House.

**Ms Boyd** interjected.

**Mr KELLY:** I will not go through that—I take that interjection—because I would rather talk about the importance of this bill. Like many people in Queensland I thought I had a reasonable understanding of parliament, but it is only when you get here that you really start to build that understanding of the 800 years of institution that has been built here and the important function that it plays in our society. I certainly see the committee system in Queensland as playing an incredibly important role in our community and it is certainly something that I have learnt a tremendous amount about since being elected. I really would not have had much of an understanding beforehand of the role of the committee system, but as something that has evolved as a mechanism to increase transparency and accountability it has certainly achieved that.

The submission from Queensland Advocacy Inc. accurately described the system very well in its submission in that committees are well placed to perform the functions which the House itself is not well placed to perform, such as investigating, interviewing witnesses, discussing matters in detail and formulating reasoned conclusions. I have certainly greatly enjoyed—possibly enjoyed the most of anything I have done in this place—being involved in the committee process and I have found those discussions of matters in detail quite interesting and intriguing. These are cross-party committees and you are forced into close contact with people whose views vary greatly from your own, but you are forced to consider their views. On my committee it has been great—I note the member for Moggill in the chamber—to have other people who share my background in health and, just as we would not probably agree frequently with each other in the workplace, it is not uncommon that we would not agree here. However, the committee system gives us a forum to discuss issues with one another and to work through those things. As health professionals—and as all health professionals will tell you—we do know

it all, but this system forces us to listen to the community and listen to the views of average people so that when we are considering things like vaccination bills or smoking bills we are forced to think about how they impact on people and what they mean to average people. That not only helps us to produce better legislation; it improves us as health professionals as well.

I note that QAI also refers to our committee system as being quite robust and that it believes that it is one of the key checks and balances that augment the separation of the executive and the legislature. The committee on which I sit, which is chaired by Madam Deputy Speaker Linard, has considered many issues. Some have been extremely divisive in our community and all have been very complex. The committee system has given us the space and the time to consider these issues in a way that broadens our understanding and hopefully allows us to make a contribution to improving the legislation that comes to this place. We have considered both government and private members' bills and I have been really impressed by the contribution of the organisations and the people who have made submissions. Some of our committees have attracted incredibly large volumes of submissions—one close towards 2,000 submissions—and it is fascinating to read those submissions and read people's views from very different perspectives on the same issue and it really does broaden and expand your thinking on the issues that are the subject of the legislation. I have also been really impressed with the conduct of the witnesses. They have been sincere and, for the most part, they have presented well-thought-through arguments, not always backed by sound research data but always sincerely believed.

The process of the witnesses coming before the committee has really allowed me, as a member who is involved in legislation and who often deals with issues that I will not necessarily deal with on a day-to-day basis, to build a much greater understanding of how and what we do in this place will affect people in the community and their expectations. I believe that gives us, as committee members, a really good opportunity to bring forward suggestions for improvements to legislation. The experience of the people and the organisations who make their submissions and contributions to inquiries into bills is impressive. They provide an invaluable input into the process.

One of the most important parts of this committee system is that it allows for community input. The Queensland Teachers' Union, in its submission to this inquiry, acknowledged that the committee is—

... a forum for discussion and investigation into issues of public importance—

and gives—

... members of the voting public an opportunity to enhance their knowledge... and have input.

The Queensland Teachers' Union also noted—

Policy and administration functions of Government are made more open and accountable by the existence of Committees.

I support this bill, because it strengthens and improves the committee process. It continues that tradition, which was started by Goss, of improving transparency and accountability in this state. I certainly fully support that. This bill ensures that core matters of the parliamentary committee system are enshrined in our Constitution and that we need a majority to alter our Constitution. In effect, that means that it will be much harder for any future government to play around with the committee system.

I believe that allowing committees to initiate their own inquiries will also allow them to more fully respond to concerns in the community or issues that they may become aware of in the course of their duties. It is not infrequently that you are following a line of inquiry and you find an issue, which not necessarily relates to the terms of reference of the legislation that you have an interest in, that you think would be of some value to the community to pursue, but you have no capacity or mechanism for doing that.

Another positive aspect of the committee process that I would like to dwell upon is the effect that the committee process has on ministers and members who bring bills to the House. The committee process ensures that ministers and members bring bills to this House that are capable of meeting their objectives and withstanding public scrutiny. It has been my experience that, when the committee has made recommendations to the minister, or raised issues with members of the Public Service, or members, they have been responded to and dealt with thoughtfully. On the rare occasion—and I would have to say that I am scratching my head to think of when this has happened—that a minister or a member presents legislation that does not meet its objectives, or maybe has some other failings, generally speaking, those ministers or members would acknowledge that and seek to improve their legislation. That has generally been my experience, but there has been one notable exception.

This bill improves accountability and transparency. In my opinion, the most important thing it will do is increase the community's trust in the legislative process, because it increases their capacity to have involvement in the legislative process. The bill will also continue that important role of encouraging ministers and members to produce legislation of a high quality capable of withstanding public scrutiny. For those reasons, I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PEGG** (Stretton—ALP) (5.03 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Constitution of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. As a member of the Finance and Administration Committee, which conducted an inquiry into the introduction of four-year terms for the Queensland parliament, I have a particular interest in this bill. During the course of the committee's inquiry, the committee system and the potential for strengthening it was raised by a number of people who made submissions and also in the public forums that were held across the state. The committee travelled the length and breadth of the state and hundreds of Queenslanders participated and attended those forums. The inquiry was time consuming, but it was a very important process. I acknowledge the efforts of the then chair of the Finance and Administration Committee, the member for Bulimba, and also the member for Barron River, the member for Condamine, the member for Coomera and the member for Broadwater.

I believe that any amendments to the Constitution should be treated very carefully. I know that this is an issue that other speakers have addressed in this debate. The Constitution is the primary document upon which our system of parliamentary democracy and government in this state is based.

In my view, when in opposition, it is very easy to support increased accountability, checks on the executive and strengthening the committee system. In opposition, it is very easy to talk the talk. So far, only one speaker from the opposition has spoken in favour of this bill and it was no surprise that it was the member for Clayfield who was talking the talk. I have to admit that I am very surprised that, on this particular issue, members such as the member for Surfers Paradise and the member for Kawana have not been talking the talk—although they still have some time in which to make a contribution to this debate. As I said, it is easy to talk the talk, like those opposite are doing right now; in government, it is a lot tougher to walk the walk. That is why I am very proud to be part of a government that is introducing these measures.

Currently, the Parliament of Queensland Act provides for the establishment, membership and role of portfolio committees. This bill will insert a new part 5 into chapter 2 of the Constitution Act to recognise the basic principles and structure of the parliamentary committee system. This amendment will provide for the Legislative Assembly to establish a minimum of six portfolio committees at the commencement of every session. It further provides that every bill introduced into the Legislative Assembly must be referred to a committee for a minimum review period of six weeks. However, the Assembly will be able to declare a bill urgent by ordinary majority. The amendment further provides that the annual appropriation bills must be referred to portfolio committees for examination at a public hearing and that the appropriation bills must be accompanied by associated documentation.

The requirement for there to be a minimum of six committees does not preclude the government of the day from having more committees. It is also important to note that, currently, the existing provisions do not provide for a minimum number of committees.

**Mr Rickuss** interjected.

**Mr PEGG:** As the member for Lockyer should be aware, in addition to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee and the Ethics Committee, there are seven portfolio committees.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Millar): Order! Member for Lockyer, the member is not taking your interjections.

**Mr RICKUSS:** He was. Mr Deputy Speaker, I apologise, but he did answer my interjection.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I accept.

**Miss Barton** interjected.

**Mr Rickuss** interjected.

**Mr PEGG:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. As we have seen so often, we have the member for Broadwater and the member for Lockyer talking the talk, but they are not prepared to get up and make a contribution to this debate.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Stretton, I will ask you to direct your comments through the chair.

**Mr PEGG:** Thank very much for your direction. Mr Deputy Speaker. I also wanted to address the amendments that will allow portfolio committees to initiate inquiries on their own motion provided that the inquiry is within their portfolio areas. Currently, section 91(1) of the Parliament of Queensland Act provides that the role portfolio committees is to—

- (a) consider Appropriation Bills; and
- (b) consider other legislation and proposed legislation as provided in section 93; and
- (c) perform its role in relation to public accounts and public works as provided in this division.

This bill will insert a new subsection into section 92 to provide for a portfolio committee on its own motion to initiate an inquiry into any matter in relation to its portfolio area. For example, a portfolio committee will be able to inquire into matters such as petitions received by parliament—provided, of course, that a majority of the committee supports doing so. Ultimately, the decision as to whether a portfolio committee makes a decision to exercise this power will be a decision for each committee and will, of course, require a balancing with other committee responsibilities. This amendment will greatly strengthen the independence of the committee system. I note that, in the committee report in relation to this bill, there was general support for this provision from all submitters.

As I said at the outset, it is very easy to talk the talk on these kinds of issues. It is far tougher to walk the walk when you are in government. That is why I am very proud to be part of a government that is introducing these measures. I look forward to hearing the contributions of those opposite. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr KING** (Kallangur—ALP) (5.09 pm): I rise to make a contribution to this debate on the Constitution of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. This bill proposes to statutorily recognise the core matters of the parliamentary committee system in the Constitution of Queensland 2001 and amend the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 to provide the parliament's portfolio committees with the power to initiate inquiries within their area of responsibility on their own motion.

Earlier this year at a vote taken during the council elections, Queenslanders voted in favour of giving the state Legislative Assembly fixed four-year terms. With these four-year terms now a reality we need to entrench our committee system so that Queenslanders can feel comfort that our work in this place is given the proper scrutiny it so appropriately deserves. The Fitzgerald inquiry in the late eighties identified the need to introduce a committee system in Queensland to comprehensively review legislation and the administration of government departments and associated public bodies. Fitzgerald considered that governments need analysis to make sure that checks and balances are adhered to. I guess, after the government that brought about the reason for that inquiry, this is fairly evident.

Since the introduction of the parliamentary committee system there has been a constant development in the way committees operate and since the reforms in 2011 the majority of bills have been subject to parliamentary committee inquiry. The previous LNP government sent a few contentious bills through without using the committee system and Queenslanders were not happy with the results of this, which was shown at the ballot box in January last year. After today, that should never happen again.

Under this bill, core matters of the parliamentary committee system will now be included in the Constitution. At the start of a term of the Legislative Assembly the Assembly will establish a minimum of six portfolio committees that will cover all areas of government activity. Every bill introduced into the Legislative Assembly must be referred to one of the portfolio committees or another committee for a review period of a minimum of six weeks from the date of referral. However, if there is a need to declare a bill urgent and refer a bill to a committee for a review period of less than six weeks, the Legislative Assembly may, under its standing rules and orders, by ordinary majority decide to do this or even discharge a bill from a committee or decide a bill not be referred. The annual appropriation bills must always be referred to committees for examination in a public hearing—that is, our estimates process.

This, as we all know, is how the portfolio committees and the parliament's legislative process is operating in the current parliament under the Palaszczuk government. However, placing these matters in the Constitution highlights their importance now and into the future and will hold this and future governments to account.

Another amendment this bill delivers is to provide an ability for portfolio committees to initiate inquiries on matters within their portfolio areas at their discretion if the majority of the committee desires to do so. I think this strengthens the committee system and as long it does not impede upon the core work of the committee it will provide avenues for greater parliamentary scrutiny.

Finally, this bill seeks to make changes so that future amendments to the Constitution would require an absolute majority of the Legislative Assembly to vote in the affirmative to allow them to be passed. I will not harp on and repeat what has been said before. I will end my contribution there. I think this bill helps to achieve what the Fitzgerald inquiry set out to reform in this state—and it did need reform—and I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (5.14 pm): I rise to speak in favour of entrenching the core matters of our committee system in the Constitution of Queensland. As a new member of this place, the committee system seems an essential part of the rigorous examination of bills and reports. Queenslanders have come to expect that they should have their voice heard through public hearings. Queenslanders have come to expect that they should see firsthand our senior public servants be questioned about the intent and mechanism of bills before the House. Members of this place now expect that the committee system be rigorous in its examination. It may have been the debate over fixed four years terms that led the House to reconsider the value and entrenchment of the committee system, but through this process I have seen members on both sides of the House, but especially on this side, have a very strong commitment to the committee system and its right and proper place in the examination of our bills. It is right and proper that these core matters of the parliamentary system be incorporated into the Constitution.

As a proxy member of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly I undertook the careful examination of strengthening the committee system. I wish to commend the members at that time, the member for Mermaid Beach—who I know is very passionate about this issue; the member for Surfers Paradise—with whom I often agreed on individual issues; the member for Southern Downs; the member for Springwood; the member for Sandgate; and, in his role as the chair of the committee, the Speaker. We undertook this at the same time that we put forward to the Queensland people at a referendum fixed four-year terms for this House. Queenslanders agreed through the referendum that fixed four-year terms gave a greater certainty to government. They agreed that it encouraged a longer-term vision and horizon for government. They expect though that this House continue to critically and publicly examine the bills put forward in the House in a method whereby they felt there was due examination and clarity. I thank the members of the CLA who undertook this inquiry. The CLA in this case acted, in effect, as the portfolio committee.

I thank the other members of the CLA who have a far greater history of the process of development of the committee system than me. The committee hearings that I have participated in have been a very genuine process. The Agriculture and Environment Committee hearings that I participated in were very genuine and although people came to them with their own views and preconceptions and even, in some cases, ideas that were generated through their long-term and committed involvement in party politics, I felt that they came through the process respectfully, exploring the differences in our personal approaches and respectfully listened to the evidence that they heard through hearings and submissions. I see that same process now serving as a member of the Transport and Utilities Committee with the fine member for Kallangur as the chair. On issues such as road safety, which genuinely concerns us all, in committee deliberations we had frank exchanges of views and were puzzled about the best way to obtain a better system of road safety and enforcement with ideas going to and fro between committee members. I commend the chair of the committee for facilitating such discussions.

The atmosphere within the committees is one of genuine commitment to improving the legislation before us or adding value to the reports we are asked to examine. We do have a different view in this House about the way we make Queensland a better place. Long be it so that we have a contest of ideas in this place about our goals to make Queensland a better place. This leads, naturally enough, to a difference of opinions on bills, but there is a genuine attempt to explore and understand the differences that underlie our approaches.

I saw this with the CLA. We explored the views of more experienced parliamentarians than me on the process of debate of these bills that shape the future of Queensland. This was committee work at its best where MPs genuinely considered the issues and discussed the intended and unintended consequences of this important entrenchment within our Constitution. The Committee of the Legislative Assembly report firmly agreed that the bill should be passed as an important guarantee to Queenslanders that the committee system be seen as something as intrinsically Queensland as the Tree of Knowledge in your own electorate, Mr Deputy Speaker, the beaches of the Gold Coast in the electorates of the member for Mermaid Beach and the member for Surfers Paradise, or coastal rivers such as the mighty Logan River or, indeed, the Great Barrier Reef. The committee system itself is an institution that should be valued as highly as those natural features.

The CLA received eight submissions, with most expressing support for the bill or at least partial support with reservations or suggestions for further actions. The submitters valued the open examination of bills and public engagement, as we had with the examination of this bill. Submitters were invited to a public hearing on 29 July here in this chamber. As those who watched that hearing on the web would have noted, the chair apologised for my absence as I was quite sick on the day and also thanked those in the House who make our hearings publicly available. Like so many members of the Queensland public, I was able to watch the proceedings via streaming on the parliamentary website, in my case from my sickbed. I thank the House for the very public and open way in which we show the proceedings of committees, as in that case.

Key issues that we looked at included how we embed or entrench the practices of this House, while at the same time making sure that there is an ability to enhance committees and the public scrutiny of bills. It considered carefully the best path to put the core matters of the parliamentary committee system in the Constitution. Any future government seeking to weaken these provisions would be seen to be altering the Constitution and the public would rightfully and carefully examine any attempt to do that. Further, it considered that any change had to be by an absolute majority of the House, ensuring that nothing can be changed without more than half of the 89 current members, or 93 future members, casting a vote in support of such a change. Further, there was careful consideration of the circumstances under which a bill would not have to wait the required six weeks, but be declared urgent and possibly passed by the House in a shorter time frame.

In this House we all agree that there are circumstances where that is vital for good government. However, sometimes bills have unintended consequence; at other times, an emerging issue needs to be dealt with in the short term. However, it is tempting for governments to use this mechanism inappropriately. I will refrain from mentioning some of the criticisms that we could lay at the feet of the former government. I note that it is best to dutifully and carefully examine legislation over a six-week period and that currently we are going through that process with many of the bills that are before the House. As I said, it is tempting for governments to use this mechanism inappropriately. Submitters suggested a variety of mechanisms, but in my estimation they failed to consider how a less than honourable opposition could use those mechanisms to hamper good government and that, ultimately, a government will be judged if it abuses this process. A criticism of the previous government was how regularly and with such spurious reasoning it used this mechanism. No doubt it suffered at the polls because of that.

Some submitters suggested that outside experts be co-opted onto committees. The critique was that party affiliation and a possible lack of specialist knowledge can be an impediment to the close consideration of the details of bills. We carefully examined that suggestion, but we felt that there is a democratic deficit when it comes to co-opting unelected members of parliament into this process. Further, the parliament and the chamber itself would have to choose the experts, which may lead to the same problem in that those experts may have views that fit with the majority or minority of the chamber. In effect, we would still have the same problem that the submitter was concerned about. Therefore, the CLA reflected that the parliament is elected and has accountability to the public. I feel that members take their responsibilities seriously and there is a clear airing of different views within the reporting process. Through the committee hearings, experts have a strong role to play and their voices are very powerful.

I take the Constitution of Queensland very seriously. Perhaps I will tell my grandchildren that we embedded the committee system within the Constitution of Queensland. This is an unusual debate in that we are making a constitutional change, yet unfortunately those in the opposition have not made any contributions to the debate. I wish that they had made contributions, especially as I know that the opposition members of the CLA who participated in the process were equally as passionate as the government members of the CLA and had much to add. I thank them for their contributions. I am only disappointed that they are not putting their views on the public record today. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (5.25 pm), in reply: At the outset, I thank the opposition for their bipartisan support of the bill before the House. I thank all members. I know that a large number of government members contributed to the debate on the bill. I thank the CLA, which included Mr Speaker as the chair and members of the government, the opposition and the crossbench. Therefore, these amendments have support from right across the parliament. The bill that the House is considering will statutorily recognise the core matters of the parliamentary

committee system in the Constitution of Queensland Act 2001 and, by so doing, as the CLA has generally described it, place a psychological impediment on future parliaments from altering these provision in the Constitution without just cause.

The reforms will provide more certainty about the continued existence of the parliament's powers to scrutinise government activity through the committee system. We do not have an upper house. We are a unicameral system. Therefore, entrenching the committee system in the Constitution is the right thing to do. I note that the member for Logan said he wanted to pass this on to his grandchildren. I think every single member of this House should be very pleased that tonight we are saying that the committee system will stay firmly entrenched in our Constitution from this day forward. In addition, we know how fundamental it is, with the appropriation bills, to have the estimates process in place, which will also be embedded in the Constitution.

With those few words, once again I thank all members who participated in this debate. Today is a good day for Queensland and we see that by the passing of this legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

### Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



**Ms PALASZCZUK** (5.27 pm): I move the following amendment—

1

**After clause 2**

Page 4, after line 9—

*insert—*

**2A Insertion of new s 4A**

After section 4—

*insert—*

**4A Particular amendments of this Act**

(1) This section applies to a Bill for an Act to amend this Act respecting the constitution, powers or procedure of the Parliament.

*Note—*

See the *Australia Act 1986* (Cwlth), section 6.

(2) The Bill must not be presented to the Governor for assent unless the Bill has been passed by an absolute majority of the Legislative Assembly.

(3) The Bill has no effect as an Act if assented to after presentation in contravention of subsection (2).

(4) For deciding whether the Bill has been passed by an absolute majority of the Legislative Assembly—

(a) if the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly or Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly presiding exercises a casting vote in favour of the 'ayes', the casting vote is counted; and

(b) if an absent member of the Legislative Assembly votes by proxy or another method allowed under an Act and the vote cast is in favour of the 'ayes', the vote is counted.

(5) In this section—

**absolute majority**, of the Legislative Assembly, means a majority of the number of members of the Legislative Assembly under section 11.

I table the explanatory notes to my amendment.

*Tabled paper:* Constitution of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016, explanatory notes to Hon. Annastacia Palaszczuk's amendments [1499].

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 9, as read, agreed to.

### Third Reading



**Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (5.28 pm): I move—

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

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

### Long Title



**Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (5.28 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

## MOTION

### Road Infrastructure, Federal Funding



**Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (5.29 pm): I move—

That this parliament request the Australian government play its role in the development of Queensland roads and jobs across this state by:

- agreeing to apply the 80-20 funding arrangement for the M1 upgrades because the M1 is part of the National Land Transport Network, consistent with the federal government's election commitment and as defined on maps published by their own department;
- expediting the announcement and commencement of successful projects in the North Australian Roads Program that was first announced on 18 June 2015; and
- expediting the announcement and commencement of successful Queensland projects in the Beef Roads Program that was also first announced on 18 June 2015.

This is an important issue for Queensland—Queensland's roads and infrastructure. It is important for us to get our fair share compared to other states and for there to be consistency in terms of the way the Commonwealth funds roads in Queensland. I draw the attention of the House to the federal coalition's policy which states—

The coalition will ensure an 80:20 funding agreement is adopted when it comes to nationally significant roads outside the capital cities—

outside capital cities, I note—

this is the Commonwealth's fair share. It is the Commonwealth that should provide the majority of funding for such roads. It is the Commonwealth that is responsible for ensuring interstate and freight road networks are efficient. It is the Commonwealth that reaps a large part of the gains from efficient road networks.

That is from the federal government's own policy document. What do they have here for the M1? They come to Queensland and try to rip us off with a 50 per cent funding offer when the same road gets funded 80 per cent across the border. It is gets funded 80 per cent up the road at the Gateway Motorway North.

We have seen a plethora of excuses from the federal government in trying to justify their rip-off of Queenslanders. The latest excuse is that the M1 is not a metropolitan road. Their own document defines it as roads outside metropolitan areas. Their own policy identifies that they will fund roads outside capital cities. The M1 to the Gold Coast is clearly outside the capital city of Brisbane.

This is an issue of integrity of government. They went to the people with a policy. Here we are, two months after the election of the federal government, and they are absolutely contravening their own policy by treating the M1 and Gold Coast and Logan residents in an inferior way to the people who live across the border in New South Wales and even people who live in Brisbane. If they only fund roadways 50-50 in capital cities then why do they fund the Gateway Motorway North 80-20? Why do they do that? It is absolutely hypocritical. They have not got a leg to stand on.

In terms of the Northern Australia white paper we saw an announcement from the federal government over a year ago on the Northern Australia Roads Program and over a year ago on the Beef Roads Program. They said they were going to do it. Where are we? It is now September—a year and three months later. What exactly has happened?

We have our 20 per cent on the table. They fund roads in regional areas 80-20. Apparently, the M1 that has nearly 9,000 freight movements on the Gold Coast section and 13,000 at the Gateway merge—a critical economic generator and critical jobs generator in this state—is grinding to a halt because the federal government wants to rip off Queensland and treat us differently from other states.

They will fund the Northern Connector in Adelaide 80-20. They will fund the roadworks at Banora Point, just across the border, 96 per cent. The road between Woolgoolga and Ballina, just across the border, gets 80 per cent funding. What about Gold Coast residents? Every single MP on the Gold Coast at the moment is an opposition MP. They will not have them for too long if they keep backing Canberra instead of the Gold Coast and Queensland. I can only presume that the Gold Coast MPs from the LNP will be backing the Canberra Raiders this weekend because by the way they behave they are not backing Queensland. They are backing Canberra. It is a disgrace.

They need to support this motion. If they are sincere about backing Queensland they should be backing our campaign against the federal government to get our fair share of funding to get these critical upgrades at the Gateway merge and on the M1 on the Gold Coast going. They need to put pressure on their parliamentary colleagues in the federal government to get the NAR program going and to get the Beef Roads Program going.

We want road projects going in Queensland. The federal government needs to step up to the plate and start to understand Queensland. Those opposite should be supporting this motion and supporting Queensland and not backing Canberra. They should be backing Queensland. They are here to represent their people and not to be apologists for Canberra.



**Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (5.34 pm): I move—

That all words after 'parliament' be deleted and the following words be inserted:

'requests the Australian government play its role in the development of Queensland roads and jobs across this state by:

- agreeing to apply the 80-20 funding arrangement for the M1 upgrades because the M1 is part of the National Land Transport Network, consistent with the federal government's election commitment and as defined on maps published by their own department and calls on the Minister for Main Roads to negotiate federal road funding faithfully and get on with delivering infrastructure for Queenslanders;
- expediting the announcement and commencement of successful projects in the North Australian Roads Program that was first announced on 18 June 2015 and calls on the Minister for Main Roads to respond to the federal infrastructure and transport minister's letter of August 2016 and accept funding for successful projects under the same program;
- expediting the announcement and commencement of successful Queensland projects in the Beef Roads Program that was also first announced on 18 June 2015; and
- noting the LNP's experience in negotiating and delivering upgrades for federal roads including the Bruce Highway, Gateway Motorway, Warrego Highway and Toowoomba Second Range Crossing.'

What we have here tonight is confirmation that the Palaszczuk Labor government is more interested in political point-scoring than delivering for Queensland. This minister is incapable of having a serious conversation with his federal counterparts. Instead he would rather throw his toys out of the cot and chuck a tantrum. Policy by press conference is the style of this government. Quite simply, Queenslanders deserve better.

The minister has been unable to negotiate in good faith, instead preferring to grandstand and pull stunts like we see this evening. This main roads minister is not up to his job and cannot negotiate to save his life. As is always the case, Queenslanders miss out as a result.

We can only assume that this motion tonight has come as the minister attempts to try to regain credibility after his train wreck of an interview with Steve Austin on ABC Radio. The minister thought he was being smart, engaging in a media and PR assault on the federal government instead of doing his job of sitting down and negotiating. Austin called him out. Ten times he asked if he considered Logan a city. Someone get this bloke a map! I table the transcript as a warning to Minister Bailey's colleagues as to how not to conduct a radio interview.

*Tabled paper:* Transcript from 612 ABC Brisbane—Mornings with Steve Austin, dated 8 September 2016, with Paul Fletcher on the Turnbull Government commitment of \$215 million towards Queensland's M1 motorway [\[1500\]](#).

It was also interesting to hear during that interview the minister claim that the \$86 million from the Palaszczuk government is on the table. What is he referring to? Is this funding in the budget? No, it is not. There is no funding in the budget. Maybe the minister is planning on shaking the couch cushions to find a bit of spare change. I suspect what we are seeing tonight is actually a smokescreen. I suspect what we are seeing tonight is that they do not even have the 20 per cent needed to do this job and are using this to cover up.

It is important to recall that this is not the first time this minister has failed to negotiate. In his stand-off over funding for the Ipswich Motorway upgrade he used the same tactics—political grandstanding, media stunts and immature statements. The only difference is that the Premier had to swoop in, berate the minister and commit to 50-50 funding all because her constituents were getting annoyed at the gridlock caused by Minister Bailey.

This is in stark contrast to the LNP's record. In government we were able to achieve the best outcome for the Queensland taxpayer. It was the LNP that partnered with the federal government to deliver upgrades to the Bruce Highway and the Gateway Motorway. This was a \$10 billion program funded on a 80-20 basis.

We finally got major safety upgrades on the Warrego Highway. There was \$635 million for the Warrego Highway funded 80-20 by the federal coalition and the LNP. After years of talking by federal and state Labor, it was an LNP state government and federal coalition government that got the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing off the ground—a \$1.2 billion project for the Darling Downs, funded 80-20. It is the LNP that is able to have a mature conversation and negotiation with the federal government and get infrastructure built.

We believe in the 80-20 rule. Sometimes we have to consider what is on the table and make decisions in the best interests of Queensland. That is exactly what we did with Cooroy to Curra section A. I commend the work of the then deputy premier, who is sitting in front of me now, for taking the offer that was on the table and delivering this vital piece of infrastructure.

The minister wants to talk about being outside metropolitan Brisbane. We cannot get much further outside metropolitan Brisbane than Cooroy to Curra. What was on the table from then minister Albanese was a 50-50 deal. He found savings. He was going to return them to the Treasury coffers. He put on the table a 50-50 deal. What did the LNP government do? We took that offer because it was in the best interests of Queensland. The road is nearly finished.

This minister could do the same thing for the people on the Gold Coast and for the people in Logan. He could stop using smokescreens, accept what has been put on the table and get building, and they could have this happening now. Instead, he wants to throw his toys out of the cot, throw a tantrum and pretend he has the high and mighty moral ground. If it was good enough for federal Labor, it is good enough for state Labor. He needs to accept that there is an offer on the table. He needs to put Queenslanders first and he needs to deliver.

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (5.39 pm): I am usually reluctant to make a contribution in these debates, but this one is close to my heart because I have been touched by this issue in my own electorate with a project that is very significant to me—the Hann Highway. I will use that as an example in this case. It is an outstanding issue at the moment. We have been lobbying for many years to finish the Hann Highway. About \$80 million to \$100 million is needed to finish the job. For about two years prior to the federal election there was money put up. I do not care who the federal government is—Liberal or Labor. It means nothing to me. There was money promised for years up until that point. I was getting deep criticism as the state member for not getting any state money for that road. I was told on numerous occasions that there was money from the federal government and that all we needed was for the state to act. I keep getting criticism in my electorate that I am not delivering because the money is not there from the state but we have the money from the feds.

We got the money from the state. We got the \$20 million from the state which was 20 per cent of the \$100 million. Then we got \$40 million from the feds. We were short-changed. With that little bit more we could finish the job. Both sides need to do their job. It has not been done in this case, which is enormously frustrating. It is even more so when I am told from the North Queensland ROC meeting last week that I have failed to deliver again because there is only \$7 million from the state. That was hearsay, it was rubbish and it was fed to that meeting, as an attack presumably upon me, from federal MPs who have been obligated up until that point to fill the gap on the Hann Highway.

I do not feel terribly motivated to criticise them for any shortfalls under normal circumstances, but I do not like being criticised when finally the state government has come to the table with the \$20 million but it is not matched with the commensurate obligation from the feds at 80 per cent. It is enormously frustrating when you have been dealing with an issue like this for a long time and when it is such a crisis area for outback Western Queensland. It is so disappointing to get so close but be pulled short.

This is a pretty emotive issue for Shane and me in that we have been touched by this. It behoves them—whoever is sitting in government in Canberra, whether Liberal or Labor—to make sure that they are doing their bit. I have no problem with forcing them to do that with the 80-20 rule. It is something that we both support very strongly.

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (5.42 pm): I rise to second the amendment moved by the member for Glass House. Once again we see in this House this asleep-at-the-wheel Labor government, which has delivered no new infrastructure in 18 months, which continues to fight amongst themselves, which delivered no money in the budget for the M1, which delivered a TMR black hole and is once again attempting to rewrite the history of funding for the M1. We see the minister—still in his first term in this place, with no corporate knowledge of this issue—misconstruing and misunderstanding the fundamentals of this debate. Let me give you a history lesson, Minister.

Let me say this loud and clear: this is not a new project. The upgrade of the M1 between Robina and Reedy Creek is a continuation of a series of upgrades which have taken place since 2007 to upgrade the M1 south of Nerang. For those in this House who may not be aware, in 2007 the Howard federal coalition government committed \$455 million to upgrade the M1 from Nerang to Coolangatta. The then Labor government, under Paul Lucas as the minister, agreed to a 50-50 funding arrangement with the then federal government. I table Paul Lucas's media release, in which he said—

"Voters are entitled to ask why it took Canberra so long to match Queensland's commitment when the Federal Government accepts responsibility for 50/50 funding of the same road in NSW.

*Tabled paper:* Media release, undated, by the former minister for transport and main roads, Hon. Paul Lucas, titled 'Canberra finally bows to Qld pressure on Gold Coast Roads' [\[1501\]](#).

Upgrades of the M1 south of Nerang since that time have all been funded through a 50-50 funding agreement. Not only is this a matter of public record; I know this because I stood with the then deputy prime minister, Mark Vaile, as he made this announcement nine years ago. For the benefit of the House, I table copies of Mark Vaile's media release of 4 November, as well as a photo of me with Mark Vaile following an announcement in 2007.

*Tabled paper:* Media release, dated 4 November 2007, by the then deputy prime minister, Mark Vaile, titled '\$5.2 Bill to Fix SEQ's Transport Network' [\[1502\]](#).

This agreement has continued under successive state and federal governments since 2007, including under the Beattie and Bligh Labor governments and the LNP in Queensland, as well as the Howard coalition government, the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Labor government and the Abbott and Turnbull coalition governments in Canberra. This has been the accepted standard for funding for almost a decade.

Unlike the minister, who still has to learn about the M1 from briefings from his bureaucrats, I, like so many of my colleagues on this side of the House, have the corporate knowledge spanning more than a decade. In fact, I was labelled the 'member for the M1' many years ago by the *Gold Coast Bulletin*. I remember when the funding was first committed to and the announcement was hard fought. I remember my very first press conference in 2005. This placard says, 'We need the M1 upgrade now!'

*Tabled paper:* Photograph depicting the member for Mudgeeraba, Ms Ros Bates MP [\[1503\]](#).

I remember when the funding was first committed. I remember when we had to stand by the side of the road on Neilsens Road near the exit 73 overpass and campaign day after day for an upgrade to the M1 south of Nerang. That would be me in that photo.

I remember the postcard campaign which showed the true extent of frustration amongst local residents. Steven Ciobo, the member for Moncrieff, and I did a postcard campaign. We actually stuck pictures of Peter Beattie's and Di Reilly's heads in the roundabout for the campaign for the funding.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member, you are tabling all of those?

**Ms BATES:** Yes, I am.

*Tabled paper:* Bundle of photographs depicting the member for Mudgeeraba, Ms Ros Bates MP [\[1504\]](#).

I remember the fatalities—the countless many who lost their lives on a dangerous stretch of road. I remember campaigning for upgrades to the M1 once the funding was announced and for the projects to be expedited. I remember the department's plans to close the exit 75 overpass at Worongary. That would have made life harder for residents at Worongary. I remember successfully campaigning against them and stopping that proposal. I remember the then Labor government refusing to install safety barriers on the M1 and campaigning successfully to have them installed before more fatalities took place ahead of the eventual six-laning of the motorway. I remember the 'Where's Wally?' campaign when no-one could find Craig Wallace, who was nowhere to be found when he was the minister for main roads. These were hard-fought battles.

Unfortunately, because the then Labor government under Anna Bligh then decided to redirect our M1 funding to marginal Labor seats further north, the money has now run out. The minister needs to get out of his ivory tower, drive down the M1 in his air-conditioned limousine and sit in the traffic with the rest of us. The minister needs to put his money where his mouth is and stop playing games, because no-one on the Gold Coast believes the minister, and there are too many of us with the corporate knowledge who will be able to refute everything the minister says. It has always been LNP state and federal members who have fought for the M1. Beggars cannot be choosers. The minister needs to accept the funding for the M1, stop grandstanding and get on and build the M1. Gold Coasters do not want any more political games from a minister who was probably riding a tricycle when the funding was first announced.

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (5.48 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion moved by the Minister for Main Roads because this House simply asks—and I hope that the opposition agrees—that the Australian government plays its part in the development of Queensland and that it applies the same rules that it applies in northern New South Wales for the M1, which is 80-20 funding support from the Australian government for the M1.

Mr Speaker, as you may know and as the minister certainly knows, my passion is for continual funding for the Mount Lindesay Highway. We see funding for the Camp Cable Road intersection and also for the Beaudesert bypass. They are great projects initiated after years of inaction under the LNP. However, if the Australian government does not play its part on the M1, that means there is less money in the pool to go around to fund other projects within Queensland.

Every LNP member who speaks about another road project who does not support 80-20 on the M1 needs to be silent when it comes to funding on their road projects. Unfortunately, the minister will not have me silenced because I will be supporting 80-20 funding on the M1 and I will not be silenced when it comes to further funding on the Mount Lindesay Highway.

I grew up in the shadow of the M1. When it was being constructed, I played in the dirt of the bulldozers used to build it. I rode my red bike—it was not a tricycle—on the road on weekends as it was being completed. I did not at that stage realise what an important artery this would be to connect Queensland to other states and cities. I did not have the full understanding, as I do now, that the M1, through its connections to the Logan Motorway, connects northern New South Wales and other states to the west, to the people in Lockyer and Toowoomba; it connects all of Queensland and is a vital project.

I turn to the amendment that has been put forward. One of the things I note is that there is a little bit of boastfulness that 'we note the LNP experience in negotiating and delivering'. They have effectively told the House that they are on strike, that they refuse to get the participation of the federal government until they get their way. They do not want the best for Queensland. They want to spoil it for Queensland. They want to actually participate in this game being played by the national government. If we want to look at their experience in negotiating, let's look at a few quotes. We know that Warren Truss said—

The Australian Government—

and they said this very proudly—

has re-introduced the traditional 80:20 funding split for new road and rail projects on the national network ...

He said that really clearly. He did it in New South Wales. We are not seeing it in Queensland. Considering their experience in negotiation, let us have a look at some of the things they said. We saw Bert van Manen. What did his experience in negotiation achieve when he wanted to get funding for the M1 past Beenleigh, which I know the member for Waterford—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Logan, one moment. Pause the clock. I know you are on a roll. Member for Mudgeeraba, you have not stopped interjecting since your contribution.

**A government member:** Throw her out.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I will throw you out if you continue.

**Mr POWER:** The advanced negotiator of the LNP, Bert van Manen, said—

While projects like the Bruce Highway and Toowoomba Range Crossing have had 80/20 funding splits—  
he admitted it—

they are major freight corridors and the M1 highway is a commuter road and urban congestion is—

not a federal responsibility. That is their negotiating style. That is what the LNP does to negotiate: concede at the first hurdle.

What does Steve Ciobo have to say? When he was asked by the *Gold Coast Bulletin* he admitted that he did not even know the funding formula. He stated—

'To be honest you would need to direct that question to the Transport Minister,' Mr Ciobo replied. 'He's the man that has knowledge about all road projects.'

This is the key road through his electorate. This shows that the LNP, the key negotiators in this, have no idea.

Lastly, let us have a look at Mr Andrew Laming, federal MP. Steve Austin asked, 'Andrew, why is the coalition, your mob, trying to screw the Queensland state government over funding on the M1 upgrade?' Andrew Laming replied, 'Because they deserve it. This is the Queensland government.' These are the negotiators who are supposed to stand up for Queensland. The reality is they are on strike. They refuse to stand up for Queensland. This motion urges them to do the right thing.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (5.53 pm): Unlike those opposite, who have not delivered a single new major infrastructure project in the last 18 months, the LNP has a strong track record of working with the federal government to deliver vital infrastructure projects. Today's motion moved by the minister is nothing but Labor hypocrisy at its best.

The Palaszczuk Labor government needs to stop picking fights and start negotiating with the federal government because it has no plan in place of its own to pay for any infrastructure we need. This government's one and only plan surrounding infrastructure has been to cry poor, have a hissy fit—and we have seen that from the minister opposite again today—and blame the federal government when it does not get its own way. It was wonderful to be here in the chamber listening to the minister when he was talking about the Northern Australian Roads Program. The minister has obviously been so busy writing motions that he forgot to check his correspondence from the Hon. Darren Chester MP, Minister for Infrastructure and Transport. This will be of interest to the member for Mount Isa, who contributed to the minister's motion. It will be good for him to hear this because the minister has been caught out. I have a copy of the correspondence that was sent to Minister Bailey, and I am happy to table it.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, undated, from the federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Hon. Darren Chester, to the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply, Hon. Mark Bailey, regarding the Northern Australia Roads Program [\[1505\]](#).

It was sent to the minister in August 2016 advising his office of the successful projects. The member for Mount Isa will be extraordinarily pleased to see that not only is the Hann Highway project that he was talking about on this list but there are also one, two, three, four, five, six other projects. Guess what this letter says? It clearly states—

I therefore seek your written agreement to delivering the six selected projects for the Northern Australia Roads Programme, and that their delivery will comply with the terms and conditions contained in the NPA.

The minister is the reason that the member for Mount Isa does not have his roads. The federal minister is waiting for this minister's response and what have we seen? A completely lazy minister who lacks dedication to his portfolio. This is a minister who does not even answer his own correspondence. This is a minister who has clearly been given direction by the federal minister, and he knows it. He cannot even write back because he is too busy grandstanding out there in front of the media.

**Mr Springborg:** On his tricycle.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** He is too busy on his tricycle. He is too busy to even know where these projects are. Instead, the money from the federal government is sitting there and this minister is too lazy to get out of his office and even understand that he needs to reply to correspondence. I urge the minister to look in front of him. If there is a pile in front of him, sign the letter, get it back to the federal minister and actually do the job that he has been employed and is getting paid to do.

We have talked about the six roads, and I can read them out. Let's compare that to the Palaszczuk Labor government's budget delivered just three months ago. In this Labor budget they spread state funding for the Hann Highway about which the member for Mount Isa stood in this House and talked. It is interesting because this money that the member for Mount Isa was talking about in the state budget was over five years. I would hardly call that fast-tracking by any stretch of the imagination. We have this government over here taking five years to get anything done. We have a minister over here with a state that desperately needs federal funding for the roads and this minister is too lazy to look in his correspondence box, sign off on the letter and return it.

Perhaps this minister over here can reword his motion because it is very embarrassing for him that he has completely messed up. He did not realise that he has not even done his homework. He really should consider the whole motion before he puts it before the House. This minister is an embarrassment. The federal government knows it and now the whole of Queensland knows that he is a lazy minister.

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

**AYES, 41:**

**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, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Walker, Watts, Weir.

**NOES, 46:**

**ALP, 42**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Power, Ryan, Russo, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

**KAP, 2**—Katter, Knuth.

**INDEPENDENT, 2**—Gordon, Pyne.

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Powell) negatived.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

### Portfolio Committees, Reporting Dates

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (6.04 pm): I seek to advise the House of determinations made by the Committee of the Legislative Assembly at its meeting today. The committee has resolved, pursuant to standing order 136, that the Finance and Administration Committee report on the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2016 by 25 October 2016; the Transportation and Utilities Committee report on the Rail Safety National Law (Queensland) Bill by 25 October 2016 and the Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 by 1 November 2016; the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report on the Serious and Organised Crime Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 by 1 November 2016; and the Agriculture and Environment Committee report on the Environmental Protection (Underground Water Management) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 by 25 October 2016. The committee has also resolved, pursuant to standing order 136, to vary the committee responsible for the Water (Local Management Arrangements) Bill 2016 from the Transportation and Utilities Committee to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee to report by 25 October 2016.

## MOTION

### Australian Building and Construction Commission



**Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (6.06 pm): I move—

That this House calls on all Queensland senators to support the reintroduction of the Australian Building and Construction Commission.

The reintroduction of the Australian Building and Construction Commission, the ABCC, is not a new issue for this state or this nation. In fact, the recent double dissolution federal election was called because the former Senate kept blocking this important legislative measure, so let us not be under any misapprehension that this is not a vital economic reform that is needed not only to deal with militant union activity—particularly in the construction sector—but also to help unlock productivity benefits which will encourage more investment and create jobs for Queenslanders.

At a time when this government is begging for an economic narrative, it chooses to favour its mates in the union movement over sensible economic reform which will generate thousands of construction jobs across our nation. The scenes we saw last week as marching unionists disrupted the streets of Brisbane were typical of what we have seen time and time again. We cannot stand idly by and allow militant union activity to disrupt not only the construction industry but also our broader community. What we saw last week was a strike about workers involved in another state, in another industry, organised by the ETU and then jumped on by the CFMEU as well. It comes on the back of recent data which reveals that Queensland is now the focal point of industrial disputes in the nation.

Despite what the Deputy Premier tries to fudge, the ABS data for the June quarter 2016 revealed that Queensland accounted for more than half—more than 50 per cent—of all working days lost to industrial disputes across the nation for those three months, continuing the trend under the Palaszczuk Labor government and replicating the previous quarter's results.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Mansfield, I apologise for interrupting your train of thought. Members, please take your private conversations outside. Minister for Industrial Relations, if you want to have a conversation across the chamber you will be warned.

**Mr WALKER:** Compared with the June quarter data, it shows an increase of over 300 per cent since the last quarter under the LNP government. The Menzies Research Centre recently published a report called *Constructing a better future: restoring order and competition in the building industry*, which made some very valid points about the need for this reform. The report noted—

At the time when Australia's economy is transitioning from the mining investment boom, the construction sector has a critical role to play in developing new industries, attracting foreign investment and securing long-term economic growth.

A productive and efficient construction industry is vital if we are to achieve the most from public and private investment in the infrastructure we need to keep the economy going.

We hear time and time again about infrastructure challenges for our growing state and the need to work through funding challenges because of Labor's legacy of debt and deficit. The report further states—

A strategy to reduce these costs will deliver benefits to everyone. Better value for money in construction will help businesses expand, create new jobs and export opportunities.

It will allow governments to provide more hospital beds, better schools and more kilometres of road and rail with less borrowing and fewer taxes.

...

By reducing the cost of construction by 10 per cent—a target we say is eminently achievable—the federal government would save \$5 billion on its planned infrastructure spending.

Master Builders Queensland says that industrial disputation in the construction sector 'is hurting our state's economy and reducing our attractiveness for vital investment in infrastructure, tourism and other business opportunities'. It is important that the House calls on the 12 Queensland senators to represent the interests of all Queenslanders and support legislation to reintroduce the ABCC, a 'tough cop on the beat' to restore the rule of law to the construction industry in Queensland.

The ABCC existed from 2005 to 2012, when Labor abolished it and replaced it with a weaker building regulator known as Fair Work Building and Construction. The ABCC Bill will address a number of things. It will address particularly the infrastructure challenges we face and the funding for infrastructure. Master Builders Australia estimates that infrastructure like schools and hospitals costs taxpayers up to 30 per cent more because of industrial action and delays at building sites. Large building contractors are currently free to lock out smaller contractors in the industry by discriminating against those who do not have a particular type of EBA favoured by the large contractor or the unions.

It is important to note that the ABCC would apply to unions and businesses alike—as it should—that are wrongly acting in the construction industry to add these significant costs to our economy and to delay infrastructure. I encourage all members to support the motion and send a message that industrial lawlessness should not be tolerated. We support investment and jobs in Queensland's construction industry.

*(Time expired)*

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (6.11 pm): I rise to speak to the motion, which should be opposed. There is something in the DNA of those opposite. They cannot get rid of it, no matter how much damage they do to themselves. It is in the DNA of those opposite to pick a fight with the workers of the state of Queensland. They do it in this place just about every sitting day, so it is no surprise to see a motion of this nature before the House this evening—a continuation of a tedious, no-ideas attack on workers.

It is almost worse than that. I think those opposite are fixated on attacking workers. For those on the other side, the idea that working men and working women can come together and try to achieve better outcomes for themselves, better outcomes for their families and better outcomes for the next generation is a philosophy that should be stamped out. Everything we hear from those opposite is that it is all a union conspiracy.

It is their leader in Canberra, Malcolm Turnbull, who put this issue front and centre after, I note, already being knocked back by the previous Senate. He called a double dissolution election on this issue, but there was hardly a whisper about the ABCC in June 2016. Even Malcolm Turnbull realised that you cannot attack Australian workers and expect them not to notice. You cannot support the establishment of the ABCC and expect workers to not think long and hard about why a government would attack them.

This state is home to a construction industry worth about \$44 billion annually. It is an industry that supports over 200,000 Queenslanders, providing security for their families. It is an industry that built this state long before John Howard, long before Tony Abbott and long before Malcolm Turnbull and it will continue to build this state long after those opposite are gone.

As the minister responsible for construction regulation, I work with leaders in the construction industry. That work is focused on building confidence in construction. I am working with the industry to make sure the sector continues to grow. As minister I meet regularly with industry groups, with construction companies, with subbies and with tradies—almost every day. They broadly talk to me about the industry and I listen. Do members know what? In none of those conversations has anyone ever advocated for the return of the ABCC. The only people talking about the ABCC are those in the LNP. I can inform the House what the industry does talk to me about. What they are interested in is fixing up the culture of non-payment in the industry. They want to work together to deal with the scourge of imported nonconforming building products. They talk with me about the infrastructure and construction pipeline that the Palaszczuk government is delivering for Queensland. The jobs that this government is delivering for Queensland are what the construction industry want to talk about. The ABCC is not their priority. That makes sense because the ABCC was never effective in the role it was meant to play.

We heard from the LNP the first time around that productivity was supposed to increase under the ABCC. They said that it was meant to bring in a glorious age of productivity in the construction sector. What happened? Nada. It had been repeatedly found that the ABCC failed abysmally when it came to productivity improvement in the construction industry. Even the Productivity Commission could not find any evidence of productivity improvements. It was a dud.

The ABCC did have one profound effect. It increased deaths and injuries in the construction industry across the nation. Those opposite are not the ones who will mourn a workmate killed on a construction site. Those opposite are not the ones who have to call the family to deliver the heartbreaking news. It is pretty easy for people to sit in this room, or in Parliament House in Canberra for that matter, and declare war on workers when you never have to meet the casualties of that war. It seems that those opposite have no consideration for what it is like for someone to lose a workmate—a brother, a sister, a father—on a construction site. I find that deplorable.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members, I am having difficulty hearing the minister.

**Mr de BRENNI:** Those opposite are fixated on union bashing. In 2007, when the ABCC was last in place under the Howard government, what did we see? We saw worker deaths on construction sites hit a 10-year high, with 51 workers killed. The worst element of the proposed ABCC is the fine workers are hit with after acting on workplace health and safety concerns—fining a worker for acting on workplace health and safety concerns \$36,000.

This is a vision that Queenslanders will not accept. It is a dark vision that Queenslanders completely rejected at the last state election. It is consistent with their way of government. I sincerely hope that the Senate rejects the ABCC.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr CRAMP** (Gaven—LNP) (6.16 pm): What a shame I have to follow such a disgraceful speech from the member for Springwood. It is just not cricket. I rise to speak in support of the motion, as there can be no argument that it is incumbent on Queensland senators in the federal parliament to ensure that the rights of Queensland workers are upheld and that any organisations that seek to denigrate those rights are held to account. This includes the rights of construction workers in Queensland.

I have no doubt that those opposite have a deranged and misguided view that somehow organisations such as the CFMEU provide appropriate workplace representation for construction workers. I can assure those opposite that this could not be further from reality. A good and healthy democracy should include the rights of all segments of society to have access to representation when needed. This certainly includes employees and employers.

To the best of my knowledge, I am the only person in this chamber who has actually founded an organisation to represent the interests of employees. This organisation, the apolitical Emergency Medical Service Protection Association, as it turns out provides a far superior and fairer model of workplace representation, focused solely on the workplace rights and entitlements of workers, than that of the Labor aligned, politically focused organisations of the Left. How do we know this? The employees that EMSPA sought to represent deserted the Labor aligned registered unions in droves across three states, to the point where EMSPA is now the largest employee representative organisation for ambulance officers in Victoria and Queensland and the only organisation left in New South Wales.

The creation of EMSPA also demonstrated the need for competition in the workplace representation environment and that workers can be trusted to make sound decisions about who should represent their interests in workplace matters. We now see that EMSPA is only the beginning of improved choice for workers, with employment based groups including the Nurses Professional Association of Queensland, another apolitical employee representative group, being established to provide better workplace representation for Queensland workers.

Unlike the lemmings on the Left who blindly follow the authoritarian 'we-know-what's-best-for-you'-ism as part of their collectivist credo, I am actually qualified to say that employee representation can successfully exist between the employer and the employee on foundations that are not based on a vested interest in chaos, where the goal is to ensure that workers' rights are upheld but never used as a weapon to overreach to such a—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. One moment, member for Gaven. I am having difficulty hearing you. Member for Kawana, you will have ample opportunity to speak shortly, as will the member for Brisbane Central.

**Mr CRAMP:** As I was saying, the goal should be to ensure that workers' rights are upheld but never used as a weapon to overreach to such a detrimental extent that we would see thuggery, standover tactics and violence culminating in private industry capitulating or excessive costs of products and services imposed on the public due to such actions.

**Mr de Brenni** interjected.

**Mr CRAMP:** I am using large words, so if the member for Springwood would like clarification he can come and see me later. When these actions, such as those committed by the CFMEU, are allowed to fester and grow, this only emboldens those committing the actions and they continually spiral downwards into more extensive criminal behaviour and activities. It took the courage of a federal coalition government to establish the Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption which, as has been widely documented, found that there is a widespread and deep-seated culture of lawlessness among many union officials and revealed allegations involving multiple examples of bribery, extortion and blackmail in the nation's construction industry.

The health of the construction and development industry in Queensland is already on its knees under this do-nothing, asleep-at-the-wheel Queensland Labor government. Queensland needs greater competition in tier 1 construction, including to break the CFMEU-led protection cartel that is effectively adding around 30 per cent on to the construction cost of government projects—a bill which is inevitably footed by Queensland taxpayers. The solution is simple and, no, it is not to have another bunch of bureaucrats in a state building and construction commission. Instead, the state government should only allow tenderers who do not have uncompetitive workplace arrangements and the state government must simply strike out those tenderers who do have uncompetitive provisions off the tender list.

While the CFMEU is such a major contributor to the Labor and Greens parties, the Queensland Labor government will ensure that the system is not changed. Therefore, the need for our federal Queensland senators to step up has never been greater. Whilst we are assured of absolutely no action from this weak Labor government in Queensland that simply panders to union corruption, the reintroduction of the ABCC will be the only independent authority to monitor workplace relations and pursue those who seek to commit criminal actions at the expense of—

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr PEGG** (Stretton—ALP) (6.21 pm): It is going to be difficult for me to emulate the eloquent oratory of the member for Gaven, but I will give it my best shot. We all know that he is a man of few words. I rise to oppose the motion moved by the member for Mansfield. This is just getting predictable now. I am almost feeling a sense of *deja vu*. Haven't we been there and done that? Those opposite are just getting a little pathetic in their attempts to do Prime Minister Turnbull's job for him. I have to admit that the Prime Minister definitely needs some help, but I am not sure that the member for Mansfield or the member for Gaven can provide the kind of help that he needs. With friends like the member for Mansfield and the member for Gaven, the Prime Minister certainly does not need enemies—although we all know that he has quite a few of those!

The Prime Minister called a double dissolution election on the issue of reintroducing the ABCC, and didn't that work well for him! Thanks to Prime Minister Turnbull's almost own goal with the issue of the ABCC—the whole reason for calling an early election because it was such a pressing issue for the Australian community though pretty much MIA during the entire election campaign—what have we seen now? We have now seen the re-emergence of One Nation as a force, with the halving of the quota required for a double dissolution election. What a fantastic outcome for Australia and a big thankyou to Prime Minister Turnbull for that! Isn't it just a little embarrassing that those opposite—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Members, I try to allow a reasonable degree of latitude during the private member's motion debate. Member for Gaven, you will be warned. No, I will warn you under standing order 253A. You have all had a pretty good go.

**Mr PEGG:** I would have thought it would be a little embarrassing for those opposite to continue to be the cheer squad for one of the greatest almost own goals we have seen but, as we have seen previously, those opposite have no shame, so here we go again: nothing else to talk about, so drag the old ABCC card out of the pack. I could only imagine the tactics committee meeting that produced this motion. I certainly hope it was not a very long meeting! I certainly hope it was not a very long meeting at all!

I am not sure how many times those of us on this side of the House have to make the point that we do not support the reintroduction of an organisation that is granted broad, unchecked powers for one section of the workforce. Just a little refresher for those opposite: the ABCC would have so much broad coercive power that workers would be required to attend an examination before the ABCC commissioner and answer questions or provide information under oath or affirmation. There is no right to silence and no right to representation by a lawyer of the worker's choice. Workers face a penalty of six months imprisonment for failing to comply with requirements to produce documents, information or attend to answer questions. Ordinary workers doing their jobs being hauled in and interrogated with no representation of their choice and no right to silence—that is certainly not the Australia that I want to be part of.

These powers impact on the basic rights of ordinary individuals who work in the industry, and that is around a million workers across Australia. Even the Law Council has observed that the ABCC laws are contrary to the rule of law and the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights said that the ABCC legislation breaches fundamental human and legal rights. This is where it gets very

interesting, because when you look at the submission of the Law Council of Australia to the Senate Education and Economics Legislation Committee—and I quote from paragraph 47, the heading of which is ‘Retrospectivity’—it states—

... the Transition Bill provides for the retrospective operation of coercive investigatory powers.

When I heard mention of retrospectivity, it brought me back to the lengthy contribution from the member for Kawana on 30 August of this year in relation to the Workers’ Compensation and Rehabilitation (National Injury Insurance Scheme) Amendment Bill. I want to read some quotes from the member for Kawana in relation to retrospectivity. It was quite a lengthy contribution from the member for Kawana when he said—

As I was saying, the LNP always oppose retrospective provisions.

But, wait, there is more. The member for Kawana went on to say—

The LNP will oppose retrospectivity.

But, wait, there is even more! It gets better! I quote from the member for Kawana—

These retrospective provisions are repugnant. The LNP has always opposed retrospective provisions. We opposed them last week in relation to other legislation—the vegetation management bill, for instance—and we will always oppose them.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (6.27 pm): I nearly missed the call, Mr Speaker, because I was conversing with my honourable friends here—the members for Hinchinbrook and Everton—and they were explaining to me that that young 30-year-old over there is a Labor heavyweight union official. I was so surprised about this young man—who could best be described as the Sam Dastyari of the Queensland parliament, this 30-year-old that everyone is scared of—that I nearly missed the call, so shocked and so surprised I was in this young heavy hitter over there. I was so shocked and surprised at the thought that he was the heavyweight, but the honourable members assure me that that is the case. If anything could be more unbelievable it is that.

I swear that the only *deja vu* this member has had in this debate is when he practised in the bathroom mirror half an hour ago, when he wrote his own jokes down and then looked in the mirror and laughed at himself, with his imaginary friends around, and said, ‘I think they’ll laugh at that. That’s a good one. I’m going to say that. Let’s write that down.’ Anyone who comes in here and has to read a joke off a piece of paper is questionable, but you are the heavy hitter of the Queensland Labor Party, Sir. I honour him as the Queensland heavyweight. I have more respect for you—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Kawana, I would ask you to make your contribution relevant to the topic.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** No, it is not a joke, members. We are on show. Queenslanders are watching us as we participate in this debate. I urge all members—and there are more members to speak—

**Ms Grace** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Brisbane Central, I do not need your assistance. You will have an opportunity shortly. I urge all members to make their contributions relevant to the topic.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The Labor Party, including the member for Stretton, who just spoke, have 156,000 reasons to oppose the reintroduction of the ABCC. That is the contribution of the CFMEU in dollars and gifts in kind to the Labor Party in the last six months. That is why the members opposite do not support the reintroduction of the ABCC.

Some of my colleagues will remember Murray Watt. He is now a senator. The Minister for Housing talked about the LNP demonising women in the workforce, yet Murray Watt ousted Jan McLucas because of his own political union alliances. Jan McLucas was a senator for a long time. Murray Watt, being pro women in parliament, ousted Jan McLucas so that he could take the job. Then he said—

I’m very grateful to Left branch members and unions for electing me as our candidate for the forthcoming ballot for @QLDLabor Senate ticket.

Further, I refer to a *Courier-Mail* article, titled ‘Veteran Labor senator rolled by faceless union powerbrokers’. I understand that tonight Senator Murray Watt is going to make his maiden speech. Being a senator representing Queensland, this is his chance to stand up for Queensland. I understand that he is going to have an office on the Gold Coast. Perhaps he will stand up to the thuggish behaviour of the CFMEU and the ETU, particularly in relation to the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games.

Over the last six months the unions have given the ALP \$1.9 million. That money is out of the pockets of workers. Why will they not invest that money back into the pockets of workers? These vulnerable Queenslanders are paying their union dues but that money is going to the Labor Party, not to front-line services, not to delivering social services, not to delivering social housing.

The member for Woodridge, who, I understand, does not live anywhere near Woodridge, is suddenly a friend of the unions. He is trying—in vain, I might add—to take the Socialist Left faction off the Deputy Premier, Jackie Trad. He is trying hard. He has come out in support of vegetation management.

**Mr Springborg:** He's got half.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** He has half. The member for Woodridge then announces a policy for 17-year-olds in youth detention. He is trying very hard to get his colleagues over there in the left faction to support him and not the Deputy Premier. In fact, we have heard little birdies talk about the member for Woodridge. When we were in government, ministers had an open-door policy for departmental officials. The former minister for health, Lawrence Springborg, had an open-door policy. I understand that when the member for Woodridge became the minister he shut all the doors and puts locks on them so that those departmental officials could not get in.

A little birdie has also told me that the builders at 1 William Street have had to readjust the Premier's office because they suspect that it is not going to be occupied by the member for Inala. They have had to put locks on the doors, because the member for Woodridge is on his way to the top level at 1 William Street. He wants only keycard access to keep the public servants out. We know that the only way to stand up for Queenslanders is to reintroduce the rule of law on construction sites in Queensland.

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (6.33 pm): I rise to oppose the motion. It is really predictable that we have just heard the member for Kawana speak for five minutes and at not one stage did he give this House one reason that any senator would support the ABCC. We heard a man who does not have any ability whatsoever to speak for more than 10 seconds in this House on any policy issue. He spent five minutes talking about Murray Watt, the member for Stretton, the member for Woodridge—anything other than the motion. The Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition should be ashamed for allowing that to occur in this House.

The ABCC issue is very important and not one to waste five minutes not talking about. It is interesting to note that the member for Kawana spoke about the issue as much as the federal government spoke about it during the federal election campaign. It was a nothing issue.

The members opposite want to force members to vote for something that has the most incredible coercive powers by which to compel ordinary workers to give evidence, to be interviewed with no right to silence, with no right to representation by a lawyer of their choice and with no privilege against self-incrimination. These powers would impact upon the basic rights of individuals who work in the industry—around one million workers across Australia—and their families.

As the Law Council has observed, the bill to reinstate the ABCC is contrary to the rule of law, yet we heard from the member for Kawana a five-minute contribution about anything other than the issue. He used to be the minister for industrial relations in this state. That is a disgrace. It is the reason the LNP is in opposition. The members opposite have still not learned their lesson. During the last state election campaign they locked him away and I predict that they will do exactly the same again.

When it comes to the ABCC, even the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights said that this legislation breaches fundamental human and legal rights. The members opposite are doing the work of Malcolm Turnbull and flogging a dead horse that is the ABCC. Based on the evidence, when the ABCC was in place, the number of injuries went up, productivity went down, and safety risks were at their highest. When the ABCC was disbanded, all of those issues improved. In fact, after the ABCC had been abolished, the number of workplace deaths halved. Yet, the member opposite did not even address the issue. Instead, he complained that certain senators are going to vote against the bill. The member for Kawana, the former industrial relations minister in this state, did not mention one reason the ABCC should be returned.

**Mrs Frecklington:** One hundred and fifty-eight thousand reasons.

**Ms GRACE:** I will take that interjection. It is a good one. I thank the member very much. The members opposite talked about the CFMEU dispute last week, but did we hear anything about the 55 workers who lost their jobs overnight in Victoria? They do not understand. The agreement that those workers were under, which slashed their wages by 65 per cent, was approved in Perth by three casual workers. That agreement applies to workers in Victoria and Queensland. The members opposite do not even understand the federal industrial relations law. All the trades awards that are covered by the CFMEU are mentioned in that agreement. That is why the CFMEU took action.

Yet we hear nothing about what is soon becoming a national disgrace and that is the manner in which workers are being employed in this country. The layer upon layer of subcontracting is starting to become a national disgrace. I call on those opposite to join with me in holding a fundamental review of these practices since the hostile takeover by the Howard government of industrial relations laws.

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

**AYES, 41:**

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

**NOES, 44:**

**ALP, 42**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Power, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

**INDEPENDENT, 2**—Gordon, Pyne.

Resolved in the negative.

## ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (6.45 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

### Inland Rail Corridor

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (6.45 pm): I rise tonight to raise some very serious concerns around the delineation of the preferred corridor option for the Melbourne-Brisbane inland rail. It is fair to say that this is a proposal which is universally supported throughout my area and, indeed, around Australia. It is something that should have happened a long time ago. It is critical that we get the process right, that there is transparency, a proper consideration of all of the options and things are not presented as a fait accompli. I raised some of those concerns in this place in June of this year.

In my discussion with many affected people since that time my concerns have only been heightened. My concerns were heightened even more when I was provided in the last few days with a document prepared by the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation. They have done an analysis and an assessment of the various corridor options. This particular document, which I table, was a final report which was concluded by the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation in July of last year.

*Tabled paper:* Document, dated 1 July 2015, by SMEC, titled 'MBIR Options Analysis Project: Issues Identification and Alignment Refinement of the ARTC Inland Rail Alignment between Toowoomba and the NSW Border, Final Report' [[1506](#)].

More importantly, it is far more contemporary than the document which has been relied on by the Australian Rail Track Corporation or many of the proponents which goes back to 2010. Indeed, it did a desktop and very, very serious engineering analysis and insight into the various options which were put forward. There should be concern about why this document was not released earlier on so that there could be some public transparency and public scrutiny. This document I understand was known to the Department of State Development, the Department of Transport and Main Roads, ARTC themselves and also Queensland Rail. Of great concern is that it seems to repudiate the preferred corridor option which has been put forward by ARTC and that is through Inglewood up to Millmerran across 30 kilometres of floodplain. We have seen two major floods, in 2011 and 2013, since that original design proposal was put forward.

We need an independent assessment. We need to have an independent transparent process that shines light on all of the options so that people have confidence that what we are going to have is the best option for this overdue and much needed project, a project that is planned to be built sometime in the next 10 years. Indeed, it prefers an option that goes from Inglewood, through Karara and Leyburn, past the airport in Toowoomba and then over the range from there.

My clarion call tonight is not only for an explanation as to why this document was not released but also for an explanation as to what other documents exist so that we can get proper and due transparency in this process and the right option for consideration.

### **University of the Sunshine Coast, Moreton Bay Campus**

 **Mr KING** (Kallangur—ALP) (6.48 pm): This evening I rise to make a contribution regarding a recent announcement that will be of enormous benefit to my electorate of Kallangur in coming years. This announcement is the priority development area status for the old Petrie Paper Mill site as it transitions into the new Moreton Bay campus of the University of the Sunshine Coast. Over the next two decades, this perfectly placed piece of land will transform the small town of Petrie and neighbouring Kallangur into a university hub, with all of the jobs, community and business interest that this change will bring.

The Moreton Bay region is one of the fastest growing urban areas in the country, with our population expected to grow by 40 per cent over the next 20 years. This university is desperately needed as a transformational change for our area. I am delighted the Deputy Premier has granted the mill PDA status. Without this status it would have been extremely difficult and invariably unlikely that this development would occur under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009.

My community has held a strong view in recent years that we are losing our identity as we have lost our libraries and banks to newer areas like North Lakes and Morayfield. This is a chance for our community to look beyond that and be the place where people come to live, be educated and socialise around this new hub. We can all be proud to live in the Moreton Bay region and enjoy the benefits that the bayside at Redcliffe to Beachmere brings, the shopping and business precincts of North Lakes and Narangba and the rural aspects of Whiteside to Dayboro, but we want to come home to Kallangur, Kurwongbah, Petrie and Dakabin to live.

The site is 460 hectares and will contain the new University of the Sunshine Coast Petrie campus at the core of a revitalised Petrie town centre, providing local tertiary opportunities for more than 400,000 residents in an area which currently has no university. The university will potentially generate \$950 million for the Queensland economy. There will be 100 direct jobs per year through university construction and more than 6,000 ongoing jobs by 2036 generated by the PDA. It will create new retail and commercial spaces, residential development, sporting facilities, shared pedestrian and cycle pathways, entertainment and dining areas and parklands. Stage 1 of the University of the Sunshine Coast Moreton Bay campus is expected to open and be delivering courses from semester 1 of 2020. The uni expects 10,000 students over the first 10 years, growing to 20,000 students at full capacity.

The PDA includes koala habitat, and the council intends to apply to the federal government to determine if it is a controlled action under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. There are provisions in the interim land use plan to deal with koala habitat and other koala conservation measures, as well as the other environmental issues which include remnant vegetation and wetlands, bushfire, landslide and flooding hazards. This is a great boost for my electorate, not only in bringing a heightened sense of community but also in the jobs and growth it will bring. I look forward to being a part of this great change as it comes to be.

### **Toowoomba Hospice**

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (6.51 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise tonight to speak of the wonderful work of the Toowoomba Hospice, an accredited healthcare facility that provides free palliative and end-of-life care based on mutual respect, trust and individual needs. Recently I visited the hospice to meet the staff and volunteers. It is important to note the vital role it plays in the fabric of the Toowoomba community.

The inspiration and driving force behind the Toowoomba Hospice was the late Sister Frances Flint. Sister Flint was inspired by medieval monks and nuns who cared for the sick and dying in special parts of their monasteries and abbeys called hospices. These institutions faded the longer the Middle Ages progressed but were reintroduced in the 19th century in cities such as New York, London and Sydney. Sister Flint was a woman of unwavering faith and fierce determination, with a clear vision for

a hospice in Toowoomba that focused on the holistic care of people in the last months of their lives and the needs of the families that support them. Thankfully, she lived to see that her vision had been well and truly realised.

Built through the extraordinary generosity of the Toowoomba and Darling Downs community at a cost of approximately \$1.2 million, the Toowoomba Hospice provides six beds for people in the final stages of life. Construction commenced in July 2002 and the hospice officially opened in July 2003. Today the Toowoomba Hospice is a true local charity, employing 25 staff and engaging over 100 volunteers across a variety of tasks. It is a great supporter of local business, many of them small businesses, and in return they support the Toowoomba Hospice. The promotions and fundraising manager, Mark Munro, works tirelessly to promote the hospice's fundraising activities, including Hang Ya Boss Out to Dry, which involves putting your boss up in a crane where they are trapped until they have raised enough money to get down, and the infamous Trash Ya Hair for Hospice Care, which will commence next month and speaks for itself.

I pay tribute to chairman Graham Barron, who has been there from the beginning, the management team, the management committee and volunteers. Together through their varied efforts—nursing, pastoral, bookkeeping, administration, gardening and housekeeping—they provide a home-like atmosphere and meet a significant community need in caring for the terminally ill and their families and friends who love them so deeply.

### Cityhope Church Day of Honour

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (6.54 pm): On 7 August I had the privilege of attending the Cityhope Church Day of Honour at Ripley. The service was led by Reverend Mark Edwards OAM, the son of former deputy premier Llew Edwards. Sixteen years ago the Cityhope Church established an annual day of honour to acknowledge the police, emergency services workers, volunteers and politicians for their contributions to the Ipswich community, much of which often goes unnoticed. Those acknowledged at this year's service included Mayor Paul Pisasale, Ipswich city councillors, state members Jennifer Howard and me, as well as federal members Shayne Neumann and Milton Dick.

Also acknowledged were six members of the Roche family, representing three generations, all current or former emergency services workers. They were led by the patriarch of the clan, Peter Roche, who is the retired deputy fire chief from Ipswich station, with 36 years of service, having commenced work in 1959. His list of major fire involvements includes the Oakdale Guesthouse fire, in which five people were killed, and the Reids fire, where a huge department store in the centre of Ipswich was destroyed. Peter's career highlights included receiving his Diligent and Ethical Service Medal from his son, Mark, in his role as deputy commissioner.

Mark Roche is currently serving his 37th year in the QFES and was appointed Deputy Commissioner, Operations and Emergency Management, in August 2015. Mark joined the Fire Auxiliary in 1979. After completing the permanent recruit course, he joined the fire service and gradually rose through the ranks. He is seen by his peers as an excellent operational administrator, loyal beyond measure. When his father, Peter, started as a firefighter there was no such thing as a breathing apparatus. Now, Mark is at the forefront of massive technical changes to address that important safety issue for the men and women of the QFES.

The third member of the family honoured was Damian Roche, son of Peter. Damian is an advanced-care paramedic in Ipswich with 26 years of service. He is recognised as a first-class paramedic, a great mentor and always calm in a crisis.

The fourth member honoured was Lindsay Hoger, Peter's son-in-law, who has 37 years service in the QFES. According to his workmates and peers, there is no one they would rather have with them in a crisis.

The fifth member was Luke Hoger, Lindsey's son and Peter's grandson. He is a senior firefighter with eight years service in the QFES. He is respected by his workmates. The final member of the Roche clan to be honoured was Jordan Roche, Damien's son and Peter's grandson. Jordan has recently completed six months service at the Fernvale Rural Fire Service. His aim is to be a firefighter and continue the family tradition.

At the day of honour, Reverend Mark Edwards was also recognised as a Paul Harris Fellow by Rotarians Mayor Paul Pisasale and former deputy mayor Denise Hanly. It was a great day for the Cityhope Church and for the City of Ipswich. I thank all concerned for organising that great event.

### Middle Bluff Lighthouse

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (6.57 pm): One of the oldest buildings in the Hervey Bay area is on Woody Island: the Middle Bluff Lighthouse. I am pleased to say that it has been restored to how it looked originally in 1866. The dome was the last piece to be placed back on the lighthouse. It went up on Monday, via helicopter. It was only a LNP government that made it happen. I thank my colleague Steve Dickson, who was minister at the time, for the approvals and for his support.

**Dr Miles:** You went there with me!

**Mr SORENSEN:** Later. I think everyone in this House should feel a sense of pride that some of the Great Sandy Marine Park's rich cultural heritage has been restored. The Middle Bluff Lighthouse is one of two heritage listed lighthouses on the island. The other is the North Bluff Lighthouse, which is yet to be restored. I will be coming to see the minister about getting that one restored. It is your turn now, mate!

Today many Hervey Bay locals still have family connections to the lighthouses on Woody Island. There are the ruins of the lighthouse keeper's cottage, a grave site, the remnants of the original telegraph line, Indigenous fish traps and heaps of stories of interest about Woody Island.

As history shows, the hexagon lighthouses at Middle Bluff and North Bluff worked in tandem as a ship's navigational aid. This is an arrangement that is believed to be unique in Australia's early maritime heritage. It would be a shame to leave the North Bluff lighthouse as a relic of years gone by as both these lighthouses have a significant story to tell about our history. As ships were navigating the Great Sandy Straits they would line up the lights of the Middle Bluff and North Bluff lighthouses in a straight line to gauge the middle of the channel. That is when they would turn left to follow the channel up the straits.

I acknowledge people like Gavin Patterson and Don and Lesley Bradley, who were persistent in their desire to highlight the historical significance and importance of bringing back the lighthouses to their original appeal. Gavin was not going to let those lighthouses decay and become relics and ruins. I say to Gavin: let's get the north one done now. Don't stop. He is very passionate about those lighthouses because he has a family connection with them. It will be great to see both of them restored. Minister Miles, I will be catching up with you.

### Disability Action Week

 **Hon. CJ O'ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland) (7.00 pm): This week is Disability Action Week. It runs from 11 to 17 September and aims to promote the inclusion of people with disability in our communities. I am pleased to say celebrations kicked off early in Townsville last week with the local Mundingburra organisation Townsville and Regional Disability Individualised Support Service, fondly known as Tardiss, holding a local event acknowledging staff and families. I had the opportunity to visit Tardiss to meet their staff, who do great work in our local community, particularly as we adjust to the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

I have spoken many times in this House about the life-changing impact of the NDIS for people with disability and also of the huge job generation that will come with the rollout. Over its three-year rollout the NDIS will create up to 950 additional jobs across the broader Townsville to Mount Isa region, which is great news for local jobseekers at a time when we really need jobs.

It was great to see firsthand that local organisations like Tardiss are expanding and hiring new staff to meet the growing demand from the NDIS. Already, Tardiss has hired around 20 new staff, including two former employees of Queensland Nickel. Everyone in Townsville felt the effects when the QNI refinery closed, but none more so than the refinery's 800 employees.

It is great to see local people are already benefiting from the huge number of jobs to be created by the NDIS, including laid off QNI workers who can make the most of these opportunities with a rewarding new career. One of these former QNI employees had just finished his very first shift as a disability support worker when I met him last week and by all reports he is doing an absolutely amazing job.

Tardiss is one of many organisations across the region celebrating the opportunities that come with the NDIS, as part of Disability Action Week. There is a fantastic range of local events on in Townsville and across Queensland, including opportunities for people to try out wheelchair basketball and bocce and to celebrate with a community fun day.

I am pleased the Palaszczuk government has allocated \$140,000 in grants to support more than 100 applicants with local events in their communities. A full list of events as well as resources, including some great new videos, are available on my department's website. I encourage everyone to get out and about during Disability Action Week and help us to promote and celebrate inclusion in our community.

### **Warrego Electorate, Rotary Clubs and Freemasons**

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (7.03 pm): I rise to pay tribute to the Rotary Club membership of Charleville, Mitchell, St George and Roma and the Queensland Freemasons, who have become the unsung heroes of the ongoing drought with their drought relief voucher system. The drought relief voucher system has been delivered by Rotary clubs around the district for over three years. I would like to thank particularly Phillip Charles, past DG, Gerry Bahre, Adrian Utschink, Bryan Payne, Paul Anderson, Patrice Robinson, Gary Birkett and all the Rotarians for their dedication to this cause.

Hand Heart Pocket, the charity of the Queensland Freemasons, joined forces with the Rotary Club of Charleville to provide grassroots support to landholders and business owners who are battling against the ongoing drought conditions. The drought is not only impacting landholders; it is impacting small businesses in towns and whole communities. I am very honoured to place on record the funds that Hand Heart Pocket has donated to drought relief. They have donated more than \$710,000. This is over and above the significant funds donated by the Rotary clubs.

The members of the Augathella Masonic Lodge, who were also members of the Charleville Rotary Club, decided to merge the two initiatives, using funds raised through Hand Heart Pocket to provide local business vouchers through the Rotary Club. I would like to thank Ric Newson and his Charleville Rotary team, even though they are a small team, and Dave Walters and the Queensland Freemasons for their tremendous support of farmers and small businesses across South-West Queensland.

The area assisted by Rotary and the Freemasons encompasses the local government areas of Paroo, Bulloo, Murweh and Quilpie, representing 14 per cent of Queensland. The other Rotary clubs assist the St George, Mitchell and Roma districts. The voucher system was designed to help local businesses as well as individuals and families.

The system works well and ensures that no funds are diverted to administration costs. Every cent donated to drought assistance goes to drought assistance. Confidentiality is paramount in the distribution of the vouchers through a range of local businesses—for instance, the local tyre service, chemist, fuel or food store to name a few.

Part of the Freemason tradition is charity—providing a hand up, not a handout, to people in need. Rotary shares the same principles. I place on record tonight a huge thank you to the Rotary members and the Freemasons for the hand up they are giving and continue to give to the farmers and small businesses in the Warrego electorate.

### **RACQ Maryborough Technology Challenge**

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (7.06 pm): I rise to talk about the 2016 RACQ HPV technology challenge that was conducted in Maryborough last weekend. Some 141 teams went through the CBD of Maryborough. It was a truly tremendous sight. A big thanks goes to the Maryborough Chamber of Commerce, especially president Lance Stone and Dean Hazelwood, who organised the event. A few years ago the FCO—the Fraser Coast Opportunities—ran the event. They gave it back to the community. The Maryborough Chamber of Commerce took it on.

It is a marvellous event. We read so much in the press about the youth of today and how they are out of control. Some 141 teams and over 1,500 competitors raced around a track for 24 hours. To stand there and watch these kids was amazing.

The Maryborough ALP put a team in. For that I thank Terry Meaker. It was called the Demaine Red Flyer. It was named after one of the great Labor men of the Maryborough and Wide Bay district. Members hear me talk about Billy Demaine at great length.

**Mr Power:** Not enough.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** I take the interjection from the member for Logan. He was a great man. We keep the Demaine name alive in Maryborough.

We had a team from Maryborough State High School. The principal gladly took the money that Terry Meaker raised. We called it the Billy Demaine Red Flyer. It was a flyer. It did very well. We saw it fly around the track. I was thinking what Billy would have thought because we all know that he was a member of the suicide squad in the 1920s upper house. I wonder what he would think about the Demaine Red Flyer running around the CBD of Maryborough.

The HPV is a truly remarkable event. They are human powered vehicles. These kids go for 24 hours. I was exhausted watching them. I went down to pit lane with the principal of Maryborough State High School, Simon Done, and had a look at the Demaine Red Flyer and had a look at the kids on their bikes warming up before the event. The tenacity of these kids is amazing. They start in March every year. They organise their teams and have physios organised. People would think they are at Le Mans when they watch these kids race around, but it is in downtown Maryborough—the greatest city in Queensland. I will say that again: Maryborough—the greatest city in Queensland. It is really great to be part of it. It makes the CBD come alive.

I congratulate the chamber of commerce, because it looks as though they will be taking this event on for another 10 years. A big thanks to Lance Stone and Dean Hazelwood and the volunteers. The volunteers make this event a significant event in Maryborough city. I am proud to represent the people and the kids who took part in it. I invite everyone to come up next year and have a look at the HPV in Maryborough city. You will not regret it.

### Nurses and Midwives

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (7.09 pm): I rise to speak about the important role nurses and midwives play in hospitals right around Queensland. We hear constant references to the previous LNP government, so I thought I would begin by touching on one of the things we did as a government in the first six months of 2012.

On 6 August 2012 the Industrial Relations Commission certified the agreement made between the Queensland Department of Health, the Queensland Nurses' Union of Employees and the Australian Workers' Union of Employees. I am very proud of the work we did as a government to reach this agreement. In particular, EB8 part 2 point 13 talks about the increases to wages and allowances. In this agreement at part 2 point 13 it clearly states the increases to wages each year of three per cent or \$30, whichever is higher, and also a three per cent increase to the allowances for nurses and midwives.

As well as this, nurses received a payment of \$500, which took the total increase to 3.16 per cent. This increase of three per cent was year on year for three years and something I know our hardworking nurses and midwives appreciated at the time. This was a great accomplishment for the government at the time and also a great result for nurses and midwives who had certainty and assurance of ongoing wage growth. I table a copy of EB8 for the benefit of the minister and members to examine, as I know the current EB9 is still being finalised.

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Industrial Relations Commission: Nurses and Midwives (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement (EB8) 2012, 6 August 2012 [[1507](#)].

Our nursing staff who sacrifice a lot to help in the care and recovery of others should not go unnoticed. It is an industrial document and it trumps any press release or anything else that might be being referred to when we talk about whatever wage rises are being given.

The latest hospital data shows that our hospitals continue to face ongoing pressures, with the July data showing increases of three per cent and five per cent respectively for category 1 and 2 cases presenting at our emergency departments. Patients being seen within clinically required times saw 25 per cent of category 2 patients not seen in time frames, whilst 39 per cent of category 3 patients were not seen in required times through our emergency departments.

Today we heard the health minister referring to long waits for the specialist outpatient waiting list. It is a bit rich to be lectured by the member for Woodridge when it was our government, the LNP government, which was prepared to put out the waiting list for the waiting list. The previous Labor government hid it. They marked people 'never to be seen'. There were hospitals like the Gold Coast and the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital where they were doing that. Under Labor the total waiting list for the waiting list increased from 120,000 to 232,000 in the six years of Labor between 2006 and 2012. There was a 15 per cent annual cumulative escalation, and under us we brought that down to 228,000. The minister should release all of the waiting list for the waiting list and not selectively cherrypick as he is doing.

*(Time expired)*

### Herston Quarter

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (7.12 pm): Before I speak about the Herston Quarter, as a proud Italian-Australian I would like to offer my condolences to the victims of the earthquake that struck central Italy on 24 August, in particular the town of Amatrice. This terrible natural disaster has claimed the lives of at least 292 people and left almost 3,000 people homeless. All of those affected by this tragedy are in our thoughts and prayers. I look forward to working with the Italian community on fundraising efforts to support those in need following the deadly quake.

I am also proud to represent an electorate that contains one of Australia's leading health precincts. The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital in Herston and adjacent facilities, including the Queensland Institute of Medical Research, are all world renowned. The QIMR is at the forefront of medical innovation and research, developing lifesaving treatments that are transforming health care both here and abroad. I am pleased to say that, in addition to all of these facilities, Herston will soon be home to a new \$1.1 billion health, aged-care, residential and retail precinct. This is great news for Queensland, inner-city jobs and the state's economy, and it is great news for my electorate of Brisbane Central.

Public health services will be front and centre at the Herston Quarter with the delivery of a 132-bed world-class Specialist Rehabilitation and Ambulatory Care Centre. Herston Quarter will mean more economic development opportunities for Queensland, supporting 700 jobs annually during the 10-year development period, along with hundreds of jobs annually in its operational phase.

Importantly, the heritage buildings on the site—which are in need of significant repair and investment—will be rejuvenated and are at the heart of the development. Australian Unity also intends to make a multimillion dollar investment in the public realm to create a variety of attractive, accessible and comfortable new public spaces for visitors and residents to enjoy.

Herston Quarter will deliver health and hospital services, aged care, research, education and complementary uses. I have received a full briefing on the Herston Quarter redevelopment and I am satisfied that any parking and traffic issues will be addressed during planning and discussion. The redevelopment plan includes a significant expansion of off-street parking and plans are being developed to manage any increased traffic flows. Local residents can be confident that disruption during construction will be minimised and that the project will deliver real benefits to the people of Brisbane Central.

This is a magnificent site, the site of the old Royal Children's Hospital. It will be developed into one of the most world-class health precincts that we are yet to see here in Australia. We are very proud.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 7.15 pm.

### ATTENDANCE

Bailey, Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Crawford, Cripps, D'Ath, Davis, de Brenni, Dick, Dickson, Donaldson, Elmes, Emerson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gilbert, Gordon, Grace, Harper, Hart, Hinchliffe, Howard, 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, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Trad, Walker, Watts, Weir, Wellington, Whiting, Williams