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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT

Thursday, 16 February 2017

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THURSDAY, 16 FEBRUARY 2017



The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

REPORT

Auditor-General



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from the Auditor-General report No. 11 of 2016-17, titled *Audit of Aurukun school partnership arrangement*. I table the report for the information of members.

Tabled paper: Auditor-General of Queensland: Report to Parliament No. 11: 2016-17—Audit of Aurukun school partnership arrangement [187].

PRIVILEGE

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



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, on 21 November 2016, the member for Mudgeeraba wrote to me alleging that the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence deliberately misled parliament in her answer to a question without notice. I have decided that the matters do not warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committee and I will not be referring the matters. I table the correspondence in relation to this matter. I seek leave to incorporate the ruling circulated in my name.

Leave granted.

SPEAKER'S RULING—ALLEGED DELIBERATELY MISLEADING THE HOUSE

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Members,

On 21 November 2016, the Member for Mudgeeraba wrote to me alleging that the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence deliberately misled Parliament in her answer to a Question Without Notice when she said:

The Member for Mudgeeraba also claims that DVOs are not worth the paper they are written on. She is wrong again. She is not just wrong, but irresponsible and dangerous.

and

For the benefit of the House, I am happy to fact check some of the claims that the member for Mudgeeraba has made. She claims that the government has issued a directive to DVConnect about what shelters it can refer women to. That is wrong. Even DVConnect CEO Di Mangan has absolutely refuted these claims.

In her letter to me, the Member for Mudgeeraba contended that the first statement was deliberately misleading as it omitted part of the Member for Mudgeeraba's statement, thereby misrepresenting what she had said in the House.

The Member for Mudgeeraba also contended that the Minister knowingly made false claims in her second statement when stating that Member for Mudgeeraba was wrong to have stated that the government had issued a directive to DVConnect regarding referrals to private shelters.

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

The Minister contended that there was no evidence that she misled the House intentionally or otherwise. The Minister also advised that the Government had not issued a directive to DVConnect to not refer women to private shelters and that she understood the CEO of DVConnect to have refuted the claim by the Member for Mudgeeraba.

Standing Order 269(4) requires:

In considering whether the matter should be referred to the committee, the Speaker shall take account of the degree of importance of the matter which has been raised and whether an adequate apology or explanation has been made in respect of the matter. No matter should be referred to the ethics committee if the matter is technical or trivial and does not warrant the further attention of the House.

Whilst I agree that there is an Ethics Committee precedent that a statement that is technically correct can be misleading by omission, in this case there is no evidence presented to me that the Minister intended to mislead the House when using only part of the Member for Mudgeeraba's statement other than the Minister's denial of such an intention.

I also considered that there was no evidence presented to me that the Minister's statement regarding the allegation that the government had issued a directive to DVO Connect not to refer women to private shelters was either incorrect or misleading.

I have therefore decided that the matters do not warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committee and I will not be referring the matters.

Tabled paper: Correspondence from the member for Mudgeeraba, Ms Ros Bates MP, and the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Hon. Shannon Fentiman, to the Speaker, Hon. Peter Wellington, regarding an allegation of deliberately misleading the House [188].

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

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 1 December 2016, the member for Clayfield wrote to me alleging that the Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events deliberately misled the parliament in her response to a question without notice. I have decided that the matter does not warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committees and I will not be referring the matter. I table the correspondence in relation to this matter. I seek leave to incorporate the ruling circulated in my name.

Leave granted.

SPEAKER'S RULING—ALLEGED DELIBERATELY MISLEADING THE HOUSE

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Members,

On 1 December 2016, the Member for Clayfield wrote to me alleging that the Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events deliberately misled the Parliament in her response to a Question Without Notice when she stated that:

They promised the people of Queensland a reduction of \$330 in their power bills and we saw a 43 percent increase.

In his letter to me, the Member for Clayfield stated that the Minister was attempting to have the House believe the LNP's "Cost of Living" election commitment related solely to electricity tariff pricing, which he advises it did not, and that the statement was demonstrably false and deliberately sought to mislead the House.

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

The Minister disputed the allegation made against her, and contended that her statement was based on statements made by various LNP members in the House and via media release during previous terms of government, and was not based on LNP policy documentation. The Minister presented examples of statements to support her contention.

Standing Order 269(4) requires:

In considering whether the matter should be referred to the committee, the Speaker shall take account of the degree of importance of the matter which has been raised and whether an adequate apology or explanation has been made in respect of the matter. No matter should be referred to the ethics committee if the matter is technical or trivial and does not warrant the further attention of the House.

On the information before me, I considered that the Minister has made an adequate explanation that her statement was neither incorrect nor misleading.

I have therefore decided that the matter does not warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committee and I will not be referring the matter.

Tabled paper: Correspondence from the member for Clayfield, Mr Tim Nicholls MP, and the Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Hon. Kate Jones, to the Speaker, Hon. Peter Wellington, regarding an allegation of deliberately misleading the House [189].

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

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 30 November 2016, the Premier, Minister for the Arts and member for Inala wrote to me alleging that the member for Surfers Paradise deliberately misled the House in his point of order on 29 November 2016. On the evidence before me, I am satisfied with the explanation of the member for Surfers Paradise that his point of order was spontaneous and based on his memory of the findings of the Ethics Committee report. Therefore, I have decided that the matter does not warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committee and I will not be referring the matter. I table the correspondence in relation to this matter. I seek leave to incorporate the rulings circulated my name.

Leave granted.

SPEAKER'S RULING—ALLEGED DELIBERATELY MISLEADING THE HOUSE

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Members,

On 30 November 2016, the Premier, Minister for the Arts and Member for Inala wrote to me alleging that the Member for Surfers Paradise deliberately misled the House in his point of order on 29 November 2016 when he stated:

The Minister for Education has said that we cut funding for education. There has been an Ethics Committee report that said that those sorts of comments by the now Premier were things that were deliberately misleading and that members need to be careful about the things they say about things that are not true.

In her letter to me, the Premier stated that the Ethics Committee report referred to by the Member for Surfers Paradise found the Premier did not know her statement was misleading and that there was insufficient evidence to indicate that she intended to mislead the House. The Premier contended that as the complainant in the matter, the Member for Surfers Paradise would have been aware of the report's findings, and therefore his statement that the Premier's comments were found to be deliberately misleading was in itself deliberately misleading.

I sought further information from the Member for Surfers Paradise about the allegation made against him, in accordance with Standing Order 269(5).

The Member for Surfers Paradise advised that his point of order was spontaneous and based on his memory of the findings of the report, which were that the Premier's statements had been misleading and there was an element of recklessness to them.

Standing Order 269(4) requires:

In considering whether the matter should be referred to the committee, the Speaker shall take account of the degree of importance of the matter which has been raised and whether an adequate apology or explanation has been made in respect of the matter. No matter should be referred to the ethics committee if the matter is technical or trivial and does not warrant the further attention of the House.

On the evidence before me, I am satisfied with the Member for Surfers Paradise's explanation that his point of order was spontaneous and based on his memory of the findings of the Ethics Committee report.

Therefore, I have decided that the matter does not warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committee and I will not be referring the matter.

Tabled paper: Correspondence from the member for Surfers Paradise, Mr John-Paul Langbroek MP, and the Premier and Minister for the Arts, Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk, to the Speaker, Hon. Peter Wellington, regarding an allegation of deliberately misleading the House [190].

PETITIONS

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

Tully Coastguard, Radio Installation Mount Mackay

Mr Cripps, from 1,002 petitions requesting the House to direct Ergon Energy to withdraw the requirement for the Tully Coastguard to pay to continue to co-locate its radio installation on top of Mount Mackay [191].

Keith Payne VC Botanical Gardens, Ingham, Flying Fox Colony

Mr Cripps, from 2,555 petitions requesting the House to disperse the flying fox colony occupying the Keith Payne VC Botanical Gardens in Ingham [192].

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

Coal Seam Gas Fracking, Moratorium

From 450 petitioners, requesting the House to declare an immediate moratorium on coal seam gas fracking and all unconventional gas mining activities and licenses and transition to renewable energy [193].

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

Service Station, Request for Call-in

From 450 petitioners, requesting the House to call in the application for a 24 hour 7 day a week service station, place a stay on construction work immediately and to reconsider this development [194].

Petitions received.

MINISTERIAL PAPERS

Revocation of State Forest Areas

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (9.35 am): I lay upon the table of the House a proposal under section 26 of the Forestry Act 1959 and a brief explanation of the proposal.

Tabled paper: Revocation of state areas: Proposal under section 26 of the Forestry Act 1959 and a brief explanation of the proposal, relating to Beerwah State Forest [195].

NOTICE OF MOTION

Revocation of State Forest Areas

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (9.35 am): I give notice that, after the expiration of at least 14 days as provided in the Forestry Act 1959, I shall move—

- (1) That this House requests the Governor in Council, in accordance with section 26 of the Forestry Act 1959, revoke by regulation the setting apart and declaration as State forest the area as set out in the Proposal tabled by me in the House today, viz—

Description of the area to be revoked

Beerwah State Forest

An area of 7.358 hectares described as lot 100 on SP235756 as illustrated on the attached "Beerwah State Forest revocation: sketch A".

- (2) That Mr Speaker and the Clerk of the Parliament forward a copy of this resolution to the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef for submission to the Governor in Council.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Justice System, Parole Review

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.36 am): Last year, 81-year-old Elizabeth Kippin lost her life in her own home. Elizabeth was a popular and dedicated member of the Townsville community. The man who was charged with her murder had been released on parole. At the time of that tragedy, I committed to a comprehensive review of our parole system, conducted by Walter Sofronoff QC. Today, the Attorney-General, the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and I announced our response to the 91 recommendations of the Sofronoff review.

The government will implement 89 of the 91 recommendations in what will be the most comprehensive overhaul of Queensland's parole system in a century. This overhaul will make the community safer through tougher and tighter supervision of parolees and improved rehabilitation of offenders. It will also address the complex issues of drugs and mental health in the rehabilitation of offenders. To implement the reforms, the government will introduce legislation into the parliament later today. We have committed \$265 million over six years and will add an additional 329 full-time-equivalent staff to Queensland Corrective Services, including 243 additional parole and probation officers. The legislation and the additional resources are all geared towards reducing the risk of reoffending by parolees.

Mr Sofronoff's report highlights how, over quite a long period, there has been a loss of focus on the purpose of parole and its rationale. The starting point is that having a parole system promotes safer outcomes for the community than not having one. Its purpose is to reintegrate prisoners into the community so as to decrease the chance of their reoffending on their release from prison. Its rationale is to keep the community safe from prisoners reoffending. The more effective our parole system is, the safer the community is from crime.

These changes are designed to curb crime by being tough on the causes of crime. They are aimed at reducing crime through reducing the risk of reoffending. The key measures to be implemented include: expanding the use of GPS monitoring for better surveillance of parolees, recruiting additional staff and strengthening the Probation and Parole Service, enabling it to provide more effective case management and tighter supervision of parolees; expanding rehabilitation services for prisoners to address the causes of crime, including drug addiction and, of course, mental health issues; introducing legislation to provide for no-body no-parole prison sentences; and engaging Michael Byrne QC as president-designate of the Parole Board, who will establish a new fully independent board operating under a new parole process.

The government has also decided to reinstate the specialist Drug Court. The two recommendations that the government has not accepted are, firstly, recommendation 7, which sought to give sentencing judges the discretion to depart from mandatory non-parole periods. In Queensland mandatory non-parole periods only apply to a range of serious violent offences such as murder and unlawful striking causing death. In the government's view, the potential risk to community safety of implementing this recommendation outweighs the benefits it could bring to the new parole system and as such the government does not intend to remove mandatory non-parole periods.

Secondly, recommendation 58 sought a review of the policy restricting placement of sexual offenders and prisoners convicted of murder or serious violent offences with a view to reintroducing appropriate candidates to low-security facilities. Even if it can be argued that some such prisoners constitute a relative low risk to community safety, the possibility of an escape by an offender in a low-security program undermines the community's confidence in our system. The government cannot support this recommendation.

The death of Elizabeth Kippin was a tragedy. Her family members were briefed on this report and the government's response to its recommendations late yesterday. As Premier, I am determined to ensure that from this tragedy we make the changes to the system of parole that will make it tighter and more controlled. We hope that these reforms will make our community safer.

I want to thank Walter Sofronoff for his comprehensive report. I table the report and my government's response to it.

Tabled paper: Queensland Parole System Review—Final Report by Mr Walter Sofronoff QC, November 2016 [[196](#)].

Tabled paper: Queensland Parole System Review—Final Report by Mr Walter Sofronoff QC, November 2016, government response [[197](#)].

Justice System, Parole Review

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (9.41 am): Make no mistake, if you commit the crime you will do the time. The stark reality is that at some point in time the majority of prisoners will eventually return to the community. That is why the reforms announced today by the Premier are so important. They are a watershed moment for Queenslanders. They are designed to boost community safety, break the cycle of reoffending, reduce crime and make a real difference to people's lives.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Someone is making comments from the chamber. I remind members of standing order 251 which states—

Member speaking not to be interrupted except in certain circumstances

When a member is speaking, no other member may converse or make any noise or disturbance to interrupt that member unless it is:

- (a) to call attention to a point of order or a matter concerning the powers, rights and immunities of the House suddenly arising;
- (b) to call attention to lack of a quorum;
- (c) to call attention to the presence of strangers in the House; or
- (d) to move a closure motion pursuant to SO 88.

Mr RYAN: This is a very important matter following a grave tragedy. It is an important matter that we should all listen to.

These reforms are a watershed moment for Queenslanders. I have this morning asked Queensland Corrective Services to begin the immediate recruitment of more staff to manage the raft of new programs we will introduce to strengthen the rehabilitation of prisoners. The Sofronoff review was unequivocal: the most effective way to secure the safety of our community is to reduce reoffending and that means rehabilitation.

Under the sweeping reforms to be implemented by the Palaszczuk government, we will employ an additional 329 staff to ensure the robust end-to-end case management of each prisoner seeking parole. We will increase the number and diversity of rehabilitation programs, including drug and alcohol strategies and education courses, both inside prison and out in the community. We have also begun consultation with Queensland Health to increase vital mental health and drug treatment services.

Make no mistake, though, there will be nothing cushy or frivolous about these programs or services. They are designed for one purpose and one purpose only—to safeguard Queensland communities by ensuring the crucial reintegration of rehabilitated prisoners back into the community. When they front the new Queensland Parole Board those prisoners will have to prove that they are fit for re-entry into society. That will require the completion of a carefully formatted plan targeted at the specific issues that make these prisoners a risk to the community.

It will not end there. The community can rest assured we will continue to provide support and supervision when these offenders leave jail. By capitalising on previous programs funded by the Palaszczuk government to expand and modernise GPS technology, we will ensure offenders are better monitored in the community and that curfews and strict conditions can be imposed.

Almost a half of the adult prisoners released from prison in Queensland during 2013-14 had returned to prison within two years. Queensland's result, whilst better than the national average, is still not good enough. That is why it is so important to invest in a robust probation and parole system because it boosts community safety and is designed to break the cycle of reoffending and make a real difference in people's lives. We now have a groundbreaking and powerful plan to make our streets safer by breaking the cycle of reoffending and that plan starts today.

In closing, I would like to pay tribute to Mr Peter McInnes, the current president of the Queensland Parole Board, for his decade of dedication to probation and parole. I visited Peter and his wife, Robyn, this morning and outlined the key reforms to them. I have to say that it brought a smile to their faces.

I also pay tribute to all our hardworking probation board members, probation and parole officers across our state and our custodial officers. They work every single day to keep our community safe and we owe them a debt of gratitude.

Justice System, Parole Review

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (9.46 am): The Palaszczuk government is delivering on another election commitment by reinstating the Drug Court, as also recommended in the Sofronoff parole board review report released today. These courts were cut by the LNP for ideological reasons alone, with no consideration of evidence, no understanding of the link between addiction and offending or, in fact, any basic understanding of the court. We will reintroduce them using the best and most cost-effective model for Queensland.

The government engaged expert consultants from Monash University, the ANU and the Australian Institute of Criminology to determine the best model. They considered how existing specialist court and court diversionary programs can best work together to address underlying issues associated with criminal offending and other problematic issues and behaviours, such as alcohol and drug misuse, mental health issues, homelessness and domestic violence.

We will adopt the model recommended by this drug and specialist courts review. The Palaszczuk government is committed to intervening in these high-risk cases because we know that the best outcome for both the individual and the broader community is to tackle addiction, turn people away from crime and create a safer community for everyone.

The new Drug Court will be operating out of the Brisbane Magistrates Court and will accept offenders onto the program by the end of the year. It will include support and referral services which will be rolled out to other locations across the state. The reinstatement of the Drug Court will again position Queensland as a leader in justice system reforms that are evidence based and have proven effective in breaking the cycle of offending. Where drug and alcohol dependency is concerned, this is extremely challenging but the potential benefits to the community are significant.

We know that diversionary programs have a better chance of changing behaviour, which is why we have a targeted, well-designed model. The court will target those offenders who are at the highest risk of reoffending who have a drug dependency as it is these offenders who require the type of wraparound services and support and intensive treatment and supervision to address their drug problem. Importantly, drug courts are not an easy option. For participants the program will be challenging. They will have to confront their addictions and offending and seriously address these issues.

The Sofronoff review also recommended no-body no-parole legislation in Queensland. This government wants to help families of victims achieve the closure that comes with a proper farewell to their loved ones. We can do this by providing a strong incentive for offenders to cooperate with authorities. We will introduce this legislation this year after consulting with stakeholders on a preferred model going forward.

State Infrastructure Fund

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (9.49 am): The Palaszczuk government's \$2 billion State Infrastructure Fund is delivering infrastructure projects right across the state—growing the economy and supporting jobs for Queenslanders. Rural and regional Queensland is benefiting from this investment through 89 projects in the \$180 million Significant Regional Infrastructure Projects Program.

I am pleased to report to the House that, as at the end of January, 38 of these projects are under construction, supporting more than 208 jobs at the peak of construction. This includes the Cairns Western Arterial Road and the Bill Fulton Bridge duplication, the Townsville Hospital Paediatric Ward upgrade which I visited recently, a new administration building and refurbishment of staff areas at Gladstone's Rosella Park School and a social housing development underway in Townsville.

A further 37 projects are in the design or procurement phase and will support 376 jobs at the peak of construction. These include vital community health and safety infrastructure such as the Howard police and fire station, a replacement fire station for Mackay and the Palm Island Primary Care Centre. Fourteen projects in this region-focused program have already been finished. This means that we now have better facilities at a number of regional schools for the students, teachers and their families at Mackay State High School, Gordonvale State High School and Woree State School. The \$5 million

refurbishment and expansion of the McKinlay Shire Multi Purpose Health Service at Julia Creek and the \$2 million refurbishment for the Boulia Community Clinic are soon to start procurement for construction.

I can also report that the \$200 million Works for Queensland program has been enthusiastically embraced by 65 eligible regional councils to create and support jobs quickly in areas battling high unemployment. The State Infrastructure Fund also benefits regional Queensland through the \$300 million Priority Economic Works and Productivity Program for critical road and rail infrastructure. The \$40 million timber bridge replacement along the Dawson Highway between Gladstone and Biloela and the \$30 million Riverway Drive duplication in Townsville are designed to not only keep the economy moving but also to keep Queenslanders on the go. Our \$2 billion State Infrastructure Fund is delivering on the Palaszczuk government's plan to create and support jobs and to build the infrastructure that Queenslanders need, without selling assets.

Jobs and Regional Growth Fund

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.52 am): The Palaszczuk government is resolute in its implementation of our economic plan. This plan is all about driving more jobs, more growth and business opportunities, particularly in regional Queensland. We have a strong economic plan which is positioning the state. We have a diversified economic base to capture growth and job opportunities well into the future. A key element of our plan is our total focus on creating jobs across Queensland by supporting the private sector and local business environment to drive and sustain jobs.

On 1 February 2017 I announced the \$130 million Jobs and Regional Growth Fund, which is directed at growing regional economies and jobs for Queenslanders. Regional Queensland is the major contributor to our state and national economic performance, and this government is showing its support by delivering programs to encourage local businesses to grow. We recognise that the private sector is key in terms of jobs generation in the Queensland economy, and this fund will incentivise regional private sector projects, investment and jobs creation.

The Jobs and Regional Growth Fund will help facilitate private sector projects which create employment and economic growth opportunities in regional areas outside South-East Queensland that are facing an unemployment rate above the state average. The fund is now open to businesses to apply for one-off financial assistance ranging from \$100,000 to over \$10 million in either direct grants or relief of state charges such as payroll tax or stamp duty. The fund will support businesses to assist them to grow and expand in Queensland and will target sectors such as agriculture, resources, tourism, manufacturing and construction. The fund will apply in regional areas as well as areas with unemployment rates higher than the state average.

I am pleased to advise the House that two businesses have already received a commitment of financial assistance from the fund at different ends of the funding spectrum. Mount Isa Mines will receive \$15 million to contribute to the cost of rebricking its copper smelter, which will in turn support employment in the north-west minerals province. Cape York Timber will receive \$100,000 to secure a business loan to expand its operations in Cooktown which will support additional employment.

The Queensland government is looking to fast-track business activity that leads to economic and employment benefits for regional Queensland. I strongly encourage businesses across regional Queensland that have proposals that maximise benefits for regional employment to consider applying to the fund.

I also remind the House that the \$20,000 Youth Boost under our Back to Work program finishes at the end of this month. Employers who hire a young jobseeker before 28 February are eligible for an extra \$20,000 for their business. Over the Christmas break I was sitting down with my nephew talking about his job prospects and what he was looking to do. My suggestion to him was that he should be walking in the door, speaking to employers and saying, 'What can I offer you? I can walk in the door and you get \$20,000 if you hire me.' It is a good incentive and the more employers finding out about it the more they are taking it up. The take-up rate has been impressive, as we heard today. There have been almost 200 people who have applied and received funding, and there are another 200 awaiting approvals.

This is a real incentive. Employers and young jobseekers alike should be eager to get access to this fund before it runs out. The Youth Boost is giving regional businesses the confidence to take on more staff and grow their businesses while providing job opportunities to young Queenslanders in regional Queensland.

Health Services

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.55 am): One of the greatest challenges faced by our health system is the pressure placed upon it by rising demand. We on this side of the House we remain committed to the principles of accessible and universal health care. Unlike the LNP, we do not believe that your health check should be dependent on your chequebook. Our party has always fought to ensure that the most disadvantaged and vulnerable of our citizens are not denied the basic human right of decent health care.

There is no doubt that the quality of our state's health system encourages people to use it, particularly as private insurance seems to be slipping beyond the reach of many Australians—most notably older Australians on fixed incomes who have a disproportionate need for health services as they age. Demand continues to increase. Last year, elective surgery was up over three per cent. Emergency department presentations were up four per cent. Demand for a specialist outpatient appointment rose 10 per cent. Demand for ambulance services rose five per cent. An extra 66,000 calls were made to 000 seeking assistance from the Queensland Ambulance Service, an increase of nine per cent.

These were challenges that our predecessors met by cutting 4,400 staff from the public health workforce. They apparently thought that the best way to handle increasing demand was to sack 1,800 nurses and midwives. The Palaszczuk government, however, will not turn its back on the people of Queensland. As the challenge of demand rises, we are working hard to rise to this challenge.

There were over 1.7 million presentations to a public hospital emergency department last financial year in Queensland. Despite this unprecedented level of demand, 79 per cent of those presentations were seen within the clinically recommended four-hour time frame. We are also working hard to reduce waiting lists. Despite a very significant increase in referrals, the list of those waiting for a specialist outpatient appointment has fallen by more than 40 per cent.

Our staff are committed to meeting all the seen in-time targets across all three categories for elective surgeries, where our median wait times remain the best in the nation. Increasingly, demand will continue to place pressure on performance, something that will be an ongoing challenge in the months and years ahead. We will continue to invest in mental health, in preventive health, in sexual health, in public education, in employing more paramedics and in putting more ambulances on the road.

I want to thank most sincerely our hardworking hospital and ambulance staff for the work they do right across Queensland. They work at the front line of health care, and they will continue to have our support as we face this ongoing challenge of demand into the future. Because of federal coalition health cuts, the path ahead will be harder, the climb will be steeper, as we are forced to do more with less. I again call on the Leader of the Opposition to join the government in condemning these cuts to ensure that Queenslanders continue to get the health services they need.

Aurukun School Partnership Agreement

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events and the Commonwealth Games) (9.58 am): The Department of Education will implement all three recommendations of the Queensland Audit Office report into the Aurukun school partnership arrangement tabled in parliament today. The QAO report examined the governance arrangements, enrolments, internal controls and human resource practices supporting operations of the Aurukun school between 2010 to 2016.

Until last year, the school at Aurukun operated under a partnership model with Good to Great Schools Australia. The Audit Office recommendations include, firstly, that binding agreements are implemented for any funding arrangements with external education providers; secondly, that, as part of arrangements with external providers, staff receive adequate training and supervision to support the delivery of education; and thirdly, that governance arrangements are reviewed to ensure timely implementation of any internal audit recommendations.

I can assure the House that the new agreement currently being negotiated with Good to Great Schools Australia for Coen and Hope Vale schools will implement these recommendations. The new agreement will provide clarity about the roles and responsibilities of each party to ensure we provide the best possible education we can for the students. Already we have entered into a partnership commitments and protocols agreement with Good to Great Schools Australia, providing a strong basis for a formal agreement in line with the Auditor-General's recommendations.

The Auditor-General's report did not find any examples of maladministration by departmental employees. However, staff at the school did not clearly understand or comply with the department's enrolment guidelines and policies. The report found the school overstated the number of students in relation to the department's day 8 staffing collection guidelines from 2010 to 2016. I am advised that this amounted to a five per cent overpayment in staffing costs. However, the Auditor-General also states very clearly on page 4 of the report that they found no evidence of deliberate manipulation of enrolment numbers. On page 22 of the Auditor-General's report, for example, figure 3A shows that in 2016 it appeared there was a variance of 25 students on day 8 data. Yet the audit report also states that 24 students had attended at least one day of school during February. Further, the Auditor-General states that the school may have been entitled to some of this overall occasion as a consequence of the department's additional allocation process. The department has this policy in place to provide additional teaching support for schools that experience growth in student numbers inconsistent with day 8 data.

Today I am announcing that I will be asking the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Training Advisory Committee to examine whether there is a better teacher allocation model for discrete Indigenous communities. We should be allocating teachers in schools based on the number of school-age students in the community, not the number of students who attend school on a particular day. Our government is committed to delivering for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Queensland, and we have worked hard to improve our results. Queensland's year 12 retention data in 2016 is now nation leading. As the *Closing the gap* report has shown this week, our year 3 results are better than ever before and we are leading in regards to improvement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in our state.

Our government is committed to delivering on this audit report. We will implement the Audit Office recommendations to ensure our partnership with Good to Great Schools Australia is robust, meets community expectations and delivers quality education for all Queensland schools. We will not accept second best for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

White Spot Disease

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Economic Development) (10.02 am): It has now been confirmed that seven prawn farms on the Logan River have been infected with white spot disease. It is a highly contagious viral disease causing high rates of mortality in prawns, crabs and other crustaceans. It is wide spread in prawn-farming regions in Asia and the Americas where it has caused severe losses in prawn farming. It is considered the biggest threat to prawn farming sustainability. I want to stress that the Palaszczuk government is focused 100 per cent on containment, eradication and, if at all possible, helping the farms back to disease-free production at the earliest opportunity.

To date, there has been a massive effort from Biosecurity Queensland. It has involved over 100 staff working tirelessly every day and often around the clock. To date the state government has spent approximately \$4.4 million in the response and used 3.8 million litres of chlorine. More than 50,000 laboratory tests have been conducted including 9,000 samples of wild caught crustaceans from the local waterways. I would like to pay tribute to the impacted farmers for their cooperation with Biosecurity Queensland officers and the aquatic and seafood industries for their efforts and understanding during what has been a difficult time for their members.

From the first positive test confirmation, the response has been in collaboration with federal agencies. The response has been in accordance with the nationally agreed Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement overseen by the national aquatic consultative committee. This committee comprises the Australian and Queensland chief vets, representatives from the federal Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and the CSIRO Animal Health Laboratory. Every action has been reviewed and endorsed by this committee and the experts that they have consulted.

I want to assure the House that every possible effort that could have been made to contain and eradicate this disease was taken or is being taken. I have met face to face with federal assistant minister Senator Anne Ruston to discuss the response and the way forward. We are in regular contact and we have stressed our joint commitment to continue to work together. I will continue our close cooperation until this matter is resolved.

Biosecurity Queensland was alerted on 25 November by a prawn farmer concerned about the health of some of his stock. Samples were taken and on 1 December the Animal Health Laboratory in Geelong confirmed the presence of the disease. I immediately authorised an emergency biosecurity

response, placing the farm under movement controls and alerting all relevant agencies. The following day Biosecurity Queensland established a state coordination centre and local control centre, and work began to chlorinate the infected ponds. Everything that could be done in this response has been done, and I want to thank all of those involved and commend them for their exemplary efforts.

Made in Queensland

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (10.05 am): I am pleased to announce today that our \$20 million Made in Queensland program is up and running. It is helping our \$20 billion manufacturing industry create jobs of the future. Up until the close of business last night, 50 Queensland businesses had registered to be part of this program which will offer grants of up to \$2.5 million to make productivity-boosting improvements. Made in Queensland is all about taking the industry to the next level and supporting our manufacturers to make the improvements that they will need to thrive in years to come. This is about jobs now but, most importantly, jobs for the future in an industry that is particularly strong in regional communities. I want to urge our regional businesses to step up and be part of this.

So far, 44 of the registrations that my Department of State Development has received are from businesses in the south-east, the Darling Downs and the south-west. Congratulations to those businesses for stepping up and being ready to invest with us in their future. This program is about matching grants so these companies are committing to putting their own money on the table as well. However, I want to see registrations from the far north, from North Queensland, from Central Queensland and from the Wide Bay. I encourage all members in this chamber to spread the word when they return to their electorates. I know that our Industry and Manufacturing Advisory Group is out in regional Queensland right now spreading this word. It has just had its first regional meeting at Downer Rail in Maryborough, a manufacturing hub for 50 years. Downer Rail is one of Australia's largest manufacturers of rolling stock. I was there earlier this month with the IMAG and the member for Maryborough, and Downer Rail showed us brand-new, cutting-edge machinery. This is allowing this company to fulfil three new contracts worth almost \$1 billion over the next 10 years and this investment is creating 60 jobs in Maryborough.

That is the job creation we want to see. This sector already employs almost 170,000 workers. Made in Queensland is all about growing that number, working with business and working with industry. It is a pity that on that side of the House manufacturing was not even one of their four pillars. Unlike those opposite, we are working with business to transition towards the manufacturing jobs and opportunities of the future. We want those jobs and opportunities to be right across the length and breadth of this great state.

Biofuels Mandate

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (10.09 am): This government is demonstrating its commitment to regional growth and the development of a cleaner energy future for Queensland through the expansion of the state's biorefining and biomanufacturing sectors. On 1 January 2017, the biofuels mandate commenced requiring liable fuel retailers and wholesalers to sell biobased petrol, including E10, and biobased diesel. The policy is already seeing strong results. In September of last year, Queensland had 367 service stations selling E10. I am pleased to advise that, based on information provided by fuel retailers, this number has now increased by a further 82 sites to 449, with more to follow over the next few months.

While fuel sellers are doing their part to comply with the mandate, the Palaszczuk government is playing an important role in educating motorists about E10. The E10 OK consumer education campaign began in September last year with the launch of the E10 OK compatibility checker app and has been coupled with extensive advertising. Since its launch, the education campaign has seen over 356,000 vehicle checks on the E10 OK compatibility checker. Additionally, in the first three months of the campaign launch, the consumption of ethanol blended fuel in Queensland increased by over seven per cent according to the Australian Petroleum Statistics for December 2016. As well as checking the E10 OK website to find out whether their vehicle can use E10, Queensland motorists can visit the site to find out which service stations are selling E10. This information is displayed on a map which is updated as more and more sites start selling E10.

While the mandate and commencement of the education campaign are important for increasing sales of locally blended E10, the Palaszczuk government is also very committed to leading by example by using E10 in government vehicles where practical. I thank my colleague the Minister for Housing and Public Works for his support there. I use E10 and I hope every member in this House uses E10 in their cars as well.

With the rise in demand for E10, we are now seeing positive results for the biofuels industry, with a recent media report on the Dalby bioethanol refinery stating that it is now operating at peak capacity. This will secure jobs for not only those at the refinery but also the feedstock suppliers in the surrounding region—which the opposition does not seem to care about—and across the industry as the biofuels sector grows. It also demonstrates that there is demand for new biorefinery developments.

These success stories and visible results are an encouraging start to the mandate. We have been able to ensure a solid foundation for broader government plans, such as the Advance Queensland plan. Through the increase in demand, we have given the industry the confidence to invest in Queensland and this will, in turn, drive growth and jobs in regional areas, as well as investment in research and development sectors. In only two years with a minority government, the Palaszczuk government has made biofuels economic opportunities for regional Queensland a priority. This comes after three years of inaction by the previous LNP government with their record majority. We are getting things done.

Public Housing

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Sport) (10.12 am): Earlier this week I spoke in the House about how Queenslanders are fundamentally decent people and that we expect decency as a minimum standard across all that we do. In Queensland we put our sense of decency into action, looking out for the most vulnerable amongst us, guided by a belief that we all do better when we are all doing better.

The fact is that Queensland leads the nation on measures of satisfaction in terms of public housing. We are not only leaders; Queensland is leading by a long way. We are leading when it comes to housing for people with a disability, and we are leading, despite the challenges we face in terms of remote service delivery, when it comes to state owned and managed Indigenous housing. This is a result that Queenslanders can be proud of. It reflects the commitment we have to look out for one another as a society, but our nation-leading good work is under threat.

In the *Australian* on the weekend, it was reported that this nation's Treasurer, Scott Morrison, floated scrapping the National Affordable Housing Agreement, the main funding arrangement covering housing. Put simply, if there is any significant cut to funded housing support, more Queenslanders will end up without a roof over their heads. Without this funding, we would not have been able to assist over 6,800 new households into public housing last financial year, 390 of which were households experiencing domestic and family violence.

Improving access to safe, secure and affordable housing requires investment and it requires a strategic long-term approach. This is why our government is investing \$209 million this year in our housing capital program to develop 400 new homes for people in need, to refurbish existing homes and to acquire land to meet our future needs. Without this funding, we will not be able to fund the bond loans and the rental grants that relieve demand on public housing, many of which provide support for people re-entering the labour market, and we will not be able to fund the mobile support services and services that help people sustain their tenancies. The Home Assist Secure program assists our seniors to stay in their homes across the state, helping with things like maintenance and mowing, simply so some seniors, particularly in North Queensland, can just get out their front door. The idea of cutting funding instead of cutting grass will not go down well in North Queensland.

Any cut to base funding for housing affordability and the prevention of homelessness will be an attack on Queensland's nation-leading work in housing, and it will not sit well with Queenslanders' sense of decency. We believe that budgets should not be balanced on the back of the most vulnerable amongst us. You do not fix anything by putting more people onto the streets. Malcolm Turnbull and the LNP must start taking housing and housing affordability seriously. These sorts of dangerous thought bubbles from the federal Treasurer do nothing to improve housing outcomes for anyone in Queensland. I call on the opposition to stand up for Queenslanders in need, to stand up for Queensland's nation-leading housing system and to call on the Prime Minister to reject any attack on base housing funding.

PUBLIC WORKS AND UTILITIES COMMITTEE

Report

 **Mr KING** (Kallangur—ALP) (10.15 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 34 of the Public Works and Utilities Committee titled *Subordinate legislation tabled between 14 September 2016 and 1 November 2016*. The committee did not identify any issues regarding consistency with fundamental legislative principles or the lawfulness of the subordinate legislation. I commend the report to the House.

Tabled paper: Public Works and Utilities Committee: Report No. 34—Subordinate legislation tabled between 14 September 2016 and 1 November 2016 [[198](#)].

NOTICE OF MOTION

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.16 am): I give notice that I shall move—

That this House condemns the Palaszczuk government's review-not-do approach to governing Queensland.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Justice System, Parole Review

 **Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (10.16 am): The opposition welcomes the delivery of Mr Sofronoff's report today. It is good to see a review actually turn into a report. That is one down and 149 to go. It is good to see Mr Sofronoff's report. Some of his recommendations are eerily familiar. One of the headline recommendations was no-body no-parole, and that was our idea. That was announced as our policy six months ago. GPS monitoring is part of the bill that we introduced into the parliament this week. We are doing, not reviewing. I do note with some small alarm that a quick look at Mr Sofronoff's report has shown that he actually recommends another 19 reviews, task forces or evaluations. That will be heaven for the government to hear but not for the people of Queensland.

I have travelled around Queensland since the House was last sitting—to Cairns, Townsville and Rockhampton—and people are not fooled by the hairy-chested talk of the police minister or these sorts of reports where the government looks like it is trying to do something about crime. The people of Queensland know that this government has let them down. It has let them down in the areas of crime, and it has let them down in the areas of juvenile detention.

Mr STEWART: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Earlier this week, there was a reference made to someone's appearance and it was ruled out of order. Can I ask for your ruling on this one please?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: We are not going to have a shouting match. There is no point of order.

Mr WALKER: We are talking about serious matters here, about matters of law and order and about matters of security of people in their homes. I went to Rockhampton where I saw Janice Keys and her husband in their home. Janice's husband suffers from dementia and I went to see where they were confronted by an intruder in their home.

It is not just Janice Keys in Rockhampton. The figures in Rockhampton that I saw show that the number of unlawful entries into homes increased by 40 per cent. There are lots of other people in Rockhampton who are facing the same issues as Janice Keys. They know that the government has let them down. I also went to Cairns. In Cairns the figures are: assault up 10 per cent, robbery up 27 per cent, car theft up 31 per cent and payouts over the last two years for car thefts in Cairns have increased by 154 per cent. Then we go to Townsville, where the figures are probably even worse. The response I got in terms of the figures increasing in Townsville show a thousand more homes were broken into and 600 more cars have been stolen in the past year.

People know that their representatives are saying one thing but doing another when they come down here. In Far North Queensland, in North Queensland and in Rockhampton they are bleating about crime, saying they are going to do something about it. Then they come down here and vote against the

tough bikie laws that we introduced; they vote against the juvenile justice laws that we introduced. When the juveniles do go behind bars, they are dancing on the roofs of the Cleveland and Wacol detention centres. Members opposite cannot run the criminal justice system, they cannot run the detention centres and Queenslanders know it.

Leader of the Opposition

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (10.20 am): Today we are likely to see the latest policy capitulation from this weak and lazy opposition leader when he introduces amendments to his own sugar laws. This is legislation he could not get right the first time—legislation that has been opposed by his federal Liberal colleagues which betrays thousands of jobs in the sugar manufacturing and production industry. It is absolutely remarkable to see what he will do to try to claw his way back into power.

Is it really remarkable? Do honourable members remember what he did last time? He hitched his political career to the likes of Campbell Newman, and how did that work out? Now we know that the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Clayfield, wants to hitch his wagon—his political career—to the One Nation party. How is that going to work out? Anyone can take a punt.

I want to know what is going to happen if we see the member for Buderim returned as the One Nation member for Buderim. I want to know whether the member for Clayfield would be the treasurer to the member for Buderim and whether or not that would be even better than when he was the treasurer for the former member for Ashgrove, Campbell Newman. I wonder how his memoirs are going to work out. Can honourable members imagine the member for Clayfield explaining to his electorate about watering down John Howard's gun laws or alternative facts around climate change or even replacing all of our taxation with an easy two per cent tax? Can honourable members imagine the conversations that the member for Clayfield is going to have in his electorate?

It is not surprising that there is a lack of clarity around preference deals and coalition arrangements between the member for Clayfield and the One Nation party. We heard the member for Clayfield say on Sunday, 'When it comes to the preferences the decision will be made by the state executive.' Two days later talking about One Nation, the LNP coalition State President, Gary Spence, said 'ultimately it is up to the parliamentary wing, with reference to the party organisation'. Who is in charge here? The member for Clayfield does not know if he wants to do a preference deal—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members.

Ms TRAD: If ever there was evidence of a vacuum of leadership in the LNP, that is the answer. They do not know who they want to form coalition with. They do not know what they are doing.

(Time expired)

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance; Police Portfolio

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (10.23 am): There is no greater example of the instability and the ineffectiveness of this government than their management of the Police portfolio over the last two years. In less than two years we have had three ministers, and what a trio they are. First, we had the 'Bundamba Brawler', who is the member who is never mentioned anymore by members of the government. Then we had 'Wild Bill', the rat shooter from Rockhampton, the man who claims that law-abiding farmers are lone cowboys. Now what have they served up? We have the 'Boy Wonder' from Morayfield. Holy stuff-up! That is all I can say. All three talk tough—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I think both sides have had a bit of a go.

Mr MANDER: All three talk tough on crime but all three were instrumental in reversing the most effective, toughest anti-criminal bikie gang legislation in this country—legislation that has been copied and welcomed by the South Australian Labor government as well. What do we see now? We are seeing that because of this the bikies are now becoming more brazen. We hear about the recruiting of young members in schools. We hear that clubhouses will reopen and we hear about bikies flaunting the law by going to a bikie funeral and the police simply ignoring it. I wonder why that is the case.

What is the focus of Taskforce Maxima now under this new minister? Yesterday he had the hide to stand here and proudly announce one of the great crime-busting episodes of this century: they found a car with 44 designer dresses in it! Holy fashion police! This is what they are focusing on now. They

are not focusing on violent crime; they are not focusing on bikie clubhouses; they are focusing on shoplifting. What will it be next? Will it be the illegal trade of cosmetics that this minister will concentrate on next?

It is only this side of parliament that is serious about addressing criminal motorcycle gangs and criminal organisations. Members opposite speak tough, but all they will continue to serve up is reviews. They will continue to follow our lead, whether it is no-body no-parole or whether it is an ice strategy. We are asking them to follow our lead one more time and go back to the motorcycle gang laws that worked and were effective.

Leader of the Opposition

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.27 am): It has only been three weeks since the presidential inauguration and the Trump administration has already thrown a lifeline to the Leader of the Opposition. Welcome to the brand-new post-truth world of LNP alternative facts: the alternative facts you use when you do not like the facts you have. It is very handy when they promise public servants before an election that they would have nothing to fear and then promptly send 14,000 of them to the dole queue after they are elected. It is very useful when they spend tens of millions of dollars advertising the sale of the assets of the people of Queensland without getting a mandate to do so. It is very convenient when they close an adolescent mental health centre against expert advice. They just recast the facts; they reframe the legacy and they reheat the policies, including pretending that 'Can-Do' did not, in fact, turn into a total wreck, tripping jauntily down the road pretending black is white and up is down, pretending that the largest majority in Queensland history that they lost in the election on 31 January 2015 was not that bad at all.

Of course, the greatest exponent of the alternative facts delirium is the Leader of the Opposition. There he is on the bridge of the good ship 'Strong Choices' pretending all is calm when the member for Buderim and the member for Southern Downs are already in the lifeboat. The loyal first mate, the member for Whitsunday, and the loyal lieutenant, the member for Cleveland, want to roll the rope ladder down, but they are not willing to do it just yet. They see the ship take on water, they know the sails are broken and they see a massive hole in the side of the ship blown by the One Nation canon which they know they cannot repair. They begin to doubt the captain's judgement; they are murmuring amongst themselves—that is what they do—but he says, 'I have a plan! I will sell public assets'. But in the game of 'rule in, rule out', of which the Leader of the Opposition is so fond, he cannot rule it out because he believes in it.

This is self-delusion and no-one will forget the greatest self-delusion, the most immortal words of that alternative fact teller Campbell Newman. Remember what he told Queenslanders? They just did not understand what he had done for them. The opposition have heard the LNP-One Nation story before and they know how it ends. They know that alternative facts will not save them. What they need are alternative policies, and what they need most of all is an alternative leader.

Premier

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (10.30 am): The Minister for Health, like Captain Jack Sparrow, is getting more and more desperate every day of the week. On Tuesday night I noted that the dining room was a bit empty and government members were not there. We found out that they were down at the Entertainment Centre watching 'The Boss'. Who is the boss over there? Let us go through the boss's—the Premier's—greatest hits.

How could anyone trust a Premier who says that her government can fix the rail system when it was the transport minister who oversaw 15 per cent fare increases year after year? They know they cannot trust this Premier, and why would anyone trust this Premier when she has broken her word time and time again? Remember, this was the person who was forced to pay back thousands of dollars in 2010 when Anna Bligh said that her junior minister had breached government advertising standards. The lack of ethics she displayed has been exemplified by her actions in government. This is a person who promised to respect the processes of parliament but shamelessly changed the electoral laws with 18 minutes notice. How is that one working for you, colleagues?

The Premier has been described as 'vice-regal' in the *Australian*. I have heard that every time she jumps on the government jet after visiting a regional town she complains to her staff because there has not been a red carpet and little boys and girls handing her flower bouquets. Maybe she has been watching Netflix's *The Crown* and she is wondering where are her bouquets for these royal visits to the west. Better still, each morning when the media team in the Premier's office looks at things to do I have

heard they get out a little checklist which says, 'This form should be used to book the Premier. Question 1: Is the presser in South-East Queensland? Question 2: Is there any form of controversy around? Question 3: Does it involve trains, child safety, housing or law and order? Question 4: Do any of the following names appear in the *Courier-Mail* today: Miller, Williams, Hinchliffe, Gordon or Fentiman? Question 5: Is it just rebranded LNP policy? Question 6: Does it require the Premier to actually speak? Question 7: Does it require the Premier to explain a policy? Question 8: Is there a chance the Premier will come across as not knowing the subject matter?' Then at the bottom of this checklist it says, 'If you answered yes to any of the above questions, please phone Jackie or Cameron.'

That is why we do not see much of the Premier around South-East Queensland. 'I see nothing; I hear nothing; I do nothing.' That is all her credit is: 'I see nothing; I hear nothing; I do nothing.'

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Question time will finish at 11.34.

Small Business Grants



Mr NICHOLLS (10.34 am): My first question is to the Premier. Premier, I table an extract from an email with identifying details removed.

Tabled paper: Emails, dated January 2017, from the Office of Small Business to unidentified persons in relation to small business digital grants application advice [199].

The email is to and from a Queensland business owner who applied for funding through the Small Business Digital Grants Program. In that email they are advised that successful grants are determined by being assigned a number and put through a randomiser and that applications are not assessed on merit but are assessed randomly. Premier, how widespread is the use of a wasteful randomiser, which might be better described as a chook wheel, to allocate taxpayers' money to applicants, and why is this do-nothing government afraid of making even the simplest of decisions?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. I am more than happy to have a look at this email. When it comes to small business in this state, we know how important small business is right across our state. That is why part of our \$405 million Advance Queensland program is for making sure that businesses get the opportunity to flourish in this state. Over \$20 million was allocated to small business in the last budget and we have a Minister for Small Business who is doing a great job liaising with them, talking with them and making sure that we work with them.

Whilst I am on my feet, that is what my government does; we work with people—unlike those opposite, who for three years when they were in government picked fights. The person who was just on his feet, the member for Kawana—

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order. Quite clearly the question was about the allocation of government grants using a randomiser. The Premier has not addressed that question. Attacking the opposition is not an appropriate answer to the question. I ask you to bring the Premier back to the question.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, I call you to answer the question.

Ms PALASZCZUK: As I said, we will look at that email. I want to see the truth behind that email first, but we are not going to take the opposition at face value so we will get to the bottom of it. What I have in place in my government is openness and transparency, which is something that we never saw under—

Mr NICHOLLS: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I suspect you may know that it is with respect to the imputation in the Premier's answer that they are not going to take the opposition at face value. The clear imputation is that the opposition is lying to parliament. I find it offensive and I ask the Premier to withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: I understand the Premier used the word 'opposition' and not a particular member. Premier, do you have anything further you would like to add?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, Mr Speaker. I do want to add that I am advised by the Minister for Small Business that there is always an independent assessment process when it comes to these grants. I said that I will look at the email and we will get back to the House.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

Mr NICHOLLS: My second question is to the Premier. Premier, I table a screen shot from the Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation website outlining the progress and achievements of the Palaszczuk government on ICT.

Tabled paper: Extract from Queensland government web page regarding ICT Industry Engagement Action Plan, dated 22 December 2015 [200].

The ICT achievements website has not been updated since 2015. Premier, is this not further proof that the Palaszczuk government is not doing anything?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. Obviously he has time to look through websites but not to go out and meet with the people of Queensland. Obviously he spends all his time going through the websites having a look and doing a little search. He is not too good at searching on the websites for regional roads in Queensland.

Let me be serious: small business is an incredibly important component of the Queensland economy, and that is why we are working with small business. We are working with the innovators and the entrepreneurs. We are putting in funding to make sure that we give small business the opportunity to flourish in this great state of Queensland. That is why we have a Minister for Small Business who is also working with them, a Small Business Champion and a round table to engage with small business to hear their views. The minister also organised for small business to come to Parliament House, for us to meet with them to discuss their ideas.

Mr SEENEY: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Premier seems to be attempting to answer the previous question. This question was about ICT and the achievements of the government in updating its website. ICT stands for information and communication technology. I would ask the Premier to come back to the question.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Callide. There is a lot of enthusiasm. I ask the Premier to come back to answering the question.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The minister for ICT and small business is very well aware of the need for an up-to-date and current ICT strategy for Queensland. The minister will be updating the House about that shortly.

Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, Sponsorship

Ms PEASE: My question is of the Premier and Minister for the Arts. With just over 400 days until the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, will the Premier please advise the House how even more businesses are getting on board to support this major event for Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Lytton for the question. We in this House all know how important the Commonwealth Games are for Queensland and the Gold Coast. In around 400 days we will see the best ever Commonwealth Games delivered on the Gold Coast, hopefully delivered with the bipartisan support of this parliament.

Today I am pleased to announce that yet another Australian business has come on board to join the games sponsorship family. Isentia, a major media services company, is the 18th business to enter into formal sponsorship arrangements for the Commonwealth Games. With only 412 days to go, sponsorship and all of the other planning associated with the games are going very well. Our sponsors will play an integral role in showcasing the games and the Gold Coast to Queensland and the world. We are off to the best start.

Some of the other sponsors that have come on board already are Griffith University, TAFE Queensland, Star Entertainment, KPMG, MinterEllison, Seek, Ticketek and of course Tourism Australia. Earlier this month we welcomed two new sponsors to the family. Longines, known around the world for excellence in precision timing, has been announced as the official timekeeper for the games. In addition, Australian clothing icon Hard Yakka has come on board as the official uniform provider.

We know how important the Commonwealth Games are. They are so important that next Wednesday the Tourism and Commonwealth Games Cabinet Committee will be meeting for the first time on the Gold Coast. Those opposite might be critical of us leaving Brisbane occasionally to engage with the rest of the state, but it is very important that we are on the Gold Coast—working with the Gold Coast community and understanding the needs and issues in relation to the games.

In addition, I advise the House that up to 15,000 volunteers will be needed for the Commonwealth Games. I understand that the application process is going incredibly well. Over 1,400 people will be working on the games and more than 4,000 people will be involved in the baton relay, which starts next month at Buckingham Palace. It is a very important part of the program for the Queensland government to be involved in.

In conclusion, I thank the Minister for the Commonwealth Games for her constant supervision of what is happening and what is needed and for her constant engagement with the Mayor of the Gold Coast, Tom Tate. I look forward to working with Tom Tate and the chair to make the Commonwealth Games the best ever.

(Time expired)

Taxi Industry, Adjustment Assistance

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My question without notice is to the Premier. I table a letter incorrectly sent to a taxi company staff member rather than a taxi licence owner.

Tabled paper: Email, dated 7 January 2017, from the Director (Chair), Suncoast Cabs Ltd to the member for Glass House, Mr Andrew Powell MP, regarding taxi transition payments [201].

It includes a pre-filled-out compensation claim form. How many compensation claims for taxi industry assistance packages have been sent to ineligible people?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. I am more than happy to have a look at that letter. If it has been sent in error I apologise to the person. I will ask Minister Bailey to—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We will look at the details of the letter and we will get back to the person. We have allocated \$100 million to a compensation package because we know that there has been disruption for the taxi industry—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Members, I would urge you to allow me to hear the Premier. Her answer is relevant.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The \$100 million package, which was decided by my cabinet and my government, is there as a hardship provision because we know that people are feeling the effects of disruption. Not just in this state but also right across the nation there has been a change in the way in which people undertake ridesharing. It would not have been acceptable to the Queensland public if we had sat back and done nothing. What did we do? We made a decision. Not only that, we backed it in with money because we knew there would be hardship. Some \$100 million has been allocated.

As I said to the member for Nanango, I am happy to look at the question she has asked in relation to that specific letter. This is a very important issue and I know that a lot of people are feeling the effects of this disruption. As we know, innovation is happening right across our state in a whole range of fields affecting a whole range of people. I look forward to updating the House in the very near future about another person who is looking forward to getting involved in our innovation agenda.

Sugar Industry

Mr SAUNDERS: My question is to the Premier. Is the Premier aware of any threats to jobs and investment in the Queensland sugar industry?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Maryborough for his question. I am aware of a threat to the sugar industry in this state posed by the Leader of the Opposition. I know how important the sugar industry is. I know how important the jobs are to the people who work in this industry. I know that the reckless statements being made by the Leader of the Opposition are putting those jobs at risk. I will not put up with it. We on this side of the House will not put up with it.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Hinchinbrook, you are warned under standing order 253A for your continual interjections. They are repetitive. If you persist I will take the appropriate action.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I have just been advised of a media release by the Australian Sugar Milling Council. It states—

Further political intervention in the Queensland sugar industry by the LNP would put the entire sugar industry at risk.

The Australian Sugar Milling Council (ASMC) is calling on the LNP to withdraw its threat to Queensland Sugar Limited and Wilmar and let the commercial processes that are underway run their course.

It goes on—

ASMC's CEO, Dominic Nolan believes the LNP has announced its intention to meddle further with already flawed sugar industry legislation, not as a means to resolve the issue in a timely fashion, but motivated by pressure of One Nation gaining popularity in regional Queensland.

It gets better—

QSL and Wilmar have been involved in long and hard commercial negotiations for many months.

If the LNP leadership had bothered to check with QSL and Wilmar before their announcement on Tuesday—

wait for it—

they would have discovered that the two parties had made significant progress in their negotiations in recent days and were close to agreement ...

This is the economic pathway down which those opposite want to take Queensland. Let me make it very clear: my government is focused on Queensland and Queensland jobs, and we will not put that at risk. We will not put that at risk and we will not do any deals with One Nation because it will put jobs right across Queensland and our trade investment completely at risk. Those opposite want to sell their souls. That is what they want to do—sell their souls, get in bed with One Nation. They do not have any principles, they do not have any backbone and my God they do not have any heart.

Queensland, Job Losses

Mr EMERSON: While speaking about jobs: Premier, the ABS labour force statistics released at 10.30 am today show that since January 2016 Queensland has lost more jobs than any other state—28,200 jobs lost over the year on trend terms. When will this do-nothing Premier abandon her do-nothing approach and start creating jobs for Queensland, acting to get Queensland back in work?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the shadow Treasurer for the question. Let me make it very clear. I will put my jobs record against their jobs record any day of the week. When they were in office unemployment was 6.6 per cent. Unfortunately, we only have to go back a few years to know the devastation and the disruption they caused to regional economies across this state when they ripped out 14,000 jobs. There is not one person who lost their job who does not understand the pain that was inflicted by that government—the pain that was put in a document to assess how much pain it would cause across the portfolios.

Mr Emerson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Sorry to interrupt your thoughts, Premier. Member for Indooroopilly, you have asked a question. You have continually tried to speak while the Premier is answering your question. I find her answer is relevant, so I would urge members to allow the Premier to answer the question.

Ms PALASZCZUK: As I said, clearly this budget coming up is purely a jobs budget. We understand that there are two-speed economies happening in this state. We know that we have to get on with the job and continue to grow the economy and advance the interests right across our state. One only has to travel around regional Queensland to hear what the people of Queensland are saying to me. Out in the west it is a Labor government that is delivering for Western Queensland—who would have thought that—putting in place the wild dog fencing. Don't trust me; talk to the member for Gregory. He knows how important that is for his electorate. He is quite happy to come and shake my hand about it. I travel across the state. In the Torres Strait Islands, yes, the children greeted me with flowers—yes, they did—with great smiles on their faces. Once again, we are delivering the health services and the education services that are needed for Torres Strait Islanders.

On the Gold Coast we are building what is needed for the Commonwealth Games—more jobs. The extension of the Gold Coast Light Rail is happening now on our watch. Labor is delivering. We know that roads are important across regional Queensland. We have put extra funding into western roads. Some 1,600 people are now employed through the Back to Work program and it has only just begun. Some of these people have been unemployed for more than one year and I would think that some of those people may even have been sacked by the cold and heartless people opposite. In conclusion, we will continue to work to grow the jobs in this state because that is the right thing to do by the Queensland people.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Mirani, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I have given you ample latitude. You are now warned—first warning—under 253A in light of your continuous comments this morning.

Central Queensland, Works for Queensland

Mr PEARCE: My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how Works for Queensland is benefiting Central Queensland and whether she is aware of any alternative views?

Ms TRAD: I thank the honourable member for Mirani for the question. I know that he is passionate about regional Queensland and passionate about jobs in regional Queensland. I am very pleased to report to the House that the \$200 million Works for Queensland program is delivering jobs as we speak in regional towns and cities battling high unemployment levels. I am also pleased to inform the House that as of today more than 700 projects from 67 local government areas have been submitted to the agency for assessment. That will equate to stimulating 6,000 jobs throughout regional Queensland. Isaac council in the honourable member's electorate can expect to have its projects fully assessed and approved in the not-too-distant future while Rockhampton and Livingstone councils have already reaped the benefits of fast-tracked approvals.

These projects that we have funded include things like an upgrade to the Rockhampton hockey facilities and the Cedric Archer Park water play project and stage 1 of the civil infrastructure works for the Yeppoon Homemaker Centre—a big project that is absolutely going to transform Yeppoon in terms of retail in that city. There is also more than a million dollars for jobs to improve the streetscape in Mount Morgan—a town which, as the honourable member will know, has been hard hit by unemployment. This is the Palaszczuk government getting on with delivering infrastructure and creating job opportunities throughout regional Queensland. I am also pleased to report to the House that Rockhampton Regional Council has already advertised for 14 additional jobs to rollout the Works for Queensland program, and I table a copy of the advertisement for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Rockhampton Regional Council recruitment advertisement under the Queensland government 2016-17 Works for Queensland (W4Q) program [\[202\]](#).

Not everyone has embraced the Works for Queensland program. Not everyone has, but some people have and particularly the local mayors—like Mayor Greg Williamson, who said that Works for Queensland was sensational news and he thanked the Palaszczuk government and he thanked Jim Pearce and Julieanne Gilbert for championing the region. Local mayors can rely upon Labor to champion their regions and work hard for their communities—unlike those opposite like the member for Whitsunday, who called the program a disgrace. He called the program a disgrace, but maybe he did not really understand the program. He has been a little bit distracted with all the visits he is getting from Tim and Deb about whether or not he stays in the LNP or whether or not he leaves. Let me tell members quite clearly: this side of the House is the side of the House that will work hard for Queenslanders and their jobs, not those opposite, who are more focused on themselves.

Cleveland Youth Detention Centre

Mr LAST: My question is directed to the Premier, and I ask: as the Premier is aware, Cleveland Youth Detention Centre staff were hauled in before management yesterday to be questioned about leaking information. Why is this do-nothing government more interested in its media reputation than protecting the hardworking staff in the overcrowded youth detention system?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order. I think the member for Burdekin's question contains an imputation and I ask you to rule.

Mr SPEAKER: I will allow the question. Can you repeat the question please?

Mr LAST: As the Premier is aware, Cleveland Youth Detention Centre staff were hauled in before management yesterday to be questioned about leaking information. Why is this do-nothing government more interested in its media reputation than protecting the hardworking staff in the overcrowded youth detention system?

Mr SPEAKER: There is an imputation in relation to the 'do-nothing'. Can you repeat the question? Final chance. Sorry, I will allow the question for consistency.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am advised by the Attorney-General that the director-general did talk to staff and that security is paramount. It is an operational issue in relation to that. It would be inappropriate for the Attorney-General to get involved in that procedure.

National Credit Rating

Mr MADDEN: My question is to the Treasurer and the Minister for Trade and Investment. I refer to reports that the federal government faces the prospect of recording a higher than previously estimated deficit because of its failure to have some of its spending cuts passed by the Senate. I ask: will the Treasurer outline the impacts of a potential downgrading of the nation's credit rating on Queensland?

Mr PITT: I thank the honourable member for his question. This is a very timely question, because we know that the budgetary problems that have been experienced by Scott Morrison show the very important aspect of having an economic plan. Having a plan is critical and it has become evident that the federal government, under the leadership of Malcolm Turnbull and Scott Morrison, does not have a plan. I am aware of the reports of potential downgrades and particularly, as we know, Standard & Poor's and S&P Global have made that warning shot across the bow. Members would be aware that there is a link between what happens to the national credit rating—or the sovereign—and semi-sovereigns such as Queensland and the other states and territories. If there is any movement in the national credit rating, it would have an effect on the states and territories.

We know that S&P and Moody's, after they saw the budget last year, both reaffirmed Queensland's AA plus rating. Since they have seen the MYEFO, we have had positive commentary. S&P went so far to say that, if we continue to implement our economic plan, we would see the potential to be upgraded to a AAA rating. That was certainly very welcome commentary indeed.

We know that, in Queensland, those opposite wanted to sack and sell their way back to a AAA rating. My view has been very consistent on this. We would not hurt the economy, we would not aim to get a AAA rating back at any cost. Today, we even heard that Scott Morrison is intending to look at putting up taxes if he 'must', which is a direct quote. We have been very clear about stabilising the Queensland economy by not introducing new taxes, fees and charges that would impact on Queensland and adopting the policy settings as they stood, in terms of revenue, under the previous government. The member for Clayfield will have a lot to say about the indexation policy that we have implemented, because we know that the 3.5 per cent was his policy.

Last year when the national growth figures—the GDP—came out, we heard Scott Morrison taking pot shots at Queensland. He talked about how we were being a drag on the GDP. Nothing could be further from the truth. At the end of last year we had a record year for our year-ending exports. It was the biggest in the calendar year ever. It was Queensland that ensured that the 0.5 per cent drop in GDP was not worse. Queensland is keeping things going at the national level.

Our exports are critical to the success of our gross domestic product. Under those opposite the GSP—the gross state product—in Queensland was at 0.8 per cent. In the two years that we have been in government, that percentage has been turned around to be four times as good at 3.2 per cent.

We on this side of the House know the importance of having an economic plan and sticking to your guns. Those opposite are yet to come up with anything. Last night in this House I asked, 'What does the member for Clayfield stand for?' Nobody knows, including him.

Sugar Industry

Mr CRIPPS: My question without notice is to the Premier. Following on from her answer to the question from the member for Maryborough, and without reading out the content of a press release from any party involved in the matter, will the Premier explain to the House the nature and substance of the current dispute between Queensland sugarcane growers, millers and marketing entities?

Ms PALASZCZUK: What I do know very clearly is that those opposite introduced changes to the legislation that is putting jobs at risk and that there are sensitive negotiations ongoing at the moment. Let us be very clear. What does the Leader of the Opposition want to do? He wants to intervene in those commercial negotiations around the prices.

We also know that the federal government is sitting on a Productivity Commission report. We have yet to see it released. That report puts out in simple language how the legislation that was passed by this House is putting jobs and investment at risk. We also know that there are thousands of people employed in sugar mills—

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Premier, I am sorry to interrupt your train of thought. Member for Hinchinbrook, you are already on your first warning under standing order 253A. Member for Kawana, if you persist you will follow your colleague. The Premier's answer is relevant. It is on point.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Once again, it is the LNP wanting to intervene.

Mr CRIPPS: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, the question was very clear. I asked the Premier: what is the nature and the substance of the current dispute between Queensland sugarcane growers, millers and marketing entities? Mr Speaker, I ask you to urge the Premier to address the substance of the question.

Mr SPEAKER: I rule that the Premier's answer is relevant. Is there anything further that you want to say?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Absolutely. Once again, those opposite are prepared to hop into bed with One Nation and put at risk the jobs of people who work at the mills. We are not going to put up with it. Let the commercial entities—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, I am happy to sit here and let the clock keep ticking and wind down question time until we have proper decorum in the chamber. I am in your hands, and that includes you especially, member for Hinchinbrook.

Dental Services, Federal Funding

Ms DONALDSON: My question is to the Minister for Health and the Minister for Ambulance Services. Will the minister update the House on any developments in relation to the Commonwealth funding of dental services in Queensland?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Bundaberg for her question. Along with all of the other members on this side of the House, I know how concerned she is about the ongoing cuts that the Turnbull government is implementing in relation to the provision of public health care in this state. The member for Bundaberg knows how important the delivery of health care is to regional parts of our state—to the kids in Bundaberg who need good dental treatment. All of that will be put at risk by the LNP-One Nation dance.

When the Commonwealth announced without consultation its intention to replace the national partnership agreement on dental funding with the Child and Adult Public Dental Scheme, the states were rightly concerned about the \$200 million funding cut, the imposition of a cap for the first time and a clear intention to shift liability for dental services to the states.

It is clear that the Commonwealth listened to those concerns, because it has since abandoned that scheme and replaced it with something worse. The only budget in Australia's history that was considered to be worse than the first budget that was handed down by Leader of the Opposition when he was treasurer in 2012 was the 2014 Hockey-Abbott budget. Even under the extreme austerity of that brutal document, the funding allocation for Queensland for dental services in 2017-18 was set at \$78 million. Under the current proposal from the Turnbull government, that funding has been reduced to just \$21 million a year—a cut of 73 per cent.

Government members: Shame!

Mr DICK: I take that interjection. It is a shame. That equates to 94,500 Queenslanders each year missing out on treatment. What does the opposition leader have to say about the impact on regional Queensland from health cuts for dental care? Absolutely nothing! He was not slow to get up to Central Queensland when he felt the hot breath of One Nation on the back of his neck over the Shoalwater Bay debacle. He was not slow to get up there and wander around pubs in his stubbies and his thongs saying to the bartender, 'I say, my good man, could I have a tankard of your finest craft ale?' What a fake! What a shonk! Queenslanders work out when you are a fake and when you are pretending to be something you are not and that is exactly what the Leader of the Opposition is. I have woken up the member for Callide. He knows the Leader of the Opposition is a fake.

We will not stand by these cuts. Where is George Christensen standing up for the kids in Mackay? Where are the LNP senators? Where is Senator Pauline Hanson? Nowhere! The only people who will stand up for proper dental care and proper public health care, the only party that will do that, is the

Australian Labor Party. I will stand with my colleagues on this side of the House every day of the week for Queensland. What the Leader of the Opposition has to understand is that standing up for Queensland means standing up for Queensland and that is what our government will do every day of the week.

Renewable Energy

Mr HART: My question without notice is to the Premier. The independent expert panel's final report into Labor's extreme 50 per cent renewable energy target was required to be published in October 2016. As we found out yesterday, it will not be published for many months. Has the Premier seen the secret final report into Labor's 50 per cent—

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, just one moment. I am having difficulty hearing the question from the member for Burleigh. Member for Burleigh, could you start again, please?

Mr HART: My question is to the Premier. The independent expert panel's final report into Labor's extreme 50 per cent renewable energy target was required to be published in October 2016. As we found out yesterday, it will not be published for many months. Has the Premier seen the secret final report into Labor's 50 per cent renewable energy target and does it assume a federal carbon tax?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order. The member for Burleigh's question contains a very extensive preamble which I think is more than is required. Also there are a couple of imputations contained within that preamble and I think there are also two questions. Maybe we can clarify what is his question and, rather than having the long tortuous preamble to it, whether you could you ask him to essentially review the question.

Mr SPEAKER: Would you repeat the last part which I understand is the question—not all of it, just the last part.

Mr HART: Has the Premier seen the secret final report of the expert panel and does it assume a federal carbon tax?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Burleigh for his question. As I said yesterday, the final report will be released in a couple of months, along with the government's response. That is the way we operate on this side of the House. I am also advised that the LNP did not put a submission in. They care so much about this that they did not put a submission in.

Let us go to the heart of what the member for Burleigh is on about. It is clear those opposite do not like renewables. Those opposite hate renewables. What the investment in renewables means for this state is regional jobs—not jobs in Brisbane, not jobs in the suburbs outside Brisbane but jobs in regional Queensland, with around \$2 billion worth of investment and 1,800 jobs across the regions. Obviously they do not want to stand up for regional Queensland.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, I would urge you not to debate the issue with the member for Burleigh.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is about the report. The report is about renewables. Let me also recap, so the House is clear, that our energy supply is a good mix of coal, gas and renewables. We know that the world is moving towards renewables. By the LNP not supporting renewables they are not supporting the movement of the world in this direction.

Recently I was in Japan meeting with one of the top companies that is looking at running a trial in Queensland. If the trial works successfully they will look at investing in a manufacturing plant guess where? Regional Queensland! That would mean hundreds of jobs. It is those opposite, with One Nation, who would put those jobs at risk. Our supply of energy has been able to meet those huge demands that we have seen, especially over the last weekend. Not only that, we have been able to—

Mr HART: I rise to a point of order. It was a straightforward question: does the secret report contain a federal carbon tax or not? It is a straightforward question.

Mr SPEAKER: I think it was a long-winded question, to be honest.

Ms PALASZCZUK: What we also know when we discuss these issues at a national level is that Australia needs a bipartisan approach to national energy policy. There is absolutely no leadership at the federal level or the state level when it comes to energy policy in this nation. We are going to get it right. We have coal and gas. The Minister for State Development recently announced extra exploration for domestic gas. We are not seeing that happen in other states—in New South Wales or Victoria. We are the energy powerhouse of this nation and will continue to be.

Education, Infrastructure

Mr POWER: My question is to the Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events and the Commonwealth Games. I wish to thank the minister for recently visiting the Logan Village school. I wrote to the minister last year requesting a review—

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, member for Logan. There is no opportunity for introductions. Ask the question, please.

Mr POWER: I wrote to the minister last year requesting a review—

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Resume your seat for a moment. We will just wait. I now call the member for Logan. Can you repeat your question, please—only your question.

Mr POWER: I wrote to the minister last year requesting a review of the timetable to deliver a new school proposed for Yarrabilba given the capacity of nearby schools and ask: will the minister outline what measures can be taken to address the enrolment growth in this fast growing area of our state?

Ms JONES: I certainly do not need an introduction to the member for Logan because I have known him for almost 20 years. I know what a passionate advocate the member for Logan is. He fights for his community. He stands up for his community. The people of Logan are in good hands with the member for Logan today. I acknowledge Linus Power for the great work he has done.

I have had the privilege of going to his electorate a number of times as the Minister for Education. One of the big issues he has raised with me consistently is that we need a school at Yarrabilba. We are seeing significant growth in this suburb. He has the largest greenfield site in the country in his backyard. That is why in our first budget we delivered \$40 million to deliver a new school to service the people of Yarrabilba and also to address, as the member for Logan has advised me, significant growth in the schools in and around his area.

The member for Logan has been on my back time and time again asking how we can get this school delivered earlier. Even this year, with the day 8 figures being released last week, he wrote to me again asking if there was any way that we could bring this school forward from 2019 to be opened in 2018. I have great news for the member for Logan. It demonstrates what can be delivered when you have a hardworking member. I can proudly announce today that we will open the new school at Yarrabilba in 2018. That is a direct consequence of the member for Logan's lobbying, not the member for Beaudesert, who is getting paid to represent that community.

I give all the acknowledgement to the member for Logan, who is standing up for this very fast growing part of Queensland and for Yarrabilba. It reminded me of 2006 when I was first elected as the member for Ashgrove, alongside the member for Clayfield. I remember the Tim of 2006. The member for Clayfield came in for the induction wearing his chinos, his Ralf Lauren shirt and his boat shoes. Do members remember that Tim? He was the one we all knew. That made me think of his maiden speech in 2006, when he used to believe in free enterprise. He said—

We must allow and we must encourage the small business operators of Queensland to go about doing what they do best, innovate and compete, without the cold hard hand of government regulating them out of existence.

What happened to the member for Clayfield? He is a fake and he has been called out once again. I also remember when the member for Clayfield stood up against One Nation. I remember a time when we could rely on the likes of John Howard and Tim Nicholls to stand up to One Nation. Now, we hear the dog whistling in the Queensland parliament as a desperate man will get into bed with One Nation to become premier of this state.

Flinders Highway

Mr KATTER: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning. Can the Deputy Premier please outline how she intends to address the rapidly emerging congestion, road damage and safety issues on the Flinders Highway caused by unnecessary shifts in bulk freight from rail to road due to the prohibitively high cost of the Mount Isa to Townsville rail line, given that bulk rail costs are intrinsically cheaper than road?

Mr Pyne: Good question.

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Mount Isa for that very good question, as the member for Cairns said. I also thank the member for asking my first question about rail from a non-government member in this place. I can advise the member for Mount Isa that the acting CEO of Queensland Rail

has met with Glencore in relation to freight haulage along the Mount Isa to Townsville rail line. I know that the acting CEO of Queensland Rail has also sat down with the member for Mount Isa to talk about the current situation.

It is a complicated commercial negotiation. The member for Mount Isa would be aware that haulage along the Mount Isa to Townsville freight line is a commercial operation. Currently, the negotiations are being undertaken between Glencore, Pacific National and Aurizon. Queensland Rail is very happy to continue to play a role in terms of getting parties to the table. We are a government that, of course, believes that, as much as possible, freight needs to go on rail lines. It is much better in terms of ensuring safety on our roads and the long-term usability and maintenance of our roads. As much as possible, we do want to see freight transported along freight rail lines and not along roads. That is a core principle of this government. Whatever we can do to ensure that continues, we will do. Ultimately, this is a commercial negotiation between commercial parties. We are happy to play a role to continue to get those parties to the table and to continue talking.

While I am on my feet, I advise the member for Mount Isa that this year we are investing almost \$60 million in carrying out works, including replacing sleepers along the Mount Isa to Townsville line, the culvert replacement program and level crossing improvements, which will absolutely improve the use of that line for freight haulage companies. I thank the member for Mount Isa. We will be keeping a very close eye on this issue as the months unfold. We do hope that all parties are successful in reaching a negotiated commercial outcome.

Fitzroy River

Mr KELLY: My question is to the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef. Will the minister update the House on the results of the environment department's testing for pollution in the Fitzroy River?

Dr MILES: I thank the member for Greenslopes for his question. I know he is very concerned about water quality, not just in his own electorate but also throughout Queensland. I am also aware that the member for Rockhampton and the member for Keppel have taken a close interest in this matter. Two weeks ago, the Palaszczuk government was governing from Rockhampton. At the Premier's town hall meeting, a local resident named Larry raised concerns about pollution in the Fitzroy River. The environment department acted fast, with officers taking water samples the very next day. Today, I am pleased to update the House on the results of the water quality testing undertaken in the Fitzroy River catchment on 1 February.

The laboratory results from testing at the Glenroy Crossing, the Fitzroy River Barrage and the Dawson River at Kianga Creek near Moura show no major concerns. The results indicate consistency with historical records for the catchment and are within normal ranges. For the interest of the House, I table the certificates of analysis for each of those three testing sites. Further detailed analysis of the samples is currently being undertaken at the laboratory and those results are expected to be known by March.

Tabled paper: Certificates of analysis, dated February 2017, by ALS Environmental, for the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection in relation to Fitzroy Barrage and Glencore Crossing [\[203\]](#).

I am glad that Larry raised his concerns. Members of the public can contact the department with any concerns they might have about contamination or pollution in their communities and officers will respond quickly. In this case, within 24 hours of becoming aware of the complaint, the Queensland government had deployed four teams of scientists to test the sites. In addition to responsive testing, the environment department, along with natural resource management bodies and local governments, routinely monitor the environmental health of our waterways. EHP is committed to the regulation of any activities that may impact on our waterways and the adjacent Great Barrier Reef.

Fifty EHP field officers are deployed year round from offices in Rockhampton, Gladstone, Mackay, Maryborough, Emerald and Roma, making sure that the environment in Central Queensland communities is protected from harm. Staff plan and undertake inspections on operators that hold environmental authorities with EHP, to ensure they are complying with the conditions of their approval and, in turn, environmental heritage and coastal laws. There were 972 field inspections conducted last year, which is an average of 20 inspections per compliance centre per month. Field inspections involved 842 different locations operated by 302 different businesses. Enforcement action resulted from 25 per cent of inspections in the region.

I encourage members of the public who have concerns about pollution or environmental harm to contact our pollution hotline on 1300130372. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week and EHP scientists investigate every complaint.

Open Data

Mr POWELL: My question without notice is to the Premier. I table a screenshot of the Open Data website, which shows, contrary to the Premier's statements yesterday, the former government published monthly performance snapshots for public transport every month from June 2012. Given that yesterday the Premier was unaware that the data for November and December is being withheld, will the Premier commit today to releasing the information?

Tabled paper: Extract from Queensland government web page regarding TransLink public transport performance snapshots [204].

Ms PALASZCZUK: As I said to the member, I was happy to check that information in relation to that open data. I was correct when I said that, under the former Labor government, TransLink reports were put up on a quarterly basis. My understanding is that the next quarterly TransLink report will be going up very shortly. I also recall that we used to put up the different modes of transport and the LNP did not. We are more than happy to make sure that that is actually put up online. As I said, the TransLink Tracker report is due at the end of February. It is usually put up two months after that, which is the normal standard procedure that has operated for many years now. That will be put up in the very near future.

Regional Queensland

Mr BROWN: My question is to the Minister for State Development. Will the minister advise the House of the difference between the previous government's Royalties for the Regions scheme and the Palaszczuk government's commitment to regional Queensland, including Building our Regions?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Capalaba for the question because the member for Capalaba knows the importance of regional Queensland to Queensland's economy.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock! We will wait.

Dr LYNHAM: I come here today more in sadness than in anger. We have been through this a number of times in this session of parliament, but those opposite still do not get it. They still do not get that we are investing over \$1 billion in regional Queensland—\$375 million in our Building our Regions program. It wipes the floor of the LNP's discredited Royalties for the Regions program. As the Auditor-General said—

Opposition members interjected.

Dr LYNHAM: I know those opposite do not like me talking about the Auditor-General and Royalties for the Regions again—

Opposition members interjected.

Dr LYNHAM: Here we go. The Auditor-General effectively said that their program was not a Royalties for the Regions program at all. It short-changed our regions. It short-changed our resource-producing communities.

Opposition members interjected.

Dr LYNHAM: They spruik about the work they did, but what is most important is noting the councils that never got up, the councils that put in hard work, their administrative resources, their finances into preparing detailed submissions on projects that they desperately wanted.

Do members know why they should not have bothered? The selection was so distorted. Politicians decided—those opposite decided—where the money went. The money went to LNP electorates. That is how it was. It would have been better with a chook wheel.

Honourable members interjected.

Dr LYNHAM: You are right; some of those councils would be better off if they used a chook wheel. They would have had a chance of getting some money. The final straw was that the last round was opened to government departments. We had the royalties money going to the Royalties for the Regions program and then it went into government departments.

Opposition members interjected.

Dr LYNHAM: Have you run this past Pauline? Does she support this program?

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock! We will wait. Minister, you have eight seconds left.

Dr LYNHAM: We are delivering with over \$1 billion worth of grants for regional Queensland no matter how they vote.

Queensland Rail, Overtime

Mr MANDER: My question is to the Premier. In October 2016 it was revealed at the peak of Labor's rail fail that Citytrain drivers alone were being paid almost half a million dollars per fortnight in overtime. Will the Premier tell Queenslanders how much overtime has been paid to Citytrain crews since the opening of the Moreton Bay Rail Link and the start of Labor's rail fail?

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, you have two minutes.

Ms PALASZCZUK: As we know, this was one of the issues that was canvassed as part of the Strachan review. We are working through those recommendations. We also know that overtime had to be paid because under the former LNP government there was a freeze on training. Overtime actually operated under their period of government as well. What we do know is that when we get more drivers there will be less overtime.

My main focus is to ensure that we have a reliable and sustainable timetable. That timetable is getting stress tested at the moment. I know that the Deputy Premier, now Minister for Transport, will ensure that all of those recommendations are endorsed.

Mr SPEAKER: The time for questions has expired.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Small Business Grants

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algera—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (11.34 am): I rise to make a ministerial statement. I am advised by the director-general of the Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games that the email tabled during question time contains incorrect information. I am advised staff from the department assessed the application under a process that was independently audited and signed off by PricewaterhouseCoopers. I will be asking the department to contact the individual concerned to ensure they receive the correct information.

PETITIONS

Motion to Take Note

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (11.35 am): I move—

That the House take note of a paper petition and an ePetition from 10,353 petitioners requesting the House to ensure that the M1 from Varsity Lakes to Tugun is included in current funding discussions to upgrade this major road infrastructure and to provide a business case to obtain firm costings for this section.

This paper petition and e-petition from 10,355 petitioners requests the House to ensure that the M1 from Varsity Lakes to Tugun is included in current funding discussions to upgrade this major road infrastructure and to provide a business case to obtain firm costings for this section. I am grateful for the opportunity to raise an issue of enormous significance to the people of the Currumbin electorate and surrounds, and that is the desperate need to widen the M1 all the way to Tugun. In doing so, I acknowledge and recognise all of the 10,353 petitioners who signed either the e-petition or the paper petition and the principal petitioner, Luke Dean.

Without a business case we are not on the radar and Minister Bailey knows it. He is playing a cruel game of cat and mouse.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! There are too many members standing around talking. If you need to have a conversation please go outside. If not, please resume your seat.

Mrs STUCKEY: I have asked the minister a series of questions on behalf of local residents, but he has deliberately played politics, refusing to give straight answers and showing once and for all that he could not care less about relieving the congestion we suffer daily, at any time of the day, not just during peak hour.

In the answer to question on notice 1991 of 2016 the minister talks of a draft Brisbane to Gold Coast strategy to guide priority investment over the next 10 years, but when I tried to find it it was not there. The library searched and advised the document was not publicly available. They said that DTMR

planned to consult with federal and state MPs in early 2017 before finalising it for ministerial approval and public release. It is mid-February and I am still waiting for my briefing on this. Is this yet another stalling tactic or has the minister forbidden it?

The Department of Transport and Main Roads did not even advise me of roadworks on the M1 at Palm Beach in my electorate. Was this at the request of the same minister? When I found out that \$1.9 million of major excavation roadworks at Palm Beach on the M1 was to erect safety barriers, I questioned why the state government was not maximising taxpayers' money and widening this section at the same time. I acknowledged the need for safety on our roads, but that did not stop this bullyboy minister twisting the truth to avoid responsibility for widening the M1 to Tugun. Hundreds of people I speak to are fuming when they learn the works were not to widen this congested motorway. Even the workers putting in the barriers questioned why the government was not widening the road saying that they will just have to come back and rip it up.

My recent comments slamming this government's poor planning practices must have struck a nerve as the minister personally attacked me as he tried to deflect from the real issue. Bailey's attempt to shoot the messenger will not fool the people of Currumbin, and I will keep fighting for them. He wants to play the blame game, but he is quick to forget that Labor has been in power for 16 of the last 19 years in Queensland. He is part of a succession of Labor governments that have failed to build infrastructure in South-East Queensland.

What of the then minister's promise in estimates 2010 during the Main Roads hearing when he stated that Labor was doing everything in its power to tackle congestion? He stated—

There is almost \$1 billion to upgrade the Pacific Motorway between the Gateway and Tugun to give a smoother, swifter and more seamless ride. We are slashing travel times.

Well, we are still waiting. Correspondence from the Minister for Main Roads to the member for Burleigh on 7 December 2015 revealed it was the LNP who not only submitted a business case for the Mudgeeraba to Varsity section of the M1 in 2012 but also included a submission and application for \$20 million to undertake project planning for Varsity Lakes to Tugun and between the Gateway and Logan Motorway.

The minister's comment 'Please be assured that the Palaszczuk government will continue to highlight the need for federal funding to enable the staged and timely upgrading of the M1' is an outright farce. We do not even appear in the *Infrastructure pipeline report*, December 2016, which lists the top 20 projects. I table a copy of that document.

Tabled paper: Building Queensland: Infrastructure Pipeline Report, December 2016 [\[205\]](#).

This minister has been caught out ducking and weaving to avoid having to admit that he has had his finger on the pause button for the M1, and he has not had the guts to admit it, instead choosing to use typical bullyboy tactics to avoid responsibility for widening the M1 to Tugun.

Together with my colleague the member for Burleigh, I will keep fighting for the residents on the southern Gold Coast who are sick and tired of sitting in gridlock every day. In less than three months 10,353 signatures were gathered. If New South Wales residents had been allowed to sign, this figure would have been double such is the frustration of those who live on the southern Gold Coast and rely on the M1. Congestion will only get worse as the section between Mudgeeraba and Varsity is upgraded.

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (11.41 am): It is interesting that the previous speaker finished before her allotted time—not a lot to say there really. I am very pleased to speak to this petition. I thank all the petitioners for signing it. This is a significant issue on the Gold Coast. There is no doubt about that. Why is it a significant issue? Because for three years we had a record majority government with every Gold Coast seat and what did they do for the M1? Absolutely zero. The member for Currumbin was a member of the cabinet and delivered nothing for the M1 in three years, with the biggest majority in Queensland political history. That is why these people are petitioning this place.

Mrs STUCKEY: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The minister is misleading the House. I find his words offensive and I ask him to withdraw.

Dr Miles: Because they are accurate.

Mrs STUCKEY: No, they are not.

Mr BAILEY: It is a debating point.

Mrs STUCKEY: In 2012 we put in a submission and you know it. It is on the record.

Mr BAILEY: Madam Deputy Speaker, I seek your guidance. Which part of it is not factual according to the member?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! I ask the minister whether there was a personal reference to the member.

Mr BAILEY: There was no personal reference. It was all about her record as a cabinet minister.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the minister to withdraw.

Mr BAILEY: I withdraw. We heard the member for Currumbin attack me personally a number of times. I let her roll with that. I will talk about her record—

Mrs Stuckey interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! This is not a playground. I ask the minister to continue.

Mr BAILEY: Someone has a thin skin in this place; that is for sure. Maybe that is why she had a 15 per cent swing against her in her seat at the last election because the member for Currumbin did nothing on the M1 for three years despite not just being the member but also being a cabinet minister. I would be embarrassed if I were her.

Mrs STUCKEY: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find the minister's words untrue and offensive in saying that I did nothing. I ask him to withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the minister to withdraw.

Mr BAILEY: I withdraw. We saw absolutely no result from the Newman government in three years—no result. The last upgrade of the M1 was by the previous Bligh Labor government down to Worongary. That is the last significant investment in the M1. This government has \$86 million on the table. That is our commitment. We want a fair deal with the federal government. The member for Currumbin should be standing up for the Gold Coast instead of the LNP protecting her mates in Canberra. That is what she should be doing—standing up for the Gold Coast instead of taking the party line. That is what Gold Coast residents are sick of. They are sick of being sold out by the LNP. They have 10 members on the Gold Coast—the toothless 10. That is who they are. They have a shameful record. They cannot deliver for the Gold Coast. They did not deliver for the Gold Coast. It is left to the Palaszczuk government to deal with this issue and to clean up the mess.

We have \$86 million on the table. We have made our point with the federal government. We are working with them for an outcome on the M1. I am confident that our record will be a lot stronger in terms of getting the M1 upgraded after three years of inaction with a record majority. I would be embarrassed if I were the member for Currumbin, the member for Burleigh, the member for Surfers Paradise, the member for Broadwater, the member for Albert, the member for Mudgeeraba or the member for Mermaid Beach, because their record on the Gold Coast was indolent, lazy and ineffective.

The facts of the matter are that we put the revised business case for the merge and the Mudgeeraba to Varsity Lakes projects into Infrastructure Australia in March 2016—one year after being elected. We did not muck around. We got it in. We put our money on the table in the last budget—our 20 per cent. It is part of the national land transport network. We made our point clear that we think the M1 should be funded just the same way that the M1 is funded across the border in New South Wales, where it is funded 80-20. In fact, at Banora Point it was funded 96 per cent by the federal government. We want a fair deal for the M1.

We have certainly invested in the M1. We got exit 54 going after three years of inaction by the Newman government. It is now completed. We have \$160 million going into Gold Coast roads as part of the Commonwealth Games package. Our record on the M1 is very strong. If we look at the Bligh government and federal Labor government commitments there—the LNP talk big about the Gold Coast but it is always Labor that actually delivers. Look at the evidence. Whether it is the Gold Coast University Hospital; the light rail stage 1; the two stadiums; the Commonwealth Games, which is a huge boost to the Gold Coast; the duplication of the heavy rail from Helensvale to Coomera; or the light rail stage 2, the majority of which was funded by the Palaszczuk government, it is always the Palaszczuk government and Labor that does the heavy lifting on the Gold Coast—always.

We will deliver on the M1. I say to all the petitioners: thank you for your interest. We will continue to work to get an appropriate and strong outcome for the M1 and the Gold Coast. We need outcomes and we need dollars allocated to this, not submissions. The member for Currumbin talked a lot about submissions. They do a lot of submissions. That is all very nice but Gold Coast people want outcomes. For three years they did nothing. They did not deliver. It was left to us to pick up the pieces and deliver for the Gold Coast residents.

(Time expired)

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (11.48 am): It was great to sit here and listen to a minister who does not have a clue about his portfolio. He has just spent five minutes telling us about the M1 when he has no idea about the M1. He told us that the last major work on the M1 on the Gold Coast was to 'Wollongary'—that is, Worongary. In fact, if the minister bothered to come to the Gold Coast, he would know that the M1 has in fact been widened past Worongary to Mudgeeraba and on to Robina. When did that happen? That happened under the LNP government. In three years the shovels came out, the bulldozers came out, the work got done and the road got widened. Under the LNP government that work got done. It is very similar to between 1996 and 1998 when the M1 was built by the Borbidge government. They planned it, they funded it and they built it in two years. What is Labor's record in the last two years? We have not seen any work happen at all from the Mudgeeraba flood plain any further south in the two years that they have been in government. We have not seen anything done. We do not have any planning. We do not have anything organised.

Instead of that, what we have is a plan to do the Mudgeeraba flood plain to the Varsity Lakes turn-off. I can tell the minister that that is not going to fix the problem. All it will do is push the congestion further south. If the minister wants to know how to fix this problem, then he needs to talk to the member for Currumbin, the member for Mudgeeraba and me because, after all, we sit in that traffic every day along with 10,352 other people who signed the petition who obviously sit in the same amount of traffic. They want action. They want the minister to get on his bike—because he does not have a car—and stop reviewing and start doing something. The people of Queensland are sick and tired of this do-nothing, asleep-at-the-wheel Labor government. Get on with it and fix the M1.

(Time expired)

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (11.50 am): The Palaszczuk government is getting on with the job of planning and delivering upgrades for the M1. We have submitted updated business cases for the M1 to M3 merge project and the Mudgeeraba to Varsity Lakes project to the Australian government and Infrastructure Australia. We have committed our fair share of funding to these projects—that is, \$42 million towards the M1-Gateway Motorway merge upgrade project and \$44 million towards the six-laning works between Mudgeeraba and Varsity Lakes. We are already funding and working on the planning for the future upgrade of the Varsity Lakes to Tugun section. We have invested \$1.48 million for the preliminary evaluation of the M1 Varsity Lakes to Tugun upgrade to be finalised later this year.

Right across the state the Palaszczuk Labor government has been making up for three years of inaction on roads and transport that we saw under the Newman-Nicholls government. They cut \$600 million from transport funding—money that could have gone a long way towards a whole range of projects. In my own area the Mount Lindesay Highway is a very good example. Over the last two state budgets the Palaszczuk government has committed \$35 million to projects on the highway, and we are still working to identify projects that will deliver the best improvements with the funding available. We are part way through a \$790,000 planning project. This level of investment dwarfs—and the member for Beaudesert knows this—what the former government invested.

I turn to the petition submitted. I would like to thank every single petitioner for putting their name to the important economic and safety project of improving Queensland roads. However, what if every petitioner knew the full facts about the LNP and Queensland roads? What would everyone who signed that petition say if they knew that in the last government every single member of the Gold Coast voted for budgets that cut \$600 million over three years from the transport funding? They would condemn the LNP members.

What would all of these petitioners say if they knew that at the last federal election when we were looking for federal funding the Gold Coast members were silent—complicit with the federal LNP failing to back the M1? What would they do? They would condemn the member for Burleigh and the member for Currumbin for their inaction and silence. What if they were told that the LNP members' own actions and failure to act had added to—and I quote from the petition—'daily traffic delays costing local families and businesses significantly'? Every single petitioner, if they knew the cynicism and hypocrisy of the Gold Coast LNP members, would condemn them. I applaud the minister for his passion for the roads of Queensland connecting the communities of Queensland. I only wish at the last federal election his passionate voice for funding for the M1 had been joined by those on the other side who pretend to be a friend of the M1. They were silent.

(Time expired)

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

Resumed from 10 November 2016 (see p. 4490), on motion of Mr Butcher—

That the House take note of the Agriculture and Environment Committee report No. 24, titled *Hendra virus EquiVac® vaccine and its use by veterinary surgeons in Queensland*, tabled on 21 October 2016.

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (11.54 am): I was excited to be given the opportunity to chair this committee. I was looking forward to the opportunity to expand my policy horizons, but here I am talking about vaccination again after coming from the health committee.

Mr McArdle: We miss you, too, by the way.

Mr KELLY: I take that interjection. I miss you too, member for Caloundra.

Mr McArdle: I meant it!

Mr KELLY: And I do, too. I will take that one as well. While we have some mirth around the fact that I am here talking about vaccination in agriculture, it is no laughing matter. Vaccination is as important in animals as it is in humans. I will always talk passionately about vaccination. It is one of the most important public health measures that we have ever seen in the history of health care. It is up there with hand washing and public sanitation.

I am really pleased to be in a country where my professional regulation body, AHPRA, now requires that I give accurate evidence based information to patients on vaccination. If I do not, there are consequences for me as a practitioner. Contrast that with the United States where the leader of that country is investigating this myth of a link between autism and vaccination. There is no link. It is a complete myth and there is no evidence of that whatsoever.

I return to this report, which presents the findings of the committee's eight-month inquiry into the Hendra vaccine. I thank committee members for their work on this difficult inquiry. I also thank the member for Mirani, who participated in our seven public hearings. It is obviously a big issue in his area. I also acknowledge the assistance provided by officers of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Queensland Health and Workplace Health and Safety Queensland.

The committee heard from many equestrian groups, horse owners and veterinarians during the inquiry. The committee sincerely thanks everyone who contributed their views. We accepted 293 written submissions. Many of the submissions are quite detailed and heartfelt. In addition to the submissions, we received dozens of emails from horse owners and interest groups who tracked the work of the committee throughout the inquiry. All of those people are to be thanked for their interest in the inquiry.

Hendra virus remains a risk for horses wherever there are flying foxes. It is a significant risk for people who come into close contact with horses. I think of my own daughters who once a fortnight go to Murarrie for horse riding on the banks of the Bulimba Creek. That is an area where there is a significant flying fox population. Seventy-seven horses and four people have already died from the virus since 1974 so this is a serious matter. Of the 97 horses infected, 77 died from the virus. That is a staggering rate. The other 20 were euthanased. We have to think about that as we move forward because, as with vaccinations in humans, there will be groups that rail against vaccinating horses, but the reality is that when we look at that death rate it is truly staggering.

All Hendra incidents have occurred in New South Wales or Queensland. There have been no reported cases in other states or in other countries. Thankfully, no horse specimens have tested positive for the Hendra virus at the Biosecurity Queensland lab at Coopers Plains so far this year. I am familiar with those labs, having been an organiser for the union that covers the scientists and the technicians out there. I am pleased to advise that there have been no human infections with the Hendra infections in Queensland since 2009. Horses that get infected with the virus generally die. If people get the virus from an infected horse, they will likely die too and there is no cure. This is very serious. Vaccinating against the virus remains the most effective option for preventing horse and human deaths according to all of the experts the committee spoke to. If people stop vaccinating their horses we will see deaths from the Hendra virus in Queensland again. I particularly note that the people most likely—

(Time expired)

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (11.58 am): I rise to speak on the report titled *Hendra virus EquiVac® vaccine and its use by veterinary surgeons in Queensland*. As the previous deputy chair of the committee, I welcomed the opportunity to hear of the scientific inquiries into the vaccine, the practices of veterinarians and the concerns of horse owners and enthusiasts, as my own electorate of

Gympie has a large, strong, enthusiastic and well-supported horse-loving community. When I was in Cairns as part of that committee, I had to suit up in a blue personal protection equipment suit, which I can tell members was very hot and uncomfortable and it was very time consuming to suit up.

We investigated a broad range of issues, from the original development and trial of the vaccine, adverse reactions in horses and the practices of veterinarians to economic and workplace health and safety issues. The committee made 11 recommendations to tighten up the rules surrounding the use of the vaccine and improve the safety of anyone who had interaction with horses, especially veterinarians and horse owners.

The debate surrounding the vaccine is highly emotive. We tried to take the emotion and heat out of the debate and develop a series of measures which will protect treating vets and staff, horse owners and horses themselves. We have taken a common-sense approach to an emotive situation, with horse owners feeling pressured and treating vets being concerned about the welfare of the animals while at the same time keeping themselves and their staff as safe as possible. Importantly, the committee has supported the right of veterinarians to choose not to treat unvaccinated horses. Workplace health and safety legislation needs to be amended. We need to ensure that veterinarians are not responsible for creating a safe workplace for any person other than their staff and themselves when treating a horse suspected of being, or known to be, infected with Hendra virus. This is a serious workplace health and safety issue which has been affecting horse owners, horse lovers and treating vets.

The vets have had an unfair obligation imposed on them because they have been liable not just for their staff and themselves but also for the horse owner even if they had chosen not to vaccinate their animal. We have done this while acknowledging that the most successful and comprehensive way to prevent the spread of the disease from horses to humans is through vaccination. While the committee has recommended the HeV not be made mandatory, it supports vaccinating horses as the most comprehensive and safe way to prevent the spread of the virus from horses to humans. Under the recommendations, vaccinations for animals will not be mandatory but left to the discretion of equestrian event organisers to require a condition of entry for horse owners to decide based on risk.

I have said before in this place that I am no fan of the antivaccination brigade. As an owner of a couple of thousand head of cattle, I regularly see the benefits of vaccination for both animals and humans. I have personally experienced the unpleasant side effects of not being vaccinated and I think I have mentioned this previously. I contracted Q fever by not being vaccinated, even though there was a vaccine. Vaccination is an important tool in modern agricultural industry. It helps to ensure the safety and welfare of both the animal and humans.

This report was wide ranging and proposed a number of other recommendations, including that the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries support the development of a rapid stall-side test, as a further aid to check the Hendra virus status of horses in the field, and determine whether a rapid stall-side test could negate the need for HeV exclusion testing. Other recommendations from the committee include improving time frames for exclusion testing; temperature indicators for vaccine packs; advising owners of vaccine information and 'off label' risks; raising awareness of processes for self-reporting adverse reactions to the Hendra vaccine; revision of Biosecurity Queensland guidelines; workplace health and safety guidelines for both low-risk and high-risk treatments; equine industry representatives on the Hendra Working Group; and promoting Hendra vaccinations of horses. All of these measures will be very much welcomed in my own electorate and throughout the horse industry, as they now protect veterinarians and horse owners as well as the welfare of the horse.

The final determination of whether the government implements all or some of these recommendations is up to the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries. I urge the government to embrace all of these recommendations as they help to provide a framework which will go a long way to ensuring the safety of everyone involved in the horse industry.

 **Mr PEARCE** (Mirani—ALP) (12.03 pm): Firstly, I would like to thank the committee for giving me the opportunity to sit with them on numerous occasions because I did have an interest in this issue from the very beginning. The history of Hendra events in Queensland has shown that on-farm Hendra infections usually occur in isolation—one horse, one property, stand-alone locations. Hendra has not been recorded across a large area of a city or local government area. Despite the language being used by people or an organisation, Hendra is not highly contagious.

From the history of reporting, it would be fair and reasonable to suggest that infection of a horse does not happen easily and that it is even harder for a human to catch Hendra. The risk increases if humans do not follow simple hygiene procedures and horse management practices. We know that veterinarians were the worst offenders when it came to being proactive in protection procedures, especially wearing PPE.

The use of local government boundaries to identify a potential zone for infection of Hendra is a misrepresentation of fact. Local areas where a Hendra infection has occurred should be the tool used in the preparation for any future outbreaks and act as a model to predict potential flying fox distribution and movement. If we have an event happening in one area and at another time one happens a bit closer, there is an area or a zone that we should identify and we should be prepared to move into that area as quickly as possible if there is identification of a horse being infected by Hendra.

We know that there have been 97 infected horses and 77 of those horses have died, as well as four humans. There is a high risk to humans—there is no doubt about that—but if the simple procedures of personal hygiene and wearing PPEs are followed, it is a disease that humans can protect themselves against. I was very dismayed and concerned to hear that veterinarians were the worst offenders in terms of not wearing the PPE. If we want the public to have the same attitude, they must set the example, and I think that is where veterinarians have got it wrong.

Adverse impact was a common description of the consequences of a Hendra virus vaccination. It was really heartbreaking to listen to some of the horse owners, younger children, mums and dads and vets who did attend these places and hear how it impacted their families. The fact is that people like horses, people like cats and people like dogs. There is that relationship that people build between themselves and their animal.

I was really angry about this when it was first brought to my attention because I saw it as an example of a drug that had been prepared in haste and not properly tested across the whole vaccination area, and the potential consequences to animals were simply underestimated. Another thing that stood out to me and concerned me greatly was that it appeared to be driven by the dollar. Zoetis, the manufacturer of the vaccine, was encouraging vets to not attend to a horse if it had not been vaccinated. As far as I am concerned, that is bullying to sell a product to make a profit. If that is the way we are going to let things happen in this state, we have lost it. All people know their horses well and they understand them. It is very depressing to have somebody standing over you saying, 'I can't stitch up your horse's wound because it has not been vaccinated against Hendra.'

(Time expired)

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (12.08 pm): I rise to speak on the report titled *Hendra virus EquiVac® vaccine and its use by veterinary surgeons in Queensland*. I was on the committee at the time this was investigated. I found the debate to be very interesting and a lot of emotion was shown. One thing that really got to me was when we saw the young girl who had Hendra virus and survived it still suffering from it years after. That proves to me that there should be vaccination against these things to make sure it never happens again.

If a good vaccination is found, such as this one, it pays horse owners to vaccinate their horses with it. If honourable members had seen that young lady that day and the way she was still suffering, they would have to agree with that argument. I have experience with the cattle industry and have had horses. It is terrible to see cattle die in the paddocks due to not vaccinating them against botulism and things like that. Cattle can die pretty quickly, but when we consider that people can contract this disease as well, we have to look at the vaccination of horses to make safe not only our own family but also the animals around us. We must continue down this track. I know it will not be compulsory. However, if a horse is not vaccinated people cannot expect a veterinarian to go out and risk his or her life to treat that horse. I most probably would not do it and I could not expect veterinarians to do it.

Mr Rickuss: Unfortunately, vets have died.

Mr SORENSEN: Vets have died. When people see that young lady suffering today, years after she contracted that virus, they would have to agree with vaccination.

In terms of management of human and horse interactions, contact with the horse's mouth, nose and bodily fluids must be minimised and personal protective equipment—the PPE—should be worn during procedures and necessary exposure to a horse's bodily fluids. When we were looking at the situation in Cairns one of the veterinarians gave us a demonstration of suiting up. One of our committee colleagues, Tony Perrett, actually got in the suit and went out with the vet and checked the horse. It was a very hot day and when it was time to get out of the suit he was very hot indeed. When people are getting out of that suit, they have to be very careful that they do not touch any part of the suit that may be contaminated. Afterwards they should also wash their hands and then wash the contaminated clothing. The sick horse should be isolated from other horses, humans and other animals. This includes not taking horses to equestrian events et cetera. It is important that people take note of this to lower the risk of contracting the disease.

The Hendra virus is carried by flying foxes. There are some measures that horse owners can take to prevent their horse from contracting this disease such as removing horse feed and water containers from under trees and shelters. Horses can contract the disease through interactions with the flying foxes such as through their droppings landing in horses' feed tins or water containers. It was a very interesting and emotional trip from Cairns right through to Brisbane. The committee received almost 300 submissions. That goes to show how much interest there was in this inquiry.

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (12.13 pm): I, too, would like to contribute to the debate on report No. 24 on the inquiry into the Hendra virus EquiVac vaccine and its use by veterinary surgeons in Queensland. I would like to thank my fellow committee members on the Agriculture and Environment Committee and also the member for Mirani for his time and input into the inquiry. It was very valuable. I would also like to thank the parliamentary secretariat for their support working through about 17,000 pages of material related to this inquiry. It was a huge and heavy workload for Rob Hansen, Paul Douglas and Colette Carey.

This inquiry was a very emotional issue for veterinarians and horse owners. Horse owners not only make a financial commitment to their animals; they also have an emotional commitment, as anyone would with a loved pet. The committee considered the development of trials and the approval process for the Hendra vaccine; the incidence and impact of adverse reactions in horses following vaccinations; the reporting of adverse reactions; the economic impacts of the vaccine; and the guidelines for veterinarians attending horses that are not vaccinated against HeV.

The committee found that there was a loss of trust between some horse owners and their veterinarians. Given the vaccine is new, horse owners were blaming any adverse medical condition experienced by a horse after the vaccination on the vaccination. This happened even months after the vaccination was given. Veterinarians, on the other hand, must keep themselves and their assistants safe from a virus that is fatal to humans when treating horses that are not vaccinated. There needs to be a safe workplace for all based on scientific grounds, not on emotion.

The committee has made 11 recommendations and, importantly, recommendation No. 9 is that the vaccination not be made mandatory. There are many horses in the regions, and the committee has made a recommendation that the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries investigate the feasibility of a Hendra virus exclusion test capability in Townsville or Cairns to process samples from North Queensland more quickly than sending samples to Brisbane for analysis. This is important because the virus spreads quickly.

We also came across a lot of farmers out in the field who were giving vaccinations to their horses themselves. Recommendation 3 is that temperature indicators for vaccinations could be put on the packs so that the farmers know whether the vaccination is actually kept at the right temperature and they are giving a horse a vaccination that is still valid. We believe that all of the different manuals out there that are used as guidelines for this virus and other viruses for horses need to be collated so that there is a one-stop shop for veterinarians and farmers to go to in order to get the right information to keep their animals safe.

At the end of the day, the most important thing for horses and for the vets is workplace health and safety. We need to make sure that vets are kept safe and that they keep their assistants safe. We hope that the recommendations in this report are considered and that this is the beginning of mending that rift between horse owners and their veterinarians. I commend the report to the House.

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (12.17 pm): The review of the Hendra virus EquiVac vaccine and its use by veterinarian surgeons in Queensland by the Agriculture and Environment Committee involved consideration of a number of submissions and public hearings held throughout the state. Since 1994 there have been deaths of four people and 77 horses all caused by this lethal virus.

The committee made 11 recommendations. These included recommendations that veterinarians should be free to choose to treat horses that have not been vaccinated but also that the vaccine not be made mandatory. It was clear from the scientific evidence presented to the committee that the vaccine has been an outstanding success story for Australian science and had it not been for its introduction, there would have been many more deaths of people or horses as a consequence of the Hendra virus. Unfortunately, there is currently no Hendra virus vaccine available for humans, but there is research being carried out in this regard. The recommendations of the committee also included that there be a review of workplace health and safety laws to limit the liability of veterinarians when treating infected horses and to make the requirements for protective clothing more practical and reasonable.

Hendra virus remains a risk for horses in areas where flying foxes are located, as this animal is a vector for the virus. Humans contract Hendra virus after contact with infected horses, and the virus is usually fatal to both horses and humans. There is no cure, but where humans have survived the virus we have seen that there are serious long-term health problems.

Vaccinating horses against Hendra virus remains the most effective option for preventing horse and human deaths from the virus. It appears that the reason we have not seen the deaths of any horses or people since 1994 is as a result of the Hendra virus vaccine being introduced. The HeV vaccine is marketed by Zoetis and was developed by CSIRO. The concern is that if people stop vaccinating their horses we will again have deaths of horses and humans from the Hendra virus. In its report the committee details the reasoning processes used by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, the APVMA, to approve vaccines in Australia. As stated in the report—

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries accepts the safety and efficacy of the HeV vaccine as determined by the APVMA.

Despite the assurances from the APVMA, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and others, horse owners have questioned the vaccine's efficacy and safety.

Some have even questioned whether it was properly registered. The report further states—

They argue that further testing of the vaccine is warranted on a wider range of horse breeds with differing genetic backgrounds.

As stated in the report, in a number of submissions horse owners describe adverse events linked to the HeV vaccine, but the submissions of these horse owners were contradicted by the submissions of a number of veterinarians, many of whom had personal experience of administering the vaccine to hundreds of horses and who had ongoing contact with the horses and owners. They stated that adverse reactions were a rarity.

One important issue that arose during the inquiry was whether veterinarians should be able to choose whether they treat horses suspected of being infected with Hendra virus or which had not been vaccinated. Many veterinarians who gave evidence to the inquiry advised that they would not administer the vaccine to sick horses due to the risk of contracting Hendra virus. Many veterinarians also chose not to treat horses who had not been vaccinated due to the risk of becoming infected by the virus. Depending on location and the availability of veterinarians, the reality is that horse owners who choose not to vaccinate their horse may find they are unable to find a veterinarian who will treat their unvaccinated horse.

Another issue that arose was some horse owners indicated they found difficulties associated with reporting. This was addressed in the committee's recommendations. The key issue is that veterinarians should not have to put their lives at risk by treating horses that are not vaccinated or display Hendra virus symptoms.

I would like to thank my fellow committee members, the committee secretariat and the various submitters who provided submissions to the review.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Notice



Mr KELLY (Greenslopes—ALP) (12.22 pm): I move—

That the House take note of Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee report No. 99, titled *Report on a complaint by Mr Darren Hall*, tabled on 29 November 2016.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Notice



Mr KING (Kallangur—ALP) (12.23 pm): I move—

That the House take note of Transportation and Utilities Committee report No. 32, titled *Auditor-General report 20: 2015-16—Heavy vehicle road access reforms*, tabled on 2 December 2016.

The report which came before our committee was fairly uncontentious, but we will go through it and have a bit of a chat about it. To give the House a bit of background, in 2011 COAG agreed to the creation of the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator to administer one set of national rules under the Heavy Vehicle National Law. The board of the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator reports to the responsible ministers who represent the Australian government in each state and territory which have agreed to participate.

Initially COAG planned for the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator to be fully operational by the end of 2012; however, transport ministers from participating states and territories revised the commencement date for the new access management arrangements firstly to July 2013 and then September 2013. It eventually began to process access permits from 10 February 2014. Four days later operators expressed their dissatisfaction with the system and the processes associated with the online one-stop-shop portal for access applications. As a result, the participating state and territory governments asked the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator to delegate responsibility for processing certain categories to the relevant states and territories. The Queensland Audit Office undertook to examine how well the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator addressed the root causes of the failure of the access management function.

The Queensland Audit Office advised our committee that they undertook this audit because they believed it was important to identify the lessons learned from the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator's failed implementation of the heavy vehicle access management function. In their report they concluded that the NHVR had not implemented the one-stop-shop access management system as intended because it went live before it was ready and as a result it had denied industry the full benefits of the new law; it had not used public resources as efficiently as possible; and the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator board should have done more to alert government to the ramifications of implementing the new arrangements and done more to mitigate the risks. They also stated that the benefits expected of the reforms will only be delivered if the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, state, territory and local government road managers work effectively together to implement the Heavy Vehicle National Law. They also noted that—

The NHVR board and management have learnt from their mistakes—they now engage better with their stakeholders and have changed their project management approach, releasing system changes in stages after much planning and testing.

As I said, the report was fairly uncontentious. The problems that occurred have largely been fixed, and that is what the audit picked up.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (12.26 pm): I rise to address the committee's Auditor-General report 20: 2015-16, *Heavy vehicle road access reforms*. It is important that we acknowledge this important report. We all experienced difficulties in the regions when the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator was created in 2011. When we consider there were ambitious targets on savings as a result of these implications, the reality was that our farmers experienced many problems. Locally the main issue was delays on receiving permits. The implementation failed on the rollout of the access management systems and did not manage the inevitable risks that could come with that. We discovered early that the proposed one-stop shop to improve access was not effective and it denied stakeholders the full benefits of the law.

This report also identified what I have been saying since I was elected, which is that industry operators continue to face inconsistent processes and decisions for gaining a heavy vehicle permit. Our regional stakeholders remain concerned about the NHVR's ability to deliver access management efficiently and effectively and they now perceive that the pace of change and system rectification is too slow. We continue to hear that stakeholders believe there is insufficient communication.

I know that many welcome the Auditor-General's report and recommendations, as I do, but we need these changes to continue sooner rather than later. The NHVR must achieve the objectives outlined and remove the duplication of effort. Importantly, stakeholders must have confidence that the Department of Transport and Main Roads is committed to heavy vehicle reform.

While I am on my feet it gives me an opportunity to highlight some local success with the NHVR, namely, the Bundaberg Region Class 1 Agricultural Vehicle Dimension Exemption Notice that was received in 2015. An agricultural vehicle or combination that is wider than 3.5 metres and not wider than five metres operating on a minor road in the Bundaberg local government area can now operate under the Bundaberg Region Class 1 Agricultural Vehicle Dimension Exemption Notice. This was an important reform and we worked hard for the farmers across the Bundaberg region, who are now able to spend more time in the paddock and less time filling out paperwork thanks to the determination of the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator.

We in the regions remember the work that led to the issuing of the Bundaberg region class 1 agricultural vehicle dimension exemption notice, authorising vehicles up to five metres to travel on minor roads across the Bundaberg region without having to apply for a special permit. It is important that there is no requirement to carry a copy of the notice in these heavy vehicles while making journeys. I note the involvement of the local and federal governments in gaining this exemption, showing what can be achieved if industry and governments work together. We know that this will enable the farmers in Bundaberg and Childers to get on with the job, cutting time-consuming red tape and helping businesses to be more productive, which is good for our local economy.

The Bundaberg region had local road conditions assessed by local government. This found that agricultural productivity could be enhanced by varying some of the requirements for oversized agricultural vehicles on our minor roads. Any potential risk to public safety was considered in the reforms. We know that notices have been very well received from the agriculture and transport sectors.

We welcome the Auditor-General's report. I note that the chair and the committee did good work. I note, though, that in the regions there are concerns with the national heavy vehicle reforms. There is more work to be done.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (12.30 pm): I rise to make a few comments on the Auditor-General's report the Assembly is noting here today. I concur with the comments made by the member for Burnett with regard to the processes that have been put in place with the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator. One of the Auditor-General's conclusions related to inconsistencies in processes in that industry operators continue to face inconsistent processes and decisions for getting a heavy vehicle permit. That has certainly been brought to my attention by heavy vehicle operators in my electorate of Beaudesert. These are people who undertake both short-haul and long-haul transport, whether just in Queensland or around the nation.

Since the implementation of the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, they have found it quite difficult on many occasions to know exactly what they need to do to get the permits right. It is terrible for their confidence in going forward in their business, for planning and just for knowing whether or not they are doing the right thing that they cannot get consistent processes and consistent answers from the Heavy Vehicle Regulator or even in some cases from DTMR. There has been a lot of correspondence on this issue ever since I was elected. In fact, this is an issue that cropped up as soon as I was elected to this place and it has not been resolved.

We are talking not just about the permit processes but also about the enforcement of regulations under the Heavy Vehicle National Law. Different police officers and different transport department officers can apply the same regulation in very different ways such that truck drivers who are trying to do the right thing simply do not know where to go. The issue arises also when they are filling out logbooks in relation to driving hours. There are so many different rules and regulations about what truck drivers and heavy vehicle operators have to do that it is sometimes impossible to keep up with, and then you come across the inconsistent processes.

This is an issue that will not go away. It is an issue that the state department, other state departments around Australia and the Commonwealth need to get a grip on. It is a big impediment to the productivity of especially our small business operators, our owner-drivers. They are quite often throwing their hands up in the air and saying, 'It is all too hard.' It leads to noncompliance because they do not know how to comply.

The other thing that has been brought to my attention and which I have raised with the Department of Transport and Main Roads is inconsistent processes for permits being issued for the movement of agricultural machinery around agricultural areas. I wrote to the department many months ago but still have not received a response about why there seems to be inconsistent application of rules between my electorate and other electorates around the state when it comes to the movement of those implements. People should not have to worry about whether they are doing the wrong thing in moving agricultural machinery around in an agricultural area, but that is the situation we have because there is inconsistent application of these rules. I call on the minister, who is present in the chamber, to look into that issue and see if he can get a response to my inquiry about the application for permits for agricultural movements on our main roads.

The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator was meant to make things easier and create a more consistent approach for operators around the country. One of the unfortunate outcomes is that local government has been brought into the process in terms of granting permits for movement on local roads. In the past that was dealt with by a state or territory body or by the Queensland police if necessary. Now we have a state department, the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator is on top of that

and local authorities are getting involved in the permitting process. It is just mindless duplication of roles which holds up permitting and makes it more difficult for people to get on with their business. Everyone will have seen the signs on trucks all around the country: 'without trucks Australia stops'. We need to get this regulation right. It is an ongoing process of reform. I commend to the House this report, which makes recommendations to make things easier in the future.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: The time for debate of committee reports is over.

WATER (LOCAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 15 February (see p. 137), on motion of Mr Bailey—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (12.35 pm), continuing: Before this debate was interrupted I was talking about the long history of the concept of local ownership of the state irrigation schemes—schemes that had suffered from government neglect for many years. In the short time remaining to me I will talk about one of those schemes in my electorate. The irrigation scheme at Theodore is one of the four that are moving towards local ownership. I compliment the people who have been involved. I will not name people, because a lot of local irrigators have been involved in the process at the Theodore irrigation scheme to move to the point where they will be one of the first schemes to achieve local ownership of their irrigation infrastructure. I believe that they have shown a degree of courage and an admirable degree of business acumen in putting themselves into a position whereby they are able to take over that ailing government asset and achieve greater efficiency, not just for themselves as farmers but also for the whole district. It is the whole district that will benefit from an efficient irrigation scheme like the one at Theodore.

There are schemes right across Queensland in the same position. I have spoken to a number of people proposing to become the scheme operators about the issue of access to capital in the future. I think the perception of a problem in accessing capital to invest in those irrigation schemes in the future has restricted the number of schemes for which people have been prepared to take the issue forward. That is why I think the courage of the people involved in the four schemes that are going forward should be acknowledged.

As I said in the earlier part of my contribution, these schemes were built as economic development projects. They were about providing economic development for the whole community. I think in the future the operators of these schemes need to be in the same position as local councils, for example, to be able to access programs such as Royalties for the Regions, which was about empowering local communities. It was about providing essential infrastructure in communities that facilitated economic development right across the community. I think one of the dangers is that these groups will be seen as something equivalent to a private company rather than a community group. I note that yesterday the minister responded to the shadow minister and said that it was the transfer of an asset to the community. That is right. I think governments should bear that in mind in the future—

(Time expired)

 **Mr PEARCE** (Mirani—ALP) (12.38 pm): I rise to join the debate on the Water (Local Management Arrangements) Amendment Bill 2016. This bill amends the Water Act 2000 to transfer a number of SunWater channel irrigation schemes to a local management structure. This amendment will deliver a legislative transfer scheme. I want to talk about the irrigation scheme in the Mirani electorate—that is, the Eton scheme. As a bit of background, it draws all of its water from the Kinchant Dam, which is some six kilometres south-west of the town of Mirani, and it feeds water into the scheme which benefits many farmers and many canegrowers in the area. The water supply from Kinchant Dam moves some 35 kilometres through open-cut earth channels. Last year the minister and I spent the day up there talking to local farmers and landowners to get a good understanding of how they felt.

It is not just the channel system that covers the area; there are about 130 kilometres of pipeline to further distribute the water throughout the cane-growing area. There are also a number of pump stations to lift water to a higher level in order to get a consistent flow throughout the system. It is a good system and it is one that the local canegrowers have a lot of faith in. However, like many people on the

farm these days, they are struggling to make ends meet and they saw this as a great opportunity to take over the scheme and try to run it their way to help save costs and make the scheme more efficient. I commend them for being prepared to do just that and look forward to hearing from those farmers and canegrowers that the scheme is working and meeting expectations.

As the member for Mirani I represent a large rural sector which includes vast areas of sugar production in the Mackay, Pioneer Valley and Sarina regions. I represent a number of canegrowers who are looking forward to the opportunity to manage the irrigation scheme that is the source of their water supply for cane production. Local management of the scheme will deliver a sense of certainty for the users of the scheme as they are becoming the managers—the decision makers—and making the decisions about what they think is best for their scheme for their area. Local management is designed to use local knowledge and know-how to increase productivity along the scheme channel itself and reduce costs and the need to add value to the agricultural sector.

After getting to know the canegrowers in the Mirani electorate, they are very efficient. Driving around the area, I am always very impressed to see the effort that goes into the planting, growing and production of cane. If you are flying into Mackay and you look out the aircraft window, it looks like a beautiful mat of green. At ground level a lot of effort is put into manicuring the area where the cane is around homes. It is made to look really good from that grassroots level. They put a lot of effort and time into it, they do not make a lot of money and there are plenty of things that are making it difficult for canegrowers and other growers such as beef producers. The cost of everything these days makes life for people on the land just that much tougher.

Many members in the House today would have very little knowledge or understanding of what this bill does. However, I am sure that most would know the importance of having a local irrigation scheme managed by the users of the resource delivered through the scheme. That is very important to them even though it does not mean much to the majority of members in this House. Local users—the owners—are excited about having the opportunity to take control of the management of the Eton scheme, and that goes back to the quality of those people who will be leading the operation of the scheme in that particular area.

There is a lot of knowledge, there is a lot of common sense and there is a lot of determination to make things happen and, more importantly, to make things happen in the way that they believe is best for them. It is okay for bureaucrats to sit in Brisbane or somewhere else and make decisions, but because they do not live there—because they do not work the system and they do not understand the requirements of the system and what it is expected to deliver to canegrowers—the bureaucrats do not always get it right. I am happy for these people because, like I said, they are good people, they are committed, they are hard working and they deserve the opportunity to see if they can make this scheme work for them, and I believe that they will make it work and be very successful.

I have encouraged the minister, Mark Bailey, to work with canegrowers and give them the opportunity to take control of the management of their much appreciated water supply scheme, and the bill does just that, which, as I have said several times already, is a good thing. What many decision makers, especially in this place, do not really appreciate is that today's farmers and landowners are far more focused on doing the right thing about the land, about water use and about the environment. I commend the attitude that is out there amongst landowners, amongst farmers, amongst canegrowers and amongst breeders of cattle. They are just so much more focused on not only doing it right with the environment in mind but also the need to make a profit. Young people in today's agricultural world are, in my view as an old fellow who used to work in the agricultural world, certainly doing things a lot differently, but they have more knowledge and a determination to do their job and get it right.

As a broader community we must learn to recognise and appreciate that Australian producers on the land—it does not matter what they produce—are doing an excellent job in providing this nation and people living in other countries with the best food in the world, the cleanest food in the world and the most loved food in the world, because for those people who produce it it is a love. They love to do it. I just do not think that, on a broader scale, there is enough appreciation for these people. I can say it and mean it probably a lot more than most because I was raised on the land. I did the farming. I worked the hours. I saw my dad go through the consequences of not being able to get a good crop through share farming. I remember the day that I went share farming with my dad. I sat on the tractor for hours sowing crops, but the rains did not come and it failed. The old bugger—I am sorry; he has passed on but he is—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! I would ask the member—

Mr PEARCE: I withdraw. The dear old fellow has passed on but he never paid me, so he took a debt with him. That is the way it is on the land. You have to suffer from those types of outcomes. I may be a Labor member in this place with a strong commitment to jobs and helping those who have been done over—and I have seen people being done over all the time by superior forces—but I also have a strong connection to those people on the land. I know how hard they work and I will always do my best, even though most people on the land would not vote for me, to stand by them. As I said to the people in the Shoalwater Bay-Marlborough area some weeks ago, I may not be one of their people, but I will stand in the trenches with them every day to help them win this fight.

I acknowledge that this bill caters for an irrigation scheme to be a declared project. Under a declared project, facilitated by this amendment bill, we will see the transfer of SunWater assets, liabilities and employees to an irrigation entity and other matters that may arise. The bill also provides exemptions from state taxes, fees and charges associated with the transferred scheme. The amendment bill will grant transfer and deal with interest in land, licences, registrations, authorisations, approvals and instruments.

One of the first questions I asked about the transfer of the scheme was, 'What will happen to those people who are currently employed?' Too often we agree to do these things, but we forget about the people who are delivering—those people who are out there on the ground doing the hard work, putting in the hours. I was a bit concerned that a transfer like this from SunWater to local growers might overlook the employees and that they might be disadvantaged. Part 4 of the amendment bill talks about the transfer of transferable employees and the preservation of employee rights. It is looking after the workers and their job security.

I understand that the canegrowers who are benefiting from the scheme may need to make changes in terms of saving money and making their businesses more economical, but I ask them to think very carefully and make plans so that they really look after those workers. They should not forget that those workers and the workers before them have been able to get the schemes to where they are today. Certainly, the involvement and good judgement by landowners is just as important, but I ask them to never forget the effort of the workers and the results that they delivered simply because they want a job, they want job security and they are prepared to give their all for the people they work with.

I support this unique opportunity for the transition to local management of these schemes so that they can be owned and operated by the scheme users to ensure long-term productivity to contribute to our regional and rural economies. By handing the schemes over through cooperation with the local canegrowers, the government recognises that committed landowners will make the irrigation scheme work for them and their best interests.

I look forward to the minister ensuring—and this is important—that those dollars are there for the transition from SunWater to that local entity. I hope that we could come to the minister with any concerns and that the minister would give everybody a fair hearing. I know that the minister will do his best to help them. I support the bill before the House and offer my appreciation and thanks to the minister for the job that he has been doing up my way.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! Before I call the member for Hinchinbrook, I would like to acknowledge in the gallery a former member for Yeerongpilly and former attorney-general, Mr Matt Foley.

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (12.53 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Water (Local Management Arrangements) Amendment Bill 2016. The objectives of the bill are to amend the Water Act to facilitate the restructure and transfer of a number of SunWater's channel irrigation schemes to local management arrangements. This will be achieved primarily by establishing a legislative transfer scheme, enabling a staged transition of potentially up to eight schemes in regional areas across the state of Queensland.

I do not have any of the named irrigation schemes in my electorate of Hinchinbrook. The people of my electorate of Hinchinbrook are very lucky to have extremely strong rainfall on an annual basis. It is not that my electorate of Hinchinbrook does not have agricultural producers using irrigation resources, but there are not any of these channel irrigation schemes. The people of my electorate of Hinchinbrook draw their allocations from watercourses or groundwater supplies.

I wanted to participate in this debate to recognise the role that the previous LNP government played in bringing this initiative to fruition. I want to make a few comments about this because, as the member for Callide mentioned earlier, it was the initiative of the agriculture cabinet committee within

the former LNP government that drove this process. I was privileged to be a member of that agriculture cabinet committee and participated in the deliberations of that cabinet committee that drove this initiative to where it is today.

As the former minister for natural resources responsible for the administration of the Water Act, I can say that there is a very strong relationship between the water resource planning processes and the water allocations in SunWater schemes across the state. When the department of natural resources plans and allocates those resources to irrigation schemes in those areas where they exist, I think there should be more consideration of what opportunities exist for augmenting and enhancing access to that resource in the future.

The explanatory notes accompanying the bill state—

The Bill delivers on the Queensland Government's commitment to continue to support the transfer of SunWater's channel irrigation schemes to local management arrangements, where this is viable.

The explanatory notes really mean that the former LNP government's drive and initiative to see this transition to fruition for the benefit regional communities across the state is really happening. A check of the historical record will show that the first time Queensland communities heard about this initiative was in July 2012, when the former minister for energy and water supply, the member for Caloundra, announced that the SunWater channel irrigator working group had been established. Subsequently, in December 2012, the then minister updated the community that the channel irrigation schemes had been invited to develop their local management proposals. In April 2013, the then minister went on to say that irrigators were being invited to take part in the local management reviews of Queensland's eight irrigation schemes. In July 2013, the then minister said that the local management of irrigation channel schemes was still moving forward and that there was a plan for how the delivery of those local management areas was firmly in place.

Now, we are seeing the fruition of that planning process. The explanatory notes accompanying the bill go on to state—

To achieve the policy objectives, the Bill provides for a staged transition of potentially all eight channel schemes to local management, commencing with the Emerald, Eton, St George and Theodore channel schemes if agreement can be reached on the final terms of the transfer and there is sufficient support from scheme customers. The remaining four schemes may become part of the declared project following further investigations and subsequent Government decision on the viability of these schemes transitioning to local management—these include the Bundaberg, Burdekin-Haughton, Lower Mary and Mareeba-Dimbulah channel schemes.

I get a bit worried when I read in the explanatory notes—

Currently irrigation revenues in the schemes do not cover the cost of operating the schemes. The gap between revenues and costs is funded by the Queensland Government through the payment of community service obligation payments to SunWater. Because the schemes are loss making it is necessary to ensure that the schemes transfer with sufficient capital (a separation payment) to remain financially viable, until they are able to increase revenue and reduce costs.

I agree that that transition scheme and those separation payments are going to be a necessary part of this process, but I do not want the members of this House to think that these are non-viable irrigation schemes. Page 6 of SunWater's 2015-16 annual report, which covers the performance highlights of that government owned corporation for that particular financial year, states quite clearly that SunWater has paid—

... a \$29.009M dividend at 100 per cent of Net Profit After Tax to shareholding Ministers—

being the Minister for Water Supply and the Treasurer—and that SunWater in the 2015-16 financial year has also provided—

... a special dividend of \$130M and a return of contributed equity of \$130M.

That totals a transfer of \$260 million by 30 November 2016 to the government of Queensland so they are not doing too bad. SunWater, as a GOC, is providing that revenue stream. I do not want the members of this House, when they are contemplating this bill, to think that this initiative is a dead loss. It is not a dead loss. It may very well be the case that SunWater runs them at a loss on the basis of the explanatory notes accompanying the bill, but it does not mean that the local management boards will run them at a loss.

Debate, on motion of Mr Cripps, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Tully Coast Guard

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (2.30 pm): This week I tabled a petition on behalf of 1,110 petitioners about the outrageous situation facing the Tully Coast Guard regarding its radio installation which is co-located with Ergon infrastructure on Mount Mackay east of Tully. On 20 December 2016 I wrote to the energy minister expressing my anger and disgust at what appears to be Ergon trying to take advantage of a community based volunteer, not-for-profit organisation which provides an important marine safety service to the local community. As of today I have not had a reply from the minister or the CEO of Energy Queensland who received a copy of those representations.

Since 2001 there has been a gentleman's agreement with Ergon whereby this installation on Mount Mackay has enhanced the safety of boaties in the Cassowary Coast region. It provides coverage for the VHF distress and calling frequency, or channel 16, and UHF connections to a VHF repeater, channel 80, with a coverage of 80 nautical miles. In 2013 Ergon contacted the Tully Coast Guard to advise its infrastructure on Mount Mackay needed to be upgraded and asking if they would be prepared to contribute. You can imagine their shock when in June 2015 they were asked for between \$75,000 and \$150,000 to transfer their equipment, on top of a capital contribution of \$225,000, in addition to an ongoing annual rent of approximately \$25,000. Obviously these extraordinary costs would certainly have bankrupted the Tully Coast Guard. What I find particularly galling is that Ergon sought to extract this amount of money from a community based volunteer, not-for-profit organisation when no less than five Queensland government agencies also have communications infrastructure located at this site, including the Queensland police, Queensland ambulance, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, the SES and Maritime Safety Queensland, not to mention Ergon Energy itself, a government owned corporation.

In September 2016 further correspondence was received by the Tully Coast Guard advising that none of these parties were prepared to contribute, instead Ergon proposed a temporary refurbishment to delay the upgrade for three years. Ergon then proposed an up-front charge of \$10,000 and an annual licence fee of more than \$10,000 for three years to maintain its small radio installation at the Mount Mackay site, which is well beyond their capacity to pay.

The Tully Coast Guard provides a vital community service to the Cassowary Coast region. Ergon is threatening the future of that service. I table a copy of my representations to the energy minister in which I request his intervention and direction to Ergon to withdraw its requirement for the Tully Coast Guard to pay to co-locate its radio installation on top of Mount Mackay.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 20 December 2016, from the member for Hinchinbrook, Mr Andrew Cripps MP, to the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply, Hon. Mark Bailey, regarding arrangements for the provision of VHS radio services between Ergon Energy and the Tully Flotilla of the Australian Volunteer Coastguard [\[206\]](#).

Western Corridor NRL Bid

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (2.33 pm): I rise to speak on the western corridor NRL bid. Members of this parliament are probably aware that my electorate of Ipswich is Rugby League mad. Whether it is the Brisbane Broncos running out onto Suncorp Stadium, the Ipswich Jets playing dynamic, exciting, running footy, or just a slew of local teams enjoying a quality Saturday morning, Ipswich loudly and proudly shows its force. We are a town that has produced some of Queensland's and Australia's greatest players, players like Alfie Langer and the Walters brothers to name a few. I can tell members with some confidence that when the Ipswich Jets won the inaugural Intrust Super Cup in 2015 there was a passion and a community spirit I have not seen equalled in my years in Ipswich, not since the Broncos won in 2006 at least. In fact, so impressive were the team's achievements that year that the *Queensland Times* dubbed 2015 the year of the jet.

To put it simply, Ipswich is Rugby League heartland. Our teams do so much for the community. For example, the Jets have done work with local disability support provider Alara, helping people with disability to get involved in rugby. I have seen firsthand just how successful this collaboration has been. All our Rugby League teams work in the community assisting local schools, charities and community service organisations, including Ipswich Hospice, the Queensland Cancer Council, the Leukaemia Foundation, the Royal Flying Doctor Service and Ipswich Special School. With the quality representation that my community puts forward, it continues to baffle me that Ipswich is unrepresented on the NRL stage.

As mentioned before, the wealth of young talent emerging from Ipswich and the western corridor, which includes Toowoomba, Roma and south Logan territory, is staggering. Yet at present the pathways presented to them are limited. Many of the best young players in Australia have no choice but to uproot themselves, many as young as 18, and move to cities like Melbourne and Sydney or other cities with teams to provide themselves the opportunity to advance in the game. There has to be a better way. As mentioned by the current bid boss for the western corridor, Steven Johnson, many of the current game's greats and emerging talents have been brought up and trained in Ipswich and the western corridor area, providing ample ground and massive support for a team basing itself here. I cannot emphasise enough the opportunity a team based here would present, not only to Ipswich and the surrounding areas but also to the entire state of Queensland.

Like anything, when we as a government see talent we should utilise it. Ipswich and the western corridor is not just brimming with talent it is bursting at the seams and overwhelming the country and the state with it. I believe that the time is now to see a strong team rise up in the western corridor, one that will be a beacon for generations of young footballers to come and one that my community and many others can be proud of.

Kawana Hospital

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (2.36 pm): The opening of the new Kawana hospital this year will see the closure of the Caloundra Hospital's ED and it being replaced with what an organisational chart refers to as an urgent care centre. The new hospital will treat the most urgent cases with paramedics taking patients directly to it—that is as it should be. What does the term 'urgent care centre' mean? In a description document issued last year, it was to deliver 'urgent care services to patients' and 'management of complex clinical situations that self-present to the centre'—that is, if you are sick or injured come and get treatment, we provide urgent care. The rank stupidity is that though the facility will operate seven days per week, it will only be open 12 hours per day. That may be 9 am to 9 pm or 10 am to 10 pm. What that means is that it will treat urgent cases but only on a part-time basis. Yes, be ill or injured during the day, but not during the night.

Picture it: you arrive at 9.55 pm with a sick grandchild or partner with chest pains. That is okay, but 10 minutes later you will find the doors firmly locked behind you. What Labor is saying to Caloundra residents is you need an on/off switch. You can only be sick or injured between certain hours to get treatment at Caloundra Hospital, but switch it off when it is not open. To compound this, the Caloundra Hospital ED was expanded to create 10 additional treatment spaces at a cost of \$11.5 million just five years ago. A Labor government spent \$11.5 million and they intend to tear it down. A waste of \$11.5 million—or \$2.5 million per year over the five-year period. Just to clarify, a treatment space is, in essence, an area where sick and injured people are placed, treated and monitored. The fact that 10 bays were put in means the need was there, the population was there and the growth was there. Labor is repeating its history. It delayed construction of the Kawana hospital; now it is stopping treatment at Caloundra Hospital. As I said, \$11.5 million was spent only five years ago. But the greatest insult is a service that operates only part-time.

The population growth across Caloundra and the region is significant: 55,000 people from Aura, the Palmview development and also the Beerwah East site all adding pressure to the hospital and all needing medical treatment at one point of time or another. The people of Caloundra will not stand for it. Their money—\$11.5 million—has been wasted by this government. Taxpayer money is worth nothing to Labor and this hack of a health minister.

Babie-Leigh

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (2.39 pm): I would like to tell the House about a young woman who lives in my electorate. Babie-Leigh is 20 years old. Growing up she was subjected to physical and emotional abuse within her family. At 17 she was studying year 12, working in a retail store and doing a certificate III in retail, but in the midst of that she was kicked out of home. She managed to complete year 12 in 2013, but over the next few years her life fell apart. She was living in and out of youth shelters, she suffered from depression and was self-harming, and she attempted suicide. Her aunt, who was a significant support in Babie's life, passed away, bringing Babie-Leigh close to breaking point. Sadly, Babie-Leigh's plight worsened during 2015 when she moved into a house with her friend and her friend's partner and children. In Babie-Leigh's words, she hit rock bottom. During that time, she was subjected to mental and sexual abuse. She describes that time as dark and hard to live through. Here was a young woman who grew up with abuse and family violence and was then violated by people she thought were her friends. Again, she found herself homeless, vulnerable and alone.

At that dreadful time in her life, Babie-Leigh counts herself fortunate to have come into contact with BABI, the bayside's wonderful youth and family service provider. BABI accepted Babie-Leigh into their housing program and, although she was still struggling with depression and self-harming, she was supported and encouraged to take part in the Skilling Queenslanders for Work, Get Set for Work program. I can only imagine how hard it was for Babie-Leigh to join that program, yet she found the courage to do so and was supported by the wonderful staff at BABI. She discovered a group of people she could feel safe with, she could learn with and she could create good memories with. Up until that point, her life had been about basic survival and getting through each day, but with the support of BABI and the world it introduced her to, Babie-Leigh has found the emotional energy to deal with her past and look towards building a future for herself. Babie-Leigh has completed both certificates II and III in hospitality and now wants to undertake a community services certificate so that she can help other young people in the community. She wants to reach out to young people who are going through rough times and connect them with the services and caring people who can help them with their struggles.

Babie-Leigh is just one young person that BABI has saved. In 2016 alone, 54 young people took part in their Get Set for Work program, funded by the Palaszczuk government. A truly inspiring aspect of the work BABI does is the way it draws in the local community and businesses, which can see the value in providing a helping hand to vulnerable youth. This support at a crucial time in young peoples' lives has resulted in them finding employment, has developed their skills and has built their resilience so they can become independent contributing members of society. I am so impressed by the work BABI does in our area and I am so very proud of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to funding not-for-profit agencies that provide services for our most marginalised and vulnerable. I am equally proud to be part of a government that has reintroduced Skilling Queenslanders for Work, which is doing vital work in improving skills—

(Time expired)

Flinders Highway

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (2.42 pm): In question time today, I asked a question of the Deputy Premier and Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning about rail and road, which has become an acute problem that is much discussed. There are many studies on the Townsville to Mount Isa route, which takes ore from the North West Minerals Province to the Port of Townsville, creating a lot of wealth for Queensland, as it has done for approximately 100 years. Various mines are now transporting by road bulk freight, ore and concentrates that should be transported by the rail line that was built for that purpose. The rail line provides an intrinsically cheaper mode of transport for the delivery of those things.

All things being equal, with the way charges and policies have developed over the years, mines are being forced to make commercial decisions as it is now cheaper or more attractive to transport things by road. That is an enormous problem for us as a state and for the government, because it owns the rail line and is trying to make money off it, but if people are using the road instead, arguably, the government makes no money at all. In fact, the freight tears up the road. We are facing a situation, and I do not exaggerate, where literally thousands more road trains are travelling on the Flinders Highway, which is putting lives in danger. We are talking about triple road trains. People travelling to Townsville have to try to pass those road trains all the way along the route. I guarantee there will be deaths. If thousands more road trains travel on that road than are using it now, that will create a big problem for everyone. Obviously, safety is the biggest issue. The second issue is that there will be no income from the rail track that runs through the area. Central to much of the problem is the policy that was put in place many years ago where a return of about nine per cent is needed to make owning that rail track viable. Therefore, I imagine that, as other users stop using the rail track, those who are left on the line will have to be charged more to achieve that return, accentuating the initial problem.

Recently Aurizon, the private operator of the rail line, laid off 29 workers in Hughenden and 38 in Mount Isa, after posting an 18 per cent increase in its half-year profit. We know that Lance Hockridge, one of the previous CEOs, was paid over \$6 million a year. There are hundreds of thousands of tons of business waiting there, but they have parked up their carriages and are not talking to anyone, so mines are transporting stuff by road. This is a huge problem for everyone. I do not want to be back here in a year's time reporting that the situation has gotten worse and that people are dying on those roads because too many road trains are ripping up the roads, which cannot carry that sort of capacity. We should not be forced to wear that, when right next door to the road is a perfectly good rail line that is underutilised and could be a bigger source of revenue for the government. I think the issue of the nine per cent return needs to be addressed, because it is far too low a risk for such a good return on that asset. We do not want people losing their lives on that road.

'Say No to Pauline' Campaign

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (2.45 pm): On 14 October 2016, I hosted a lunch for approximately 100 people at Michael's Oriental Restaurant. The title of the lunch was 'Say No to Pauline'. I invited Mr Kenrick Cheah to speak. Kenrick is the President of the Australian Chinese Forum and had launched the 'Say No to Pauline' campaign in Sydney. The campaign is obviously designed to rail against the prejudice, ignorance and damage that can come to our community from One Nation. The election of One Nation in the most recent federal election shows that there is a real fear in the community as to what the future holds for people: how will they put food on the table; how will they educate their children; what happens if they become ill or one of their children becomes ill? The fact that One Nation received votes in the last federal election is a sign that many people in the electorate believe that One Nation can solve their problems.

Let me state loud and clear: One Nation is not the answer to unemployment. It is not the answer to anything. I reassure the people in my electorate that I will work hard to address their needs and that I will work tirelessly to highlight the disadvantage that people in my electorate face. The re-emergence of One Nation was a sad day for Australia because of the damaging prejudice of its rhetoric and the real hurt it brings to our community. When One Nation first emerged, it vilified Asians; now it has turned its attention to Muslims. Who knows which group will be the next target of its ignorance and prejudice?

Queensland exports to the rest of the world. Effectively dealing with the complexities of foreign trade requires more than slogans that attack the most vulnerable in our communities and cause people to fear one another. I am a proud member of the Australian Labor Party and the state member for Sunnybank. The state electorate of Sunnybank has one of the most diverse multicultural communities in Queensland. The 'Say No to Pauline' luncheon highlighted that One Nation has no policies, no ideas and does not even understand history and the role migrants have played in shaping the country we are. People have settled in the suburbs of my electorate for a number of reasons.

Tourism, Digital Technology

 **Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (2.48 pm): I put on the record the LNP policy to increase the number of wi-fi hotspots across Queensland to boost and promote tourism and the wealth of the natural assets that we are lucky to call our own. As I do this, I note that we will wait and watch the Palaszczuk Labor government try and nick another LNP idea and pass it off as its own. We have seen that happen time and time again, so it would be of no great surprise. We saw this morning that the progress and the achievement of the ICT department has not been updated since 22 December 2015. That gives us an indication of how much this do-nothing government is doing.

I will talk about our plan. Our plan for digital tourism will increase wi-fi coverage in local communities and we will partner with local governments and regional tourism organisations so that we can showcase Queensland to the world through social media, complementing the range of other marketing campaigns that already run. If elected, an LNP government will promote our key tourism destinations through the increased use of social and digital media to ensure we get more than our fair share of interstate and international tourists. We will do this through a \$3 million capital infrastructure program over three years to roll out 500 new wi-fi hotspots to key tourism destinations across the state. Using digital and social media to showcase our great tourism locations is a very smart way to share the word that Queensland is a great place to visit.

We have an amazing range of natural and manmade tourism assets that are unique to Queensland and set our state apart from other tourist destinations around Australia. From the Great Barrier Reef in the Far North to the Australian Age of Dinosaurs museum near Winton in the outback and the turtles at Mon Repos near Bundaberg we have an advantage that we need to capitalise on.

Queensland needs an edge to boost tourism and to ensure that we do not keep losing market share to our interstate competitors. More than 20,000 extra jobs are predicted to be created in the tourism industry over the next four years, but that will not happen without a plan to grow tourism. I can report to the House that following correspondence to mayors across the state there has been an overwhelming response and interest in the policy and the expressions of interest are already rolling in. I certainly look forward to travelling around the state with my shadow ministerial colleague the member for Beaudesert as we continue to discuss this exciting program.

(Time expired)

Bulimba Electorate

 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (2.51 pm): This week marks two years since the swearing in of the Palaszczuk Labor government, and what an amazing two years it has been, with the Premier and every one of her ministers knuckling down to deliver on the things we promised Queenslanders—delivering, as the Premier told this House on Tuesday, 442 of our 553 election commitments so far. Most of all, we have shown Queenslanders that we want to listen and that, unlike the LNP government before us, what Queenslanders think is important we think is important as well.

In the electorate of Bulimba that is exactly the approach I take. To me a politician cannot know what their community needs if they are not out and about making themselves as accessible as possible and listening to what is important to their constituents. The people of the Bulimba electorate make it very clear to me what they think is important.

One of those priorities is education. I work closely with the schools and the P&Cs and P&Fs and am so proud of everything they do. That is why I have been so excited about the fact that around \$10 million has been spent by this government in the last two years on our local schools. It was exciting to be able to ring the schools to tell them when they got that funding. It was even more exciting to walk through a number of them at the beginning of this year to see that funding come to fruition—to see all the work that had been done over the holidays to make sure the improvements were ready to go for our kids.

I commend those principals who, I know, did not get much holiday time because they were so busy supervising the building works at their schools, but were very happy to do so, I might add. I commend Chris Ling from Cannon Hill State School who made over \$550,000 go such a long way. Linda Galloway from Balmoral State High School was delighted to show me the classrooms that have been so beautifully upgraded—they look new. They are now wonderful environments for teachers and students alike. She has been very wise in her decisions. I am looking forward to the renovations to the assembly hall which are almost finished.

I commend Ben Turner from Murarrie State School. I know that school was over the moon about their classroom upgrades. I know how much they appreciate Ben. Mr Michael Zeuschner from Bulimba State School has worked tirelessly with the P&C to make sure their new \$7.2 million classroom block and resource centre fits their very tricky site. I know that the minister has been keeping a close eye on that project and I thank her for coming out on the first day of school to see what is happening so far. I commend Sister Ann-Maree Nicholls at Sts Peter and Paul's for organising a tricky site with no disruption to students. I know that Sister Ann-Maree could run the Olympics if she were asked to do that as well.

There are so many great things that have happened in the Bulimba electorate over the last couple of years. I intend to talk about all of them ad nauseam in the House this year. I thank all the residents of the Bulimba electorate who have worked alongside me to raise issues and to advocate for the things that are important to them and who have such a passionate commitment to maintaining the quality of life that characterises our community. I am very proud to be their member.

Public Housing

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (2.54 pm): I rise to express concern about the deplorable track record of this do-nothing Labor government. Every week in my office at Southport one of the greatest challenges that I face is people coming to talk about the need for public housing. I would have thought that the Labor government of old would be ashamed of the Labor government today because the Labor government of old was all about looking after the battlers.

What have we seen in the last couple of years from this do-nothing government on the other side of the House in respect of public housing? I can tell members. We have seen a handful of new apartments in Southport on the Gold Coast in the last two years. They had the opportunity to progress some of most innovative housing schemes at little or no cost to government in partnership with community housing providers and community service providers. What did they do? They killed that off because they did not like it.

What about the people out there battling to get a home? I had a young mother in my office just two weeks ago. She is 27 years of age. She has a six-year-old and five-year-old. She has been abandoned by her husband and is pregnant with her third child. With 11 days to go until the baby was due she was evicted from commercial housing. She had absolutely nowhere to go. Just last week I had

another person in my office. This person is a great champion of our nation who has sadly fallen on hard times, has lost a daughter to cancer and is living in a garage. This person has been on the waiting list for public housing for a considerable length of time.

I am very concerned about the lack of vision and the lack of bold direction from those on the other side of the House in respect of housing. Within the \$88 million domestic violence strategy that was launched late last year in response to the domestic violence situation there was only \$12 million over five years earmarked for crisis housing for women and families fleeing very difficult circumstances.

I think it is time that this do-nothing government started to take some real action. We do not need any more reviews. We do not need any more discussion around what needs to be done. We actually need them to come up with a concrete plan on how they are going to address one of the most fundamental needs of Queenslanders across this state—shelter. Right now there are thousands and thousands on the public housing waiting lists who need something as simple as a roof over their head. Their kids deserve the stability of knowing that they can go to one house, settle into one school and that they have a future.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

 **Hon. M FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (2.57 pm): Our nation has made excellent progress on the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, our First Australians. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the 1967 referendum. An overwhelming 89 per cent of Queenslanders voted in favour of amending the Constitution to include Indigenous Australians in the national census. Nine years ago this week, then prime minister Kevin Rudd delivered a national apology for the mistreatment of those who were the stolen generations.

We have come a long way. However, some regrettable mid-20th century attitudes remain. Over the Christmas period, I travelled with my son Troy, his wife, Daniela, and my two beautiful grandchildren, Xavia and Marley, from Cairns to Cooktown along the Bloomfield Track, through Cape Tribulation and onto the beautiful Wujal Wujal community. This is an area that you would be quite familiar with, Mr Deputy Speaker Crawford. We enjoyed the hospitality of the mayor of Wujal Wujal, Desmond Tayley. On the following day, departing that beautiful area, at the Cooktown airport I got a sense of the disturbing underbelly of mid-20th century attitudes still apparent in pockets of our diverse nation.

An older gentleman asked me what I had been doing in that part of the world. I said I had been to Wujal Wujal. His response was disturbing. He said, 'I don't like the colour scheme down there.' These are the words of bigotry and intolerance, cheered on from the sidelines by the dog whistlers of the far Right. Apart from describing the members opposite as 'very, very mediocre', it was LNP Senator George Brandis who stated, 'People have a right to be bigots,' in relation to section 18 of the Racial Discrimination Act. Then there is Pauline Hanson. Who can ever forget her 1996 maiden speech, when she said—

I have done research on benefits available only to Aboriginals and challenge anyone to tell me how Aboriginals are disadvantaged.

My commitment is to advancing reconciliation and to closing the gap of disadvantage among our Indigenous Queenslanders through practical measures to boost education, health, jobs and economic engagement. We shall never reconcile our nation, our state, our past until we respect our First Nations people. We must condemn prejudice and fear. It will never bring us together; it will only divide us. We share the same biology—the same 23 pairs of chromosomes. We are all one race, the human race.

CORRECTIVE SERVICES (PAROLE BOARD) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (3.00 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Corrective Services Act 2006, the Judges (Pensions and Long Leave) Act 1957, the Parole Orders (Transfer) Act 1984 and the acts mentioned in schedule 1 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: Corrective Services (Parole Board) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 [\[207\]](#).

Tabled paper: Corrective Services (Parole Board) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017, explanatory notes [\[208\]](#).

It is a great pleasure to rise in this House today to introduce the Corrective Services (Parole Board) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017, which will establish the new Parole Board Queensland, implementing several key recommendations made by Mr Walter Sofronoff QC in the Queensland Parole System Review report. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Sofronoff for undertaking this important review following the tragic death of Ms Elizabeth 'Beth' Kippen in Townsville in July 2016. The man charged was a paroled offender.

The effectiveness of the parole process is fundamental to the integrity of Queensland's corrective services system. The Palaszczuk government is absolutely committed to ensuring that Queensland has a parole system that effectively manages prisoners released into the community and protects the community now and into the future. It is this commitment and focus that led to Mr Sofronoff being tasked with undertaking a review of the current parole system in Queensland.

On 1 December 2016, Mr Sofronoff delivered his report to the government, making 91 recommendations for wide-sweeping legislative, operational and administrative changes to Queensland's parole system. The review report provides a comprehensive blueprint for reform. The findings in the report, which was tabled today by the Premier and Minister for the Arts, is the result of the most up-to-date research, contemporary practice in other jurisdictions and wideranging consultation with experts in the field of criminology. This bill focuses on two core areas of reform recommended in the report—reform of the Queensland parole board system and expansion of GPS monitoring to parolees.

The report found that there were systemic deficiencies in the operation of the three existing parole boards in Queensland. Board decision-making appeared to be unstructured and not always approached by the whole board on an informed basis. Mr Sofronoff observed that material provided to the parole boards in advance of meetings was typically voluminous, unstructured, unindexed and compiled without careful consideration as to what information was necessary for the board in making its decisions. The report concluded that the present parole system in Queensland can be substantially improved. Mr Sofronoff recommended that, to ensure the safety of the community and the proper and efficient operation of the parole system in Queensland, the parole board must be modernised and professionalised. This bill delivers on that vision.

As recommended in the report, the bill provides for a single, professionalised parole board that operates independently to hear all applications for board ordered parole in Queensland. The new Parole Board will retain the same powers and functions as currently provided under the Corrective Services Act. However, as recommended, the bill makes significant changes to the membership, composition, structure and operations of the new Parole Board Queensland. This new board will supplant the three existing parole boards. Whilst this means the current board members' existing appointments will end upon commencement of the bill, the current board members will be able to apply to be a member of the new board.

As recommended in the report, the new board will be led by a full-time president and at least one full-time deputy president. It will also comprise at least two full-time professional members who may be drawn from a diversity of backgrounds and whose university or professional qualifications are relevant to the functions of the Parole Board, including lawyers, medical practitioners and psychiatrists. The bill provides that appointments to each of these positions will be made by the Governor in Council, upon the recommendation of the minister. For the president and deputy president, the minister must consult with the relevant parliamentary committee about the proposed appointment and, for the professional members, the minister must consult with the president of the Parole Board Queensland.

Consistent with the recommendations in the report, the bill provides that the president and deputy president must be a former judge of a state or federal court. The bill also enables the minister to recommend a person for president who has the qualifications, experience or standing considered equivalent to that of a judge of a state or federal court. The deputy president can also be a former magistrate.

In recognition of the significance and stature of these new roles and to ensure the recruitment of high-calibre appointees, the salaries, allowances and entitlements of the president and deputy president will be based on those of a Supreme Court judge and District Court judge, respectively, and both positions will have a pension entitlement similar but not identical to that of a Supreme Court or District Court judge respectively. This approach to remuneration and pension entitlement is consistent with the approach already taken regarding the Chairperson of the Crime and Corruption Commission, noting also that the entitlements of the Chairperson of the Crime and Corruption Commission is akin to a Supreme Court judge.

As recommended, the new board will comprise at least one police representative and at least one Public Service representative who has expertise or experience in probation and parole matters. As recommended in the report, the Queensland community will also be represented on the board in the form of community board members who will be appointed by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the minister and on the terms and conditions set out in the instrument of appointment. The community members may be part-time or full-time. Crucially, as recommended in the report, the bill emphasises the need to ensure appropriate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and for balanced gender representation in the membership of the new Parole Board.

As recommended in the report, the bill makes express provision for the new Parole Board to be supported by a dedicated secretariat, whose role will be to support the board in the performance of its functions. These officers will be Public Service employees.

As was emphasised by Mr Sofronoff, the bill draws a distinction between parole meetings involving decision-making about a prisoner incarcerated for a serious violent offence or a serious sexual offence, as compared to all other prisoners. For this serious category of offenders, the bill, as recommended in the report, mandates that the board must comprise at least five members and those sitting at the meetings must include: the president or deputy president, a professional board member, a community board member, a Public Service representative and a police representative. For all other cases, the board must comprise three members, consisting of at least one professional member, one community member and one other member.

Included in the bill are the necessary arrangements to ensure the smooth transition from the current parole board process to the new one. These arrangements will ensure that community safety is not compromised throughout this transitional period. Recommendation 60 of the report states—

Queensland Corrective Services' GPS tracking capabilities should be developed so that it is possible for the parole board to require GPS tracking and monitoring in appropriate circumstances based on the assessed risk of each parolee.

The bill, accordingly, includes technical and clarifying amendments to ensure that Queensland Corrective Services officers have the ability and resources to monitor the location and restrict the movements of a prisoner subject to parole—that is, a prisoner subject to either court ordered parole or board ordered parole. Electronic monitoring provides another valuable tool for Corrective Services to manage, administer and monitor parolees. The community can be assured that, where applicable, at any given time, Corrective Services staff will be in a position to monitor parolees and react to situations as they arise.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the tireless work conducted by Mr Peter McInnes, President of the Queensland Parole Board, parole board members, the secretariat, custodial officers, probation and parole officers, and staff from Queensland Corrective Services. I would particularly like to acknowledge Commissioner Mark Rallings, Deputy Commissioner Kerrith McDermott, Selina Shea, John Forster, Kate Petrie and Tom Humphreys from Queensland Corrective Services. I would also like to acknowledge David Mackie, Leanne Robertson and Carolyn McAnally for their commitment to helping keep Queenslanders safe and for their role in helping to deliver this reform for the people of Queensland.

Although this bill is called the Corrective Services (Parole Board) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017, given what has happened and where we are today, I think it appropriate that always in our hearts and minds we refer to this law as 'Beth's Law'. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. MT RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (3.12 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 Crawford): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

Hon. MT RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (3.12 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report to the House on the Corrective Services (Parole Board) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 28 April 2017.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Portfolio Committees, Transfer of Responsibilities

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (3.13 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders, the House vary the committee responsible for the Police Powers and Responsibilities (Commonwealth Games) Amendment Bill from the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

WATER (LOCAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 210, on motion of Mr Bailey—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (3.14 pm), continuing: Before the luncheon adjournment I was making an observation about my concerns over comments in the explanatory notes accompanying the bill about the narrow-minded interpretation of the contribution that channel irrigation schemes make to the economy of Queensland, particularly the economies of regional communities in Queensland. The explanatory notes make the observation that the Queensland government, through community service obligation payments to SunWater, attempts to cover a gap between revenues and the cost of operations for those schemes.

I also made the observation before the luncheon adjournment that the 2015-16 annual report for SunWater outlines a \$29 million dividend paid by SunWater to the government of Queensland—namely, the Treasurer and the Minister for Water Supply. In that same annual report it provided for a special dividend in the last financial year of \$130 million and a return on contributed equity of \$130 million, meaning that there was going to be a transfer in 2015-16 to the government of \$260 million from SunWater.

Beyond the cash treatment of the performance of SunWater, I think it is important to touch on the point that was made by the member for Mirani and the member for Callide—that is, the contribution of these channel irrigation schemes is so much more significant than simply the cash that is recorded in their annual report. For decades and decades these channel irrigation schemes have made significant contributions to stamp duty revenues, to land tax revenues of the state and payroll tax revenues of the state because of the improvements and enhancements to the productivity of the land and to the communities attached to the country towns attached to these irrigation schemes. Some of these towns would not exist without those irrigation schemes to make these very significant contributions to the productivity of the Queensland economy.

I wanted to make that point during my contribution because I was concerned that the tone of the explanatory notes accompanying the bill would give members considering this proposed legislation a false understanding of the contribution that these irrigation schemes made. I think this is a good step forward. It is the product of a very forward-looking former LNP government, as I established earlier by tabling these public statements by the former minister for water supply, the member for Caloundra.

Tabled paper: Bundle of media statements by the former Minister for Energy and Water Supply, Hon. Mark McArdle, regarding water management of irrigation schemes [\[209\]](#).

I thank that LNP government for taking those very positive steps and I support this legislation.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (3.16 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Water (Local Management Arrangements) Amendment Bill 2016. This is an important bill for my area, which has one of the largest irrigation schemes in the state centred on the sugar industry. Following the irrigation price path announced in 2012, irrigators raised concerns about the long-term sustainability of the existing SunWater irrigation channels, and I am pleased that up to eight channel irrigation schemes will be transitioning to local management arrangements under the ownership and operation of local irrigators who benefit from the scheme. This is certainly an opportunity in a time of spiralling water and electricity costs to keep downward pressure on costs in order to remain viable. Importantly, the transition to an LMA will allow our farmers to irrigate their crops to achieve maximum crop growth during peak irrigation times.

The transition to LMAs will empower our agricultural communities across the state by giving the control that is required to manage and grow their sectors in their respective regions. All eight of the schemes—namely, Bundaberg, Burdekin-Haughton, Eton, Emerald, St George, Theodore, Lower Mary and Mareeba-Dimbulah—fall within major intensive agricultural regions with cotton, horticulture and sugarcane industries represented. Burdekin chair Mario Barbagallo has publicly stated that he hopes the current state government understands the importance of moving forward with the implementation of locally managed irrigation schemes. He said that giving water users more opportunity to manage their supply schemes will make them both more efficient and more responsive to customer demands. I could not agree with him more.

I note that four of the schemes—Eton, Emerald, St George and Theodore—are ready for local management, with the remaining schemes to come online this year. In my electorate of Burdekin, an LMA will enable earlier replacement of assets nearing end of life such as concrete channels at Clare, Millaroo and Dalbeg, address rising groundwater issues and replace a number of ad hoc water supply arrangements that currently exist. The benefits of an LMA will mean local ownership, local offices and pricing decisions made locally to protect irrigator viability, greater incentives to reduce costs, choice with regard to pricing arrangements, better engagement with customers on critical decisions, capping the cost of the schemes to the taxpayer and greater transparency.

I note that there are significant differences between the schemes in terms of risk, age, viability, scale, operation, customer culture and local politics which must be taken into account in the design and execution of local management arrangements. The potential risks to government and scheme customers that could arise through moving to local management are likely to be successfully mitigated through implementing a well-planned stage 3, with a focus on achieving long-term sustainability of the new entities and sound governance arrangements.

I know in my area I would like to see an expansion of the area to incorporate those areas south of Home Hill, which is ideally situated to capitalise on growing agricultural opportunities. I refer here to the Elliot Main Channel proposal which has been on the drawing board now for several decades. It is certainly something that would open up all that land between Home Hill and Bowen to intensive agriculture, and it would present a massive scope and massive opportunities. There is an opportunity here for the government to invest in this scheme, to grow the irrigation areas which will in turn provide a boost to the local and regional economies. I would encourage the government to take on board those economic development opportunities that go hand in hand with investment in water infrastructure. It is also important to understand that the due diligence process has identified that a number of these schemes will require significant capital investment in asset refurbishment and renewal over the next 30 years. I hope this has been taken into consideration by the government.

It is interesting to note that since 2000 price paths have been set with the intention of closing the gap between costs and revenues and achieving cost-reflective pricing. In practice, the gap has in fact commonly grown, with the consistent underestimation of costs and/or inadequate price increases illustrated by the fact that predicted break-even years have seldom been achieved.

In summing up, I would ask the minister to confirm to this parliament that the government is dealing with the issue of final separation payments in a fair and equitable manner. I know it is something that has caused a lot of angst and anxiety out there amongst the LMAs. It is an important issue to ensure that this is finalised in a timely manner. I know there is significant concern amongst the affected entities regarding this issue. I would highlight that irrigators are concerned with bulk water prices. I would ask the minister to tell us what undertaking he would give to lock in a QCA type process to ensure prudent and efficient costing of water to our farmers in the future.

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (3.22 pm): I rise this afternoon to also make a contribution to the Water (Local Management Arrangements) Amendment Bill 2016. Needless to say, I will be supporting the bill. I would like to echo the sentiments expressed already by my fellow North Queenslanders—the members for Hinchinbrook and Burdekin—in what they have articulated in this debate this afternoon. There is no doubt that local people know best. Local knowledge and a sense of empowerment cannot be quantified. If the best accountants and actuaries were in a room together, that could not be quantified.

Whilst there are no water management bodies in my own electorate of Whitsunday, I look across the border to the electorate of Mirani and I heard the contribution from the member for Mirani. I appreciate what he has said in this debate here this afternoon acknowledging the work of those people involved with the Eton irrigation scheme. On a day like today, I like to get nostalgic when we talk about those irrigation schemes, including the one at Dimbulah in the far north of the state, and I look to my good friend in here, the member for Gregory. We look at the town of Emerald that he proudly represents in this place. Emerald would not be the town it is today without the construction of the Fairbairn Dam all those years ago. It is not rocket science, but without the dam—

Mr Millar: In 1969.

Mr COSTIGAN: It was 1969, and Emerald saw great transformation in the 1970s on the back of the construction of the dam on the Nogoa River. We see the town of Emerald as it is today with the schools, modern sporting facilities, modern shopping facilities and so forth. It is the capital of the Central Highlands. It has been a great success story.

Coming back to Eton, I want to acknowledge the contribution of people like Lee Blackburn, the transitional board chairman, and John Muscat, John Palmer, Jo Prior and Tom Wallwork. On a day like today, I also think of the Deguara family and all those farmers who are out there at Victoria Plains, Oakenden, Brightly, Homebush and so forth. We have 15,000 hectares of irrigated farmland there on the back of the Kinchant Dam, which of course was the great vision of the late Tom Newbery, a former member for Mirani. In fact it was great to catch up with Mr Newbery's grandson at the races at Ooralea, home of the Mackay Turf Club, which is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year. It is turning back the clock and reliving those glory days.

As the member for Callide said in this debate before lunch, it gave economic opportunities to so many places in regional Queensland. Without government support, it probably would not have happened. There have been some great success stories there. The bill does apply to Bundaberg, Burdekin-Haughton, Eton, Emerald, St George, Theodore, the Lower Mary and the Mareeba-Dimbulah irrigation schemes.

It is important to note—and I will say it unashamedly, and I see the Leader of the House looking on with a bit of a wry smile—that the LNP got this process underway. It is pleasing to see, amid the argy-bargy of politics in this place, that there is some closure here, and not before time. There is no doubt that stage 3 was delayed by nine months after Labor came to government. Without getting bogged down in that, I think this is a great way forward. I think the member for Callide also commented in his contribution that we should see some of these irrigation schemes, bodies and entities down the track looking to tap into Royalties for the Regions—or the cheapened down version, as I like to call it, under the current Palaszczuk Labor government—to grow these schemes.

In relation to Eton, I want to also pay tribute to my good friend the late Jack Long. I am sure he is looking down on us here today, having grown cane out there in the Eton district, that fertile part of country to the south-west of Mackay and the lower Pioneer Valley. In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker Stewart, I am sure you are no stranger to that part of the world, given your travels across North Queensland. It is a great part of the Mackay-Whitsunday region.

I heard my good friend the member for Burdekin talking about the Elliot Main Channel. When I came to Bowen as a 17-year-old fresh-faced reporter with News Corporation, they were talking about it then and they are still talking about it today. I am passionate about economic development and regional development, underpinned by key water infrastructure—as are the member for Burdekin, the member for Hinchinbrook and others. We hope we live—

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr Millar: Rookwood Weir would be great.

Mr COSTIGAN: I will come to the member for Lockyer in a moment, but Rookwood Weir would be great and I take the interjection from the member for Gregory. These water infrastructure projects are right across Central, North and Far North Queensland, and that is why I call on the Palaszczuk

Labor government today to get fair dinkum about these water infrastructure projects—such as the Rookwood Weir on the Fitzroy River. There are plenty more of them, like Hell's Gate on the Burdekin Dam. We keep talking about getting water piped from the Burdekin to the City of Townsville so the ratepayers of Townsville are not watching that meter run hot every day. You of all people, Mr Deputy Speaker Stewart, would know about that. If we take the politics out of it, it costs a bomb, doesn't it?

The people of North Queensland are looking for water security—not just in relation to agricultural opportunities. That is certainly important and it is something I am passionate about, along with the members for Burdekin, Gregory, Lockyer and Gympie who are in the House today. I have been banging on about water security for North Queensland for some time. We saw Bill Shorten, the federal opposition leader, roll into Townsville late last year, but I do not think we have heard a whisper since about water security for North Queensland.

When we think of those big water infrastructure projects and irrigation schemes, we certainly think of the Nullinga Dam on the Walsh River on the Atherton Tablelands, Hell's Gate on the Upper Burdekin and the Rookwood Weir as mentioned by the member for Gregory this afternoon. I also mention my pet project, and I know the member for Burdekin shares my vision here. I come back to my story of when I went to Bowen in 1989 as a young, baby-faced reporter with the *Bowen Independent*. They were talking about the Elliot Main Channel, and they were certainly talking about the Urannah Dam project, as envisaged by the longest serving attorney-general and minister for justice in this place, the late Sir Peter Delamothe, the former Liberal MP for Bowen. He was a former Collinsville medico who set up his practice in Bowen 80 years ago this year, if my memory serves me right. He had a vision, along with the late great Ted Cunningham, to build the Urannah Dam and to have an irrigation scheme downstream—the Bowen River irrigation scheme, if you like—around the Collinsville area.

There is at least 30,000 hectares of irrigated farm land. It is something for which people like David Evans from Bowen Collinsville Enterprise, Bruce Hedditch from the Bowen Chamber of Commerce and Dave Nebauer, who has again been beating the drum about this in the Bowen Collinsville area, are agitating. I have spoken to Garry Scanlan alongside my colleagues the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition when they were in my part of the world recently with the Greater Whitsunday Alliance—GWA—the new peak economic development body for the Mackay-Whitsunday region. Guess what happens tomorrow? The Aroona Dam and I dare say the Elliot Main Channel are some of the projects that will be discussed.

I return to the bill in saying that there is no doubt that we on this side of the House are very conscious about local knowledge and empowering local communities. There is no doubt that the Eton irrigation scheme in my part of the world, albeit across the Pioneer River in the adjoining electorate of Mirani, has been a great success story. The member for Callide reminded us all about what the minister said in relation to this bill, and that is that this is all about the transfer of an asset to the community. It is refreshing to hear that, isn't it?

Mr Millar: Absolutely!

Mr COSTIGAN: I take the interjection from the member for Gregory. It is very refreshing indeed. I will not go over the background that has been provided by my colleagues on this side of the chamber, particularly the member for Hinchinbrook. Needless to say, we are very grateful for the work that has been done by these people who have stepped up to the plate in the interests of their local community. I speak of people like Mr Blackburn in the case of Eton and Mr Barbagallo in the case of the Burdekin-Haughton scheme and many others right across Central and Far North Queensland. I believe that the Palaszczuk Labor government needs to get fair dinkum and start committing to some of these key water infrastructure projects and start building them, particularly with \$5 billion on the table right now through the Northern Australia infrastructure fund. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. During the previous parliament we all got together and talked about the Queensland Plan, about growing Northern Queensland and getting people to come, but you have to provide opportunities. They have been coming to Central North and Far North Queensland for a long time—to the Central Highlands, to the Atherton Tablelands. All those immigrants have come here. Without water, what have we got?

Mr Last: Not much.

Mr COSTIGAN: I take the interjection from my good friend the member for Burdekin. In summing up, I am very supportive of the bill. It was interesting to hear the member for Mirani urging the minister to work with canegrowers here. I would suggest that if the member for Mirani is not happy with what the LNP is doing in relation to sugar then he is quite welcome to cross the floor. I support the bill.

 **Hon. CJ O'ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland) (3.32 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Water (Local Management Arrangements) Amendment Bill 2016. This bill is the next vital step in continuing our government's commitment to rural and regional Queenslanders, particularly those in the agricultural sector. Right now more than 86 per cent of our state is drought declared, which is the largest proportion of Queensland ever recorded. Agriculture is an essential part of our economy and particularly in these drought declared areas the people need reassurance of reliable, well-managed and affordable water supply.

The amendments in this bill will provide the necessary framework to transfer SunWater's channel irrigation schemes to local customer ownership and management. It will mean that for the first time the people who know the most about their water supply, the local irrigators, will have control over the infrastructure they rely on. They will have the ability to set service standards that meet their needs and have greater control over variables such as customer engagement, transparency and pricing. By moving away from the current one-size-fits-all approach, communities can develop local solutions to meet their local needs and provide ongoing affordable water to the agriculture industry. Local management will also generate incentives for those who own and operate the irrigation channel schemes to reduce costs and maximise the value of water.

By putting irrigators in charge of their costs, local irrigation services could become more efficient, which could lead to further growth in the agriculture sector. It will also encourage goods and services to be locally sourced with the potential to increase work for local contractors and traders. Our government is dedicated to working with each community to ensure their local management scheme is operated effectively and provides value for money, which is why the amendments in this bill include a range of provisions to ensure that the transfer of schemes does not impact the ongoing operation of the channels.

We know that locals know what is best for their communities, which is why schemes will only progress to local management if the community supports it. I was happy to read in the committee's report that there has been strong support for local management throughout the process so far. I look forward to continuing these conversations with irrigators as the transfer process continues.

It is important to note that local management is about community ownership and not about privatisation. Local irrigators will operate the schemes to reduce costs and increase productivity, not to generate profits from the irrigation business. It is also important to note that this bill only refers to irrigation water schemes and does not include dams, which will continue to be owned and controlled by SunWater.

Local management arrangements have been successfully introduced in a number of other states including New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia, and now it is time for Queensland to join in. The passing of this bill represents the unique opportunity for schemes to be owned and operated by their users, ensuring long-term productivity and growth in our regional and rural economies. It is for these reasons that I am proud to support the bill.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (3.35 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker Stewart, before I go on, I congratulate you on your new position as a Temporary Speaker and I look forward to working with you.

I rise to speak in support of the Water (Local Management Arrangements) Amendment Bill to restructure and transfer up to eight SunWater channel irrigation schemes to local management arrangements. The bill applies to Bundaberg, Burdekin-Haughton, Eton, St George, Theodore, Lower Mary, Mareeba and of course the scheme I know a lot about, which is the Emerald irrigation scheme, which is in my electorate of Gregory. That scheme has been the cornerstone for the Emerald and Central Highlands region. The construction of Fairbairn Dam, finished in 1969, and has played a critical role in making sure that we have expanded agriculture in that region.

Firstly, can I say how disappointing it has been that the Labor government have taken two years to finalise this process. Yes, it was two years, even though everything was ready to go. All they had to do was get the legislation going.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr MILLAR: Yes, it was two years ago. It was signed, sealed and ready to go. It was sitting there. It was something that this government could have easily put forward in the first sitting week of the parliament back in 2015. They did not even look at it. They left people in limbo for over two years. All the hard work had been done. The meetings had taken place under the former LNP government. The establishment of the local LMA interim boards had already been established and were doing the heavy lifting to take local management to the irrigators and stakeholders. It was already done. All the minister

had to do was get this legislation going, which we are doing today. However, it is two years later. In fact, the agricultural cabinet subcommittee—and I mention the former deputy premier, the member for Callide; the former minister for water, the member for Caloundra; the former natural resources minister, the member for Hinchinbrook; and the former member for Toowoomba South, John McVeigh. They put this all together. They did all the hard work and the heavy lifting and made sure that this was ready to go. It took two years for members opposite to bring this up. What were they waiting for?

Mr Power: How many times have you said that?

Mr MILLAR: I say it because I think it is important that people know. Why did they let people out in that region wait for two years before they got this legislation up? They could have had this legislation ready to go in the first week of the parliamentary term in 2015. Two years!

Mr Costigan: Low-hanging fruit.

Mr MILLAR: Low-hanging fruit. They did not even know what the LMAs were. They probably did not even realise that we had an irrigation industry in Queensland. It is not rocket science. The other states had already completed the process. Local management of irrigation schemes had commenced in other states—in New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia—in line with the aims of the National Water Initiative, but because of the delay from the minister, Queensland was lagging behind. The minister had dropped the ball on local management authorities in this state, which is so reliant on agriculture. These irrigation schemes are all about high-value agriculture.

It was all part of the same sad state of affairs, which meant that Queensland did not have a department of agriculture and fisheries or forestry when the LNP took office in 2012. We did not even have a department of agriculture. Even as the Bligh government was proposing to convert stock routes to conservation corridors, Western Queensland was on the countdown to an epic drought and those stock routes proved vital in maintaining the state's breeding herds. These are issues that are so important to Queenslanders, so when the LNP came to power agriculture finally had a voice again. Farmers and graziers had real concerns about the dire state of their industry which were going to be addressed by the LNP government. Of course I pay tribute to Minister John McVeigh, the member for Toowoomba South, the member for Callide, the member for Hinchinbrook and the member for Caloundra, the minister for water at that time, who got those LMAs going and made an effort to ensure that we had interim boards engaged with irrigators to make sure we got this process going.

I am someone who is very familiar with the Emerald Irrigation Scheme. The Emerald irrigation area is fed by the Fairbairn Dam, which was funded by a federal grant and built by the Snowy Mountains Authority. The dam was completed in 1968—that is nearly 50 years ago—and it has transformed not just Emerald but the whole Central Highlands, an area as big as Tasmania. The Nogoa-Mackenzie community of irrigator farmers is a very innovative one. It was first introduced to water trading as a way of ensuring that water allocations were used for the most economically beneficial purpose. I have a deep understanding of the Emerald irrigation community. My family are irrigators in the Emerald irrigation area and grow cotton, mung beans, chickpeas and a variety of crops, so I understand the possibilities offered by local management. I am very proud that this is a project which was commenced under the LNP government.

We moved through a methodical process with a working group to see if this concept was viable. Stage 2 saw detailed investigations into the financial, legal and engineering considerations. We also needed to ensure that there was sufficient local support for such a transfer. With the election of the Labor government everything seemed to come to a halt, finally grinding back in a motion in September 2016. Five schemes, including Emerald, are now ready to proceed with a business plan in place. I congratulate all of the interim boards and their chairs for the hard work they have done and for the patience they have shown over the last two years to finally get this legislation to the Queensland parliament. What is needed now is a sincere and honest effort to make this work. I know that the board chair, Annette Smith, and her fellow board members have strong local support for the success of the scheme, and I know they have come to the task with a 100 per cent commitment to make it work.

Another issue that I am also concerned about is the prospect of the LMAs being left with a financial headache. The government needs to make sure that these LMAs have the right sinking fund and the right finances to continue on if they are to go to local management. They cannot be left in a situation where the infrastructure around those schemes is lagging and they have to continue to prop it up with higher prices. There has to be a commitment from this government to ensure those local management areas have the proper financial settlement and proper financial opportunities to make sure that the infrastructure and the maintenance of those LMAs is up to date when that takeover happens. You do not want to short-change those LMAs because it will have a huge impact on water prices, which will have an impact on agricultural production in those areas.

Let's be honest. I know it has been suggested that SunWater and those irrigation schemes were not profitable, but there have been millions and millions of dollars in dividends from SunWater handed over to the government. We are talking about tens and tens of millions of dollars in dividends from SunWater—which is a government owned corporation—which is given to the government. I believe the government owes it to these local management areas to make sure that when the money is transferred they have the right amount of financial assistance to make sure that the infrastructure of those irrigation schemes is kept up to date before they are handed over. I implore those opposite to ensure that that happens.

Water infrastructure is very important to Central Queensland. We need to make sure that we continue to invest in water infrastructure from the state government's point of view. I call on the Labor government to get behind Rookwood Weir. We are looking at \$1 billion in agricultural production and thousands of jobs in agriculture. I think it is important that we get behind Rookwood Weir and make sure that we make it happen. This is an opportunity for those opposite to make sure that we have more jobs in agriculture and secure water resources around the Central Queensland region which will grow agriculture. What I find alarming is that when the Premier and the Labor Party and cabinet were in Rockhampton and they announced an expansion of the Rockhampton Correctional Centre there was no business case: it happened just like that.

Mr Costigan: Just like that on the run.

Mr MILLAR: There we go! But we need a business case for Rookwood Weir. They continue to complain and ask, 'Where is the business case?' but where was the business case for 200 jobs for the Rockhampton Correctional Centre? Yet there are 1,000 jobs available for the construction of Rookwood Weir. Once you have Rookwood Weir constructed there will be \$1 billion in agricultural production and 1,000 jobs in agriculture, but we continue to delay.

Mr Costigan: I wonder why?

Mr MILLAR: I do not know. I take that interjection from the member for Whitsunday. I call on the Minister for Natural Resources to get behind Rookwood Weir because it will create 1,000 jobs and \$1 billion in agricultural production. That is the way forward for agriculture in Central Queensland—we just need to do it.

 **Mr CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (3.45 pm): I rise to support the Water (Local Management Arrangements) Amendment Bill, but first I want to address something that the member for Gregory said when he talked about it being low-hanging fruit and something that we should have dealt with in the first week of being in government. I do agree with him that it is low-hanging fruit. I think this bill has been sitting around for a number of years. I think the member for Callide mentioned they have been working on this for about 20 years. When I cast my mind back and think what we were doing in the first week we came into government—help me out here, Minister for Education—I think we may have been hiring staff. I think we may have been hiring doctors, nurses and teachers and trying to put a state back together that had been desecrated and destroyed over three years. I hear what the member says about low-hanging fruit and how we should have dealt with it then, but unfortunately we did have other issues.

I was quite pleased to be on the committee which looked at this bill. This was a very straightforward bill when it came to us. It did not take a lot of time, and the committee moved through it rather quickly and came to some pretty good agreement with respect to it. I am not going to repeat anything that has already been said on both sides of the House.

As the son of a farming family, I have spent half of my life—as you can see, I am a spritely 30 years old—on the land. Our family never had to rely on irrigation channels. Where I grew up in Victoria most of our water came either by bore or from the sky, but I do get it. I do understand and I do agree with everything that has been said in this House about the importance of irrigation and the importance of local management. Certainly areas like Emerald would not be the places they are today without these schemes operating. In saying that, I simply support the bill before the House.

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (3.48 pm): I rise to speak to the Water (Local Management Arrangements) Amendment Bill 2016. It was the LNP that initiated this legislation while in government in response to local councils and local residents. Under this slow-motion Labor government, however, there have been delays in the process and many are eager for progress to be made and for the government to stop holding their regions back. The explanatory notes state—

The objectives of the Bill are to amend the Water Act 2000 to facilitate the restructure and transfer of a number of SunWater's channel irrigation schemes to local management arrangements (LMA). This will be achieved primarily by establishing a legislative transfer scheme, enabling a staged transition of potentially up to eight schemes.

As other speakers have noted, the first four schemes are Emerald, Eton, St George and Theodore. The remaining four schemes—Bundaberg, Burdekin-Haughton, Lower Mary and Mareeba-Dimbulah—require further investigation and government determination to ascertain their viability.

The Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee handled the scrutiny of this bill. It was a pleasure to be the deputy chair of the committee. I thank the secretariat, the chair and the committee members for the professional way they all went about their work. The committee's report No. 36 recommended that the bill be passed. There was broad support for the objectives of the bill from stakeholders, most of whom made submissions to the committee. LMA Support Services stated at the public hearing—

I can say on behalf of the chairmen of the eight schemes that we all endorse the process that is taking place and that we believe that it is in the best interests of our customers and our communities which these schemes service that we move to a local management structure.

I agree with that assessment. My contribution to the debate will be brief. I will not repeat what has already been stated by other speakers except to say that, so long as the schemes are properly funded and local councils are treated in a proper way, I support the bill.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (3.51 pm): This bill continues the work started in stage 1 in 2012. A lot of us were involved early with the concept of local management. Some have spoken today about how long that conversation has been going on. More importantly, a lot of people discovered that local management, with locals in charge, was a positive step in driving efficiency and, more importantly, affordable water.

While I acknowledge the bill and the statewide changes it makes, I will discuss mainly the Wide Bay-Burnett area and the water supply issues that confront us. The Wide Bay-Burnett water supply area covers about 53,000 square kilometres including 30 identified population centres in seven regional and one Indigenous councils.

As far back as 2004, the region's water strategies and management had a renewed focus. By signing the National Water Initiative agreement, the Queensland government committed to work with the Commonwealth to progress national water reform. On 18 April 2004, we saw strategies which included funds for regional water supply including arrangements for the Wide Bay-Burnett. This was around an extended drought period that emphasised the increasing water demand in the region. It was identified that demand for water will increase and increase rapidly, with demand for urban water supplies across the region expected to double in 40 years, hence the focus on water efficiency and projects to reduce the demand for urban water supply. Rural demands, mostly in the Lower Burnett—some 69 per cent—to support mainly sugar cane are expected to increase with good practices and favourable conditions such as improved forward sales pricing. There are challenges, such as sugar being a suitable crop for ethanol or increased competition from other crops such as macadamias, vegetables, citrus, other tree crops, lychees, mangoes and peanuts.

Potential exists across the strategy area to expand agricultural production if water is available. We know that there are in excess of 30,000 hectares of suitable soils in the Bundaberg water supply scheme that have potential to be further developed if water is available. Our region needs water management arrangements to achieve optimal social, environmental and economic outcomes.

We note that this bill continues the work started in 2012, being introduced on 13 September 2016. The bill applies to the Bundaberg, Burdekin, Eton, Emerald, St George, Theodore, Lower Mary and Mareeba irrigation schemes. When the Bundaberg region went through this last time, we did experience negotiations for the scheme's proponents that identified sticking points on the separation payments on a viability measure. I believe now, as I did then, that the long-term benefits were worth the payments. I look forward to successful outcomes in this space. If the bill passes, negotiation of separation payments with the proponents will commence. I understand that there is some funding for separation payments, as advised in the budget, but we do not know how much has been allocated.

Currently, water schemes' revenues do not cover operating costs, as has been reported earlier by other speakers. Gaps are met through community service obligation payments to SunWater. As schemes usually run at a loss, it will be necessary that transfers happen with sufficient separation payments to ensure financial viability. There will be a focus for irrigation schemes to increase revenue and to reduce costs. That is why these schemes are so important.

This bill proposes an exemption from state taxes, fees and charges relating to any transfer of the businesses, assets and liabilities of SunWater to local management. The objectives of the bill are to amend the Water Act 2000 to facilitate the restructure and transfer of SunWater's channel irrigation

schemes to local management arrangements. The SunWater channel irrigation schemes and the regional network of the bulk water supply infrastructure are vast, supplying some 5,000 customers in mining, power generation, industry, local government and, importantly, irrigated agricultural enterprises. We have local management in other states such as New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia, in line with the National Water Initiative, and other early agreements to investigate how alternative ownership and management controls by local irrigators can work and should work.

Agriculture is vital to regional Queensland and the Wide Bay-Burnett, and dependencies on water resources are high, with intensive irrigated agriculture and many businesses expanding at an ever increasing rate. Our growing population also requires a secure supply of drinking water for the future. Also, the tourism industry is dependent on the region's water resources in part through the utilisation of rivers, lakes and dams for recreational purposes. The Wide Bay-Burnett is Australia's premier tourist destination, contributing to the state and national economy. Tourism in the Wide Bay-Burnett contributed approximately \$9 billion to the Queensland economy and accounted for 5.8 per cent of Queensland's gross state product.

Regional growth and social wellbeing are dependent on the supply of secure and sustainable water supplies. The fact that water resources are often highly variable means that water will affect economic production. Water must be used efficiently and allocated to the highest value use in order to improve both economic and environmental outcomes. Identifying solutions for meeting future water needs in my electorate has been a challenge, given the requirement that the supply objectives are met at an affordable cost to the community while at the same time being environmentally and socially acceptable. Cost is a big issue and it needs to be continually challenged.

In conclusion, I acknowledge the stakeholders and the work that has gone into progressing the legislation, even during the delays over the past year or so. From reading the submissions I note the strong desire for a sensible outcome. Submissions noted that preliminary due diligence has identified a number of matters that will need to be resolved prior to the transition to local management including issues related to land tenure and drainage charges. It is noted that the bill does, for the most part, deal with these issues. There are questions as to what legislative solutions may be required to support the transition, particularly to address existing gaps in tenure. Until detailed due diligence has been completed, the success of local management will depend on the new management entities holding secure tenure. We all hope that, where necessary, further legislation would be contemplated where the due diligence process identifies a need for it.

Several submitters wished to emphasise the importance of the new local management entities having flexibility on how they operate the schemes going forward. This flexibility will be critical to their long-term viability and ensure that potential benefits from local management are realised. This relates to, among other things, the capacity of the new entities to set their own prices for water distribution; the capacity of the schemes to expand to support further development; and ensuring that any legal issues within the schemes are addressed prior to transfer where possible so that they do not become a constraint on further operations. We commend the bill to the House. We support the bill. More importantly, we support the outcomes for our region.

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (3.58 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Water (Local Management Arrangements) Amendment Bill 2016. We all understand the importance of having strong water irrigation infrastructure in place to meet the needs of the communities and businesses in regional areas of Queensland. Indeed, it is vital for supporting economic growth and stability within the communities in our rural regions.

The Water (Local Management Arrangements) Amendment Bill supports the Palaszczuk government's commitment to having a healthy and strong irrigation network across our regional areas. In addition to ensuring a robust channel scheme that services the rural areas, it also aims to transfer the ownership and management arrangements for our irrigation channel schemes from SunWater to local irrigators where it is viable to do so. This will empower local irrigation customers and communities to have direct input into the management of their own water supplies. It will enable local knowledge to be used more readily in decision-making to better service the regions and to add greater value to our agricultural sector. Through more informed decision-making, we will be better able to reduce costs and improve productivity. In addition to greater efficiency, it will put the respective irrigation channel operators in a better position to respond to changing customer demands. The irrigators are the No. 1 customers of the schemes in their area and, as such, are the best people to make decisions about how these irrigation schemes should operate.

The management of water locally has been happening over the past 20 years in New South Wales and in Western Australia, so it is not a new concept by any means. In fact in Mackay, the town I grew up in, Pioneer Valley Water has been a locally managed irrigation scheme since its establishment in 1996. The transition of ownership from SunWater to local management arrangements is being done through extensive consultation with stakeholders from each of our eight channel irrigation schemes, with the transition only coming into effect once the relevant local irrigation communities agree and support the final terms.

An equally important component of the Water (Local Management Arrangements) Amendment Bill is to ensure that all entities established to manage a channel irrigation scheme that are owned and operated by the irrigation customers in each scheme have the appropriate backing, provisions and tenure to operate the scheme successfully. To achieve this and to ensure ongoing successful management of these important irrigation schemes, the transitions will be carried out in a staged approach, starting with the Eton, Emerald, St George and Theodore channel irrigation schemes that are ready now to commence the transition. In these regions there is strong community commitment to local management of the irrigation schemes and the local operators have the necessary business structures in place.

The remaining four channel irrigation schemes would transition across after further local community consultations and further progression and revisions of the business proposals. I think this is a great example of what a consultative government the Palaszczuk government is and what outcomes you can get through that consultation. While the bill does not apply to dams and bulk water infrastructure, weirs that are integral components of operations of the scheme will be covered. What the bill does specifically apply to is all irrigation infrastructure such as pipes, channels, pump stations and plant equipment necessary to operate the irrigation scheme.

The Water (Local Management Arrangements) Amendment Bill 2016 will help establish a more effective irrigation network through some of our key regional areas, thereby supporting future growth in our rural industry and agriculture enterprises in these communities. When I was assistant minister for local government I travelled to these rural and regional areas quite a bit and when I was chair of the agriculture committee I spoke to many farmers and many people in regional areas about this issue, and water is obviously a major issue. With 80 per cent of Queensland in drought, water is one of the biggest issues for people in rural and regional areas. Handing this control back to the actual irrigators to make decisions locally about the future of their water supply is integral to them being successful and keeping our rural and regional areas alive. For these reasons and more, I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (4.02 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Water (Local Management Arrangements) Amendment Bill. I had the privilege to be the water minister in the prior government and I was aware that this issue had been around for quite some time. If I recall correctly, Labor governments had looked at it on at least two separate occasions but it had not been progressed sufficiently. In fact, the process that we are looking at here today began in room A29 in this building when I had a conversation and it was brought to my attention that LMAs were still viable and the process that we have ended up with here today could in fact take place.

The LNP has always believed that local people should, where possible, control their own destiny. That is the LNP mantra—that, as far as possible, those locally should be in control of their own local outcomes. Some years ago we fought for local hospital boards against the wishes of the then Labor government, which was dragged kicking and screaming to the table to accept the principle. This is indeed one of the principled differences between the two major parties in this state. The LNP sees the importance of the individual in his or her own local area whereas the ALP listens only to the unions.

In July 2012 I established a working group to determine the level of interest of irrigators and SunWater in taking the matter of LMAs forward. That stage and the second stage were chaired by a lady by the name of Leith Bouilly, whom I will return to later in my contribution. The second stage focused on the channel schemes at Bundaberg, Burdekin, Emerald, Eton, Lower Mary, Mareeba, St George and Theodore. Each of the schemes were required to put in place interim boards and investigate whether the scheme could progress to develop a comprehensive business proposal and what it would take to make the scheme independent from SunWater. In total, there were over 2,500 irrigators irrigating 150,000 hectares of farmland through 2,500 kilometres of channels, pipelines and drains across these schemes.

The committee report covers in some detail what is to occur from here on in—I do not intend to repeat that—but it is important that the parliament is aware that the schemes themselves run at a loss and this loss is covered by a CSO or community service obligation. At page 5 of the committee's report

the 2015-16 CSO was about \$4.7 million. I also note comments by members of the House that SunWater has paid major dividends to this government and earlier governments in the past. We on this side of the House support this process as it reflects our belief in the individual having control as far as possible of their own destiny. It is testimony to the faith we have in the irrigators and that they know how to run their businesses effectively and efficiently. Small business operators are the basis of the economy in Queensland, and this is one example where the LNP actively supports that principle.

I, like others, want to congratulate the irrigators themselves. They made it work. Although some have some way to go, they put aside their differences—and there were many—and believed in themselves and their fellow travellers and put the hours of hard work into today's outcome. They represent the best of regional Queensland and show a spirit we have come to expect in these areas. In fact, without their work, the progress we have made to today could not have occurred.

There is, however, one other person whom I do not believe has been acknowledged, and that is Leith Bouilly. Leith Bouilly took this action to heart and was driven by a passion to get a result. With a background in irrigation and as the national water commissioner, she had the knowledge and expertise to pursue the issue, and pursue it she did. She travelled across Queensland pulling the boards together, encouraged them to keep going and dealt with the politics that arise in such bodies. She never gave up and always believed that a good result would be the outcome. Of all involved, she is one to be given the most credit. I have little doubt that the process would not be where it is today without her. She would pigeonhole anybody, including myself, directing traffic and finally getting this outcome. I remember meeting Leith at various forums here in the city and also out west and she would literally drag men and women to the table to get an outcome. She would beat them into a submission of common sense and achieved a wonderful success. Leith is now chairman of SunWater and I am certain the minister appreciates her expertise and professionalism. I support the bill.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (4.08 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Water (Local Management Arrangements) Amendment Bill. I want to thank the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee staff for their assistance with the inquiry and the professionalism with which they have produced report No. 36, especially given the time frame in which they had to do so. I also want to thank my fellow committee members from both sides of the House for their participation in the committee process and consideration of this bill that means so much to many parts of regional Queensland. There is an old saying: where there is water there is wealth. This bill facilitates the transfer of SunWater's irrigation schemes to local management arrangements where this is viable.

Local management arrangements have been introduced in a number of other states, including New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia for some 20 years. The local management arrangement project has involved a comprehensive investigation into the potential transfer of eight channel schemes to new legal entities, ultimately owned and controlled by irrigators in each scheme. I am advised that this has been a very rigorous process.

The bill provides for a staged transition of potentially all eight channel schemes to local management, commencing with Emerald, Eton, St George in my electorate, and Theodore if agreement can be reached on the final terms of transfer and there is sufficient support from the scheme's customers. Reaching agreement on the final terms of transfer is possibly the most important aspect of the whole process. It has been made abundantly clear that each board must satisfy itself that it is appropriate for it to move, and for its customers' benefit to move, to local ownership. If they cannot negotiate suitable contracts, they do not move. It is really the situation that if they do not get it done this time it probably will not ever happen. Unfortunately, without agreement through this process, all of the previous work and modelling—and there has been a huge amount of work going on behind the scenes with those local interim boards—the negotiation and the massive task to do the due diligence over the past five years will all be lost. I urge the government to be interested and reasonable with these negotiations in the interests of a better long-term outcome for irrigators and the regions that benefit from the agricultural production there.

The remaining four schemes may become part of a declared project following further investigations and a subsequent government decision on the viability of those schemes transitioning to local management. These are the Bundaberg, Burdekin-Haughton, Lower Mary and Mareeba-Dimbulah channel schemes. Outside of the legislative framework of the bill—and this work has been ongoing even while we have been waiting for the bill to come to parliament—a number of special purpose vehicles, SPVs, are being established to facilitate the transition of the Eton, Emerald, St George and Theodore channel schemes to local management arrangements. These SPVs are transitional entities established specifically for the purposes of the LMA project. If local management proceeds to a formal transfer stage, the state will be divested of the ownership of the entities once the transfers from

SunWater have been completed. The four interim boards have also been established to undertake further investigations and the development of the revised business cases, which is particularly important, into the viability of the remaining four schemes transitioning to local management.

I wish to place on record my thanks to all of the interim board members who have been tireless workers for their fellow irrigators and communities who benefit from agricultural production and irrigation. It has been a long process and their patience with this process and this state government has been commendable. I would particularly like to thank the board members in my electorate: Luke Stower—an absolute tower of knowledge and strength when it comes to dealing with this issue; he has devoted so much time and I commend him greatly for that—Scott Armstrong, a second-generation irrigator in the St George irrigation scheme; Ross Landsberg; David Moon; and Glen Price. I also wish to thank Maurie Maughan, the acting chair of the central coordination body for the local irrigators, LMA Support Services, and also the chair of the Bundaberg interim board, who appeared before the committee. He was most helpful owing to his depth of knowledge on the topic.

Currently, the irrigation revenues in the schemes do not cover the costs of operating the schemes. The gap between the revenues and costs is funded by the state government through the payment of community service obligation payments to SunWater. These CSO payments are listed for each scheme in the committee's report. As the schemes are loss making, it is necessary to ensure that the schemes transfer with sufficient capital—that is a separation payment—and remain financially viable until they are able to increase revenue and reduce costs. I note that in December 2016 the government announced the quantum of the separation payments—some \$36.6 million for four schemes. I am also aware that the St George irrigation scheme has been offered \$5.1 million to assist with this transition.

The final terms of the transfer will need to be agreed between the government and the SPVs before the transfer of the schemes can occur. In addition, there will be a number of precedent conditions to the transfer, which will include the SPVs demonstrating that they are operationally ready to take over the operation of the scheme. I suspect that St George will probably be the first out of the four that will transfer, because I think they have done a huge amount of work and will be ready to move forward.

Consistent with similar transfers of state government assets, the bill also provides for an exemption from state taxes, fees and charges relating to any transfer of the business assets and liabilities of SunWater to local management. It will now be up to the scheme customers—that is the irrigators in those areas—to assess their support for the offer that has been put on the table by the government, or to negotiate a better outcome. I have no doubt that they will thoroughly analyse the price path under SunWater and compare that price path with the offer that is currently on the table from the state government.

The committee was unable to visit any of the eight schemes—Emerald, Eton, St George, Theodore, Bundaberg, Burdekin-Haughton, Lower Mary or Mareeba-Dimbulah. I believe that it would have benefited the committee to see some of those schemes, because not all irrigation schemes are the same. Some benefit from gravity feed and some do not. Some have newer infrastructure and some—for instance, Theodore—are the oldest irrigation schemes in Queensland and are constrained by small scale, aged, outdated and inefficient infrastructure.

The St George irrigation area was originally engineered to support the production of fat lambs, not cropping. In this area, the use of irrigation has evolved and changed considerably over time to what it is today. I have no doubt that, given the way in which irrigators embrace new technology, there will be changes in the future. I see a bright future for the St George irrigation area in food and fibre production.

Shadow minister Michael Hart, who I would like to thank very much, and I took the time to visit the St George irrigation scheme. We were given a very comprehensive briefing and an inspection by one of the irrigators of the St George pump station, the weir and the extensive channel network that transports water throughout this scheme. I have no doubt that the shadow minister would agree with me when I say that the St George irrigation scheme is particularly impressive, given that its original purpose was for the production of fat lambs. It has 112 kilometres of channels and pipes and 50 customers and irrigates 10,000 hectares of land supporting the production of grapes, at one time there were rockmelons—well known as moon rocks—and now there are onions, cotton and other small crops, to name a few. This scheme is a great contributor to agriculture and a massive contributor to the local economy of St George and the district. I would like to thank the shadow minister, the member for Burleigh, for taking the time to come out and talk with the locals and see firsthand the irrigation scheme at St George and also the infrastructure at Beardmore Dam.

We also looked at the small irrigation scheme at Cunnamulla. Unfortunately, that scheme is not able to be covered by this legislation. Most disappointingly, we learned that the lack of action by SunWater, when the growers there were in need of water, has really diminished the horticultural industry in that area. In fact, there is no horticulture of grapes left. SunWater was so slow in giving them advice in relation to their allocations that growing grapes became non-viable. The members of that scheme there would dearly love to move to local management but, unfortunately, this legislation does not enable them to do that.

I think it should be noted, too, that this legislation was commenced by the former LNP government. I would like to thank the member for Caloundra for the work that he did. I also note that, during his contribution to this debate, he mentioned Leith Bouilly, who I know personally. Leith did a tower of work to make sure that this initiative could happen. She did a lot of work to ensure that the LNP could make sure that this process started.

The other states have had the local management of irrigation for 20 years and it stands to reason that Queensland irrigators should have the same opportunity to evaluate local management options for their schemes. It is now 2017. Finally, after five years—probably after two years of sitting on someone's desk somewhere—this legislation is being debated in parliament. It would be remiss of me not to place on the parliamentary record one of the reasons this process has taken so long. We heard about that in the committee process. I understand the enormity of the detail of due diligence. However, it was quite interesting to hear what the departmental officers said when they were questioned about the delays that occurred at the change of government and if there were any specific delays. A departmental officer said to the committee—

There did seem to be ... a period of time ... when the decision was made to proceed with local management under this government and the announcement of the initiation of this project. I could not give you any further detail as to why that was. It was just obviously apparent that there was some delay. I think that was probably the most significant delay that I observed.

Perhaps the minister might outline to us, when he does his summing-up, exactly what that delay was. Obviously the department knows about it because they told the committee. Perhaps the minister might elaborate as to what that significant delay was that the department seems to be well aware of.

I have been keeping the irrigators in my electorate in the St George scheme abreast of the legislation's progress throughout the parliamentary processes. Their reaction last year when I had to tell them that the government had pushed forward the Cross River Rail legislation ahead of the Water (Local Management Arrangements) Amendment Bill debate on the parliamentary agenda was one of serious disappointment with the state government. The irrigators really want to get on with the process. They want to stop the delays and hopefully have a more efficient and cost-effective system using local management and a more sustainable price path into the future. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (4.20 pm): I rise today to give my support for the Water (Local Management Arrangements) Amendment Bill 2016. As we all know, and as we have heard over the last day or two, water is the lifeblood of any community. Nothing is more true, especially for farmers. Farmers know that there are three essential components for a good crop: good sunshine, good dirt and a good supply of water. When these three elements come together you get good agriculture.

I am an old Burdekin boy and up my way we grow sugar cane—and plenty of it—and in more recent times small crops like capsicums, tomatoes, zucchinis, melons and one of those amazing tropical fruits, the mango. More recently rice is on the table—pardon the pun—and a crop that may be returning to the area. All of those crops are grown with plenty of good sunshine, good dirt and, of course, that good water that we are all talking about. One thing I hear the farmers gripe about—and I have a number of Burdekin farmers in my extended family—is water, that lifeblood of the community and of the farming industry. Sometimes when they gripe about water they gripe about it raining on one crop when it should be raining on the other one. Unfortunately we cannot change that.

This bill provides the mechanism to implement local management arrangements, which is an important means for putting irrigation customers in charge of the channel irrigation schemes which are critical to their businesses. That means, for farmers like my aunts and uncles, my cousins and their families, they will be able to have more input into decisions which develop local solutions to meet their needs and therefore provide ongoing, affordable water for agriculture.

So many of those people out there, those naysayers, will tell you it is just like putting the mice in charge of the cheese factory. In fact, this bill will produce the exact opposite to the notion of children running the candy store. It will enable irrigators and other channel irrigation scheme customers the ability to determine appropriate service levels, adjustments and strategies for managing irrigation water prices. The introduction of this bill represents the accumulation of many years work investigating the

viability of and local customer support for transferring the irrigation channel schemes from SunWater to local customer ownership. The amendments contained in the bill will enable four transition schemes to move to local management should agreement be reached between the schemes' customers and the government.

As a strong advocate for local jobs, which I have been very vocal about for my local region, I am assured that SunWater field staff will transfer to the new local entity under their existing conditions with job security guaranteed for three years in line with the government's commitment to no forced redundancies. This will ensure that their knowledge and expertise remains within the local community, where their family can remain as integral members of their community, where their kids can go to school, where their family can continue to do their shopping to ensure that local money stays within the local community. This is important. In regional centres across this state we are sick and tired of having work performed by contractors from the south-east corner or, worse, from interstate who come into town, do their work and leave, all because they were the cheapest multiservice site delivery option when the contract was offered for tender across Queensland.

Local management of channel irrigation schemes by the scheme's customers will benefit both irrigation customers and local communities by enabling goods and services to be locally sourced, potentially increasing work for local contractors and tradies. It is about time that our local mum-and-dad small businesses, like the tradies in regional Queensland, have the opportunity to do what they used to do decades ago: fix their own infrastructure. It means that tradies will be able to put on an apprentice and teach their skills in a local context. It means that local kids do not need to leave regional towns because schemes like this will provide opportunities for locals to manage their own infrastructure and keep jobs and skills in those regional areas.

This transfer of ownership and management of irrigation infrastructure will put those who know the irrigation scheme best—like my cane farming uncles, aunties and their sons, or my small crop growing cousins—in charge of the management and delivery of vital irrigation water. The implementation of local management supports the efficient delivery of irrigation water services and as a result supports agricultural productivity and the local community through employment opportunities. That means that towns dotted throughout our state, like Home Hill, Gumlu, St George, Emerald, Gindi, Eton, Homebush and hundreds of others, can continue to sustain local jobs and have a bright future through the effective management of their agricultural industry by managing the irrigation infrastructure for themselves by themselves. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (4.26 pm): The Water (Local Management Arrangements) Amendment Bill 2016 establishes a declared project for the transfer of the businesses, assets and liabilities of SunWater in relation to a declared channel scheme to an irrigation entity. The bill establishes a transfer scheme to transfer and deal with licences, registrations, authorities, approvals and instruments and the transfer of SunWater employees to the irrigation entity, as well as provides exemption from state taxes, fees and charges associated with the transfer scheme.

Across all the schemes, out of a total of more than 3,000 customers, only 40 were in opposition to local management. The concern in regard to this is although it has the support of irrigators, there is a cost in relation to maintenance of the channel schemes. If our water assets are sold off and are in the hands of multinational corporations we will see not only the high cost of water but also the high cost of maintenance of the schemes. Members might say, 'You're a bit delusional, Shane.' That is what we said about Queensland Rail. There was also a big push to sell off our energy assets.

The Mareeba-Dimbulah channel scheme is in my electorate. Back in the 1950s we saw the construction of the Tinaroo Dam and its channel scheme which had eight weirs. It grew tobacco, corn, fruit, vegies and livestock and has become one of the food bowls of the north. I do not have the Burdekin-Haughton channel scheme in my electorate, but I do have the Burdekin Dam. There is no greater sight than to see the Burdekin River in full flight, particularly when it is flooding from bank to bank.

The need for water infrastructure projects has been raised. We have not seen any water infrastructure for the last 30 years. I believe there is a small dam around the Bundaberg area, Paradise Dam. Before every election we hear talk about the need for water infrastructure, but we are not seeing it. It is important, in relation to the Hell's Gate Dam proposal and the Big Rocks Weir project in my electorate, to look at the history of the Burdekin Dam. The Burdekin Dam was as a result of a big push from the Charters Towers Regional Council, the Dalrymple shire council, the Burdekin water board, the Burdekin Shire Council and a bloke by the name of Frank Rossiter.

At that time, a lot of pressure was put on the Bjelke-Petersen government to commence the construction of the dam and the development of the Burdekin-Haughton irrigation scheme. Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen flew over the site. He met with the water board, the mayors and the councillors. Sir Joh came back and said, 'I will build the dam'. However, he said the scale of the operation was too much for the state government to fund, so he went to the feds. At that time, the feds were going through a leadership challenge that saw Bob Hawke overthrow Bill Hayden. Bob Hawke flew up to Townsville and spoke to both the Townsville City Council and the Thuringowa City Council. They said, 'What are you going to do about the dam?' Bob Hawke knew that if he did not support part funding that project he was wasting his time supporting the Labor candidate, Ted Lindsay. Bob Hawke went back and said he would back the dam at 60 per cent, leaving Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen to provide 40 per cent, in a combined federal and state government effort to fund that dam.

At the present moment, we have to look at the Burdekin irrigation scheme and, as the member for Townsville said, the jobs, the wealth, the taxes and the royalties that will go back to the state. Projects such as the Hell's Gate Dam to gravity feed water to Townsville, which is on water restrictions, and others to provide water security to the Charters Towers region are so important. Last year, the Burdekin irrigators were on water restrictions. We now have an opportunity to construct the dam and I do not mean just talking about it, but actually doing it and making something tangible. I support the bill and commend it to the House.

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (4.31 pm), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their participation in this debate. I first visited the Eton irrigation scheme in April 2015, only two months after the election of the Palaszczuk government. Later in the year, I also visited St George. I thank all the local irrigators who gave me their time. I visited Eton with the member for Mirani and those people were very generous. I found it very informative and a very valuable experience in informing my views around this.

We have been working hard to progress this project over the past two years, working closely with regional irrigator groups. In that time, significant progress has been made on implementing local management arrangements, including forming the four special purpose vehicle companies for the Eton, Emerald, St George and Theodore schemes, as well as a special vehicle company, LMA Support Services, to provide central funding and procurement services; establishing the four interim boards for the Bundaberg, Burdekin, Lower Mary and Mareeba schemes; recruiting and appointing over 47 board members and the chairs for all SPVs and interim boards; commencing the due diligence process that will involve detailed investigations into complex legal, engineering, financial and taxation issues; and making separation offers to each of the SPVs open and transparent, and ensuring that the boards and the scheme customers are fully informed in making a decision on whether they want to move to local management.

A lot of work has been done over a two-year period, with a lot of consultation as we have all worked closely on a very broad range of issues. It is important to acknowledge that each SPV needs time to consult with its customers, as local management will only succeed if scheme customers are fully supportive of the process. The government has worked closely with each of the chairs and the timing of the delivery of this project is driven by the need to provide each board with time to properly carry out their due diligence and also to properly consult with their customers.

As opposed to the approach of those opposite, we are working closely with the employees' union representatives to develop a comprehensive framework for the eventual transition of employees, to ensure rights and entitlements are protected. As part of that, I can confirm that there will be a three-year employment security period for those employees following the transfer, which is consistent with the government's no forced redundancies policy.

Introducing local management is about putting irrigation customers in charge of their future. Dams are not part of the project and those bulk water storages will remain owned and controlled by SunWater. That is this government's policy. Local management is about handing over control of distribution infrastructure to irrigation customers. This is about community ownership; it is not the sale of public assets and attempts to characterise it as such by the LNP are disingenuous. It is in no way similar to the category of the Strong Choices program, for instance, where those opposite proposed to transfer extraordinarily large public assets from public to private ownership by private corporations. They are two very different things. These schemes are loss making, which is why they are currently subsidised by way of a CSO and a separation payment is being provided. By handing control to irrigation customers, we are empowering them to control a key input into their businesses. Local knowledge goes a long way in this regard. The goal of irrigation customers is to have access to reliable

water at a reasonable price, to ensure that their primary business of agriculture remains viable. The customers will operate the schemes to recover costs and not to generate profits from the irrigation business.

The bill provides the necessary framework to implement local management arrangements once the final due diligence is completed and agreement has been reached on the final terms of the transfer. The principal purpose of the bill is to introduce a transfer framework to allow for the transfer of the irrigation businesses associated with the scheme to new legal entities established for the schemes, and to hand over control of those schemes to local irrigators. In addition, the bill includes a range of other amendments to the Water Act to facilitate the project, including: provisions to ensure that the project can be carried out as efficiently as possible, such as the power to issue directions to facilitate the project, provisions to enable the sharing of confidential information, exemptions from state taxes, charges or fees to minimise costs, and other provisions to ensure the smooth transition to local management in the future; ensuring that the irrigation entities are given secure and flexible land tenure to allow them to operate the schemes; provisions that ensure that the rights and entitlements of any employees who are transferred to local control are protected and preserved, which is a key concern of the Palaszczuk government; and simplified registration procedures for licences, authorisations and other permits required to operate the scheme.

The bill also ensures that the transfer to local control can happen as efficiently as possible, although that does require that some provisions are not consistent with fundamental legislative principles. However, those departures are consistent with what has occurred in the past and are proportionate and necessary to deliver the project. I note that the committee observed that the departures are justifiable in the context of the local management arrangements project.

I take this opportunity to thank the board members and chairs for their continuing hard work in delivering this project. I thank those hardworking people in our regions who are working to deliver local management in their communities. Many members of the community have given their time to participate in working groups and town hall meetings, all of which have been about working towards putting those communities in charge of their future.

I am also grateful to the chairs of each of the schemes for their leadership in delivering the project: Ms Annette Smith in Emerald, Mr Malcolm Finlayson in Theodore, Mr Luke Stower in Bundaberg, Mr Lee Blackburn in Eton, Mr Mario Barbagallo in Burdekin, Mr Joe Moro in Mareeba, Mr Maurie Maughan in Bundaberg and Mr Geoff Wormwell in the Lower Mary. I also thank Mr John Storie, the chair of LMA Support Services, who will play a critical role. I acknowledge—and I certainly acknowledge the references by other members in this House—the leadership of Ms Leith Bouilly, who led the processes through stages 1 and 2 of the project and is still contributing to the process through her role as the chairperson of SunWater. I thank her sincerely for all of her work.

There is also strong support from stakeholders for the progress of this important initiative. Both the Queensland Farmers' Federation and Cotton Australia support the bill and the progress towards the introduction of local management arrangements. The Queensland Farmers' Federation has 'welcomed the move' as a 'reform by the state government that empowers local irrigators to better service their schemes'.

Cotton Australia is also a strong supporter of the local management arrangements project. It stated—

We are very pleased the process has moved forward to local management by irrigators in these areas. It is a significant step forward for growers in these districts and we thank the Queensland Government for backing the process to go to the next stage. I think this is a very important micro-economic reform in these regions that will have flow-on benefits for those regional economies.

I now turn to matters raised by the opposition during the debate. The member for Burleigh asked for clarification on the separation payments and whether or not it might be a first-in-best-dressed approach. I can confirm that it is not. I can confirm that for the Eton, Emerald, St George and Theodore schemes cabinet has approved funds for the payment of separation payments to each of those schemes. This was the basis on which the separation offers were made to those schemes.

As far as the investigation schemes of Bundaberg, Burdekin, Lower Mary and Mareeba are concerned, a decision on appropriate separation payments for those four schemes will be made by government once the investigations on feasibility for those schemes has been completed and should they proceed to transition. Those schemes are currently working on preparing revised business proposals for submission to the government. The government will then consider and assess each of those business proposals on their merits.

In considering those business proposals, it will be necessary to consider the same principles which were applied in assessing the transition schemes, that is: the schemes must be financially viable over the long-term; there must be sufficient support from customers for their transition to local management; and the benefits of proceeding to local management must outweigh the costs of implementation. Based on that assessment, the government will then make a decision on whether those schemes are ready to commence the transition to local management, and if so what the government is prepared to offer by way of separation payments. In response to the member for Burdekin, I can confirm that the government will ensure that if any of the investigation schemes do proceed to the transition stage then any offer of separation payments to those second four schemes which will be made will be sufficient to ensure that the schemes remain financially viable, but also must represent a good deal for taxpayers.

The member for Burleigh also asked about employee entitlements and referred to page 14 of the explanatory notes and section 738B(f) of the bill. I can confirm to the honourable member that the separation payments do not include funds for accrued employee entitlements such as long service leave or annual leave. Rather, SunWater currently accrues funds for those entitlements in the usual course of its business. Those accrued funds for those entitlements will be an asset transferred from SunWater to the irrigation entities on the transfer date, consistent with section 723(1)(a) of the bill. That will ensure that the irrigation entities have funds to cover those entitlements on the transfer date. It will also not have any material impact on SunWater as the accrued funds are offset by the liabilities for those employee entitlements.

Section 738B(f) simply provides that once the transfer has happened SunWater will not be required to make any further payment to the employee. The separation offers that have been made to each of the schemes confirm that any accrued entitlements will be transferred from SunWater to the irrigation entities on the transfer date so the schemes will be no better or worse off if the transfer happened earlier or later than currently anticipated. This is exactly the same process that happens in other transfer schemes. Employee entitlements will be preserved and those accrued entitlements will be transferred in addition to the separation payment.

The member for Callide spoke about the history of local management. It is true that the concept of introducing local management has been explored in Queensland for many years under a number of governments. Despite all those attempts this government has taken local management further than any other and irrigators are closer than they have ever been to taking responsibility for this essential infrastructure.

The concept was first considered by the Council of Australian Governments Water Reform Framework in 1994, followed by a discussion paper released by the Queensland government in 1996 on rural water pricing which included a section on local management principles for irrigation schemes. Again in 2000, the reform of Queensland's water sector, which involved the creation of SunWater, included consideration of local management and proposed a strategy for how it might be introduced. More recently, the National Water Initiative provided that, where practicable, jurisdictions should consider alternative management arrangements aimed at removing ongoing community service obligations.

The journey to local management has been a long one. Under this government significant progress has been made to that end. In fact, this minority government has made plenty of progress—in fact, some would argue more progress than any other; more than the Nicholls-Newman government with their record majority.

Local management can only succeed if it has the support of local irrigation customers. Each scheme must be given the necessary time to properly consult with customers and provide them sufficient information to make an informed decision about whether local management is the right choice for their local community. Under this government if local management is what irrigation customers want then we are closer to its introduction than at any time since the concept was first considered over 20 years ago. This represents the best opportunity for irrigation customers to take control of their future, if they believe that is in their best interests and the interests of their local communities.

The local management arrangements project has involved a rigorous assessment of each schemes business proposals to ensure only those schemes which demonstrate that they are financially viable under local management proceed to the transition stage. The separation payments which have been offered to each of the transition schemes represent sufficient capital to ensure they are financially viable, while also being value for money for the taxpayer, particularly considering the future costs and risks to the taxpayer should the schemes remain with SunWater. Only schemes which can meet that threshold of viability will proceed to local management.

It should also be remembered that under local control the customers will be responsible for the future operations of the scheme. Those irrigation customers need sustainable and affordable water for their farms. It will be in their interests to ensure that their schemes are sustainable over the long term.

The experience in other states demonstrates that irrigators are more than capable of effectively owning and operating their schemes. The experience in New South Wales, which has had locally managed schemes for more than 20 years, demonstrates that irrigation schemes can remain financially viable under local management over the long term.

This legislation and the introduction of local management in Queensland will provide a range of benefits to the agricultural industry in our state, with flow-on effects in local communities and local economies. It represents an opportunity for local growers to take control of their water supply so that they can ensure they have reliable and affordable water that meets the needs of their businesses.

The benefits that could be realised from local management include: giving growers the capacity to determine each scheme's future at a local level; allowing scheme customers to set service standards that meet their needs which could mean lowering or increasing service standards depending upon the price customers are prepared to pay for their water; allowing schemes to focus more on delivering value for their customers; greater customer engagement and transparency on things like pricing, service standards, modernisation; and flow-on effects also for local economies for each scheme by having money spent locally on local contractors, suppliers and other service providers. There are also a range of potential benefits to the broader community, including: removing the payment of ongoing community service obligation payments for the schemes and ensuring that the future risks associated with the schemes are the responsibility of scheme customers rather than the taxpayer in general; and increasing overall agricultural productivity by encouraging efficient water use, benefitting the Queensland economy.

As members will be aware, I have circulated some amendments to be moved during the consideration in detail stage of the bill. Those amendments are largely in response to the submissions made during the committee process and to address some other technical issues. I will provide more information on the amendments during the consideration in detail stage.

Again, I would like to acknowledge the work of LMA Support Services and the chairs and board members of the eight irrigation schemes, local irrigators and the support of SunWater in this process. I would also like to thank the stakeholder groups such as the Queensland Farmers' Federation, Cotton Australia and Canegrowers for their support for this important reform.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the ongoing efforts and hard work of my department—thank you—in progressing this important initiative. The journey to local management is not yet over, but with the passage of this bill we now have in place the mechanism to implement local management in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—



Mr BAILEY (4.49 pm): I move the following amendments—

1 Clause 4 (Insertion of new ch 4A)

Page 15, after line 17—

insert—

725A Rent payable if perpetual lease issued or transferred to irrigation entity

- (1) This section applies if a transfer notice provides for the issuing or transfer of a perpetual lease under the *Land Act 1994* to an irrigation entity.
- (2) The lease must be for a rent of \$1 each year, if demanded, payable to the State.

2 Clause 4 (Insertion of new ch 4A)

Page 16, after line 3—

insert—

- (1A) This section applies whether or not the easement was acquired compulsorily or by agreement.

3 Clause 4 (Insertion of new ch 4A)

Page 18, line 4, 'vested in'—
omit, insert—

valid and held by

4 Clause 4 (Insertion of new ch 4A)

Page 21, line 28, 'granted under'—
omit, insert—

mentioned in

5 Clause 4 (Insertion of new ch 4A)

Page 24, after line 5—
insert—

- (3) This section does not apply to a means of access mentioned in subsection (1) that SunWater is required to construct or maintain under a contract or other agreement or arrangement.

6 Clause 4 (Insertion of new ch 4A)

Page 28, lines 23 and 24, 'and water allocations'—
omit, insert—

, **water allocations and particular contracts**

7 Clause 4 (Insertion of new ch 4A)

Page 29, lines 2 and 3, 'Chapter 2, part 4, division 3, subdivisions 1 and 1A'—
omit, insert—

Sections 181 and 182

8 Clause 4 (Insertion of new ch 4A)

Page 31, after line 12—
insert—

738JA Bulk water contracts

- (1) Before the transfer day for a declared channel scheme, SunWater must prepare a document (the **SunWater document**) that sets out—
- (a) the arrangements for bulk water for irrigation services supplied under the resource operations licence (the **ROL**) by SunWater in the area of the declared channel scheme; and
 - (b) the financial obligations, arising from the arrangements, of the holder of any water allocation to whom irrigation services are supplied.
- (2) The SunWater document must—
- (a) be based on the standard supply contract applying to SunWater and the holders of the water allocations; and
 - (b) fairly represent the supply arrangements and financial obligations as in place before the transfer day.
- (3) The SunWater document may include additional provisions to facilitate implementing the arrangements and meeting the obligations, but the additional provisions must not be capable of operating to the detriment, in substance, of the holder of a water allocation after the transfer day.
- (4) SunWater must, before the transfer day, publish the SunWater document on SunWater's website.
- (5) On the transfer day, the Sunwater document has effect as a contract (the **bulk water contract**), relating to the supply of bulk water for irrigation services under the ROL between—
- (a) SunWater; and
 - (b) the holder of each water allocation to whom irrigation services—
 - (i) were supplied under the ROL immediately before the transfer day; and
 - (ii) continue to be supplied by SunWater.
- (6) Subsection (7) applies if—
- (a) a new water allocation in the area of the declared channel scheme comes into existence after the transfer day; and
 - (b) water is or is to be supplied to the holder of the new water allocation under the ROL; and
 - (c) a document, in the form of a contract, is held by SunWater as a document available for public access on SunWater's website; and

- (d) the document relates to the supply of bulk water for irrigation services under the ROL to the holders of water allocations that are similar in type to the new water allocation.
- (7) The document has effect as a contract (also a **bulk water contract**) between—
 - (a) SunWater; and
 - (b) the holder of the new water allocation.
- (8) The bulk water contract applying to a water allocation has effect subject to any change agreed to by Sunwater and the holder of the water allocation.
- (9) If the holder of a water allocation the subject of a bulk water contract transfers or leases the water allocation to another person, the other person is bound by the bulk water contract as in force between SunWater and the holder immediately before the transfer or lease.

738JB Drainage contracts

- (1) Before the transfer day for a declared channel scheme, the irrigation entity for the scheme must prepare a document (the **drainage services document**) that sets out—
 - (a) the arrangements for drainage services provided by SunWater in the area of the declared channel scheme; and
 - (b) the financial obligations, arising from the arrangements, of a person to whom drainage services are provided but who will not, on the transfer day for the scheme, become the holder of a water allocation the subject of a supply contract under section 738I (a **drainage services customer**).
- (2) The drainage services document must fairly represent the arrangements for drainage services and financial obligations as in place before the transfer day.
- (3) The drainage services document may include additional provisions to facilitate implementing the arrangements and meeting the obligations, but the additional provisions must not be capable of operating to the detriment, in substance, of the drainage services customers after the transfer day.
- (4) The irrigation entity must, before the transfer day, publish the drainage services document on the irrigation entity's website.
- (5) On the transfer day, the drainage services document has effect as a contract (the **drainage services contract**), relating to the provision of drainage services between—
 - (a) the irrigation entity; and
 - (b) each drainage services customer.
- (6) The drainage services contract applying to a drainage services customer has effect subject to any change agreed to by the irrigation entity and the drainage services customer.

I table explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper: Water (Local Management Arrangements) Amendment Bill 2016, explanatory notes to Hon. Mark Bailey's amendments [210].

These amendments to the Water (Local Management Arrangements) Amendment Bill 2016 are required to address a number of issues raised by stakeholders during the committee process, as well as to address two issues which have been identified since the bill was introduced concerning the payment of rent under perpetual leases to be transferred to the new irrigation entities and to address some cross-references due to the changes which have occurred in the Water Act 2000 which have occurred due to the commencement of the Water Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2014 and the Water Legislation Amendment Act 2016.

Amendment No. 1 specifies that the rent payable by an irrigation entity for any perpetual lease which is issued or transferred to it will be \$1 per year if demanded by the state. This will reduce the costs of implementing local management and ensure that the schemes that move to local management remain financially viable under local management.

Amendment No. 2 provides that section 726 of the bill applies to an easement whether it was acquired by SunWater or its predecessors either compulsorily under legislation or under a commercial agreement or arrangement. This issue was identified in submissions to the committee for which further clarification was requested.

Amendment No. 3 replaces the words 'vested in' with the words 'valid and held by'. Again, this is an amendment in response to submissions before the committee. Amendment No. 4 replaces the words 'granted under' in section 732 with the words 'mentioned in'.

Amendment No. 5 is in response to the submissions made to the committee and relates to SunWater's statutory obligations to maintain certain channel crossings to provide landholders access to roads. SunWater is obliged to maintain a number of those crossings as a result of historical legislation which created a statutory obligation on SunWater to maintain those crossings. It is intended that those

statutory obligations will be transferred to the local management entities. However, the amendment provides that it is only those statutory obligations which will be transferred. Where the obligation to maintain a channel crossing arises under a contract or other agreement then that will be transferred as a contract and then the usual contractual principles will apply in the future.

Amendment No. 6 amends the title of part 6 to better reflect the provisions of that part. Amendment No. 7 amends a cross-reference in the Water Act 2000 to reflect the changes made with the commencement of the Water Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 and the Water Legislation Amendment Act 2016.

Amendment No. 8 inserts two new sections into the bill to address two issues which were raised in submissions to the committee. It inserts a new section 738JA, which is closely modelled on section 738I of the bill. The new section allows for SunWater to develop a new contract which will set out the arrangements for the provision of bulk water supply to irrigation customers. Currently, SunWater has a single contract that covers both bulk and distribution services. With the introduction of local management, SunWater will continue to provide bulk services, while the irrigation entities will take on bulk supply. This new section creates a simple process for SunWater to develop a new contract which will apply on the transfer date. The new contract must fairly represent the arrangements for customers prior to transfer and must not operate to the detriment of customers.

Amendment No. 8 also inserts a new provision to allow irrigation entities to recover drainage costs from those that benefit from drainage services but may not otherwise be scheme customers. Those individuals currently pay a levy to SunWater under regulations made under the Water Act 2000. This section allows for the development of a drainage contract which will apply to those customers from the transfer date. Again, the drainage contract must not operate to the detriment of customers, and customers will not have any greater obligations than they currently have under the existing arrangements with SunWater.

Mr HART: They are very sensible amendments. The LNP has no issue with them. I have a couple of questions around amendment No. 8, which provides for bulk water contracts and drainage contracts. I note that they are exactly the same as the supply contracts in the bill. I would like to ask about proposed subsection (4), which states—

SunWater must, before the transfer day, publish the SunWater document on SunWater's website.

How long before the transfer day might that be and will the LMAs see these contracts—I understand that they will not be detrimental to the LMAs—in advance? Are they going to get the opportunity to look at them well in advance and make sure that that is in fact the case? If the minister could give me some advice on that, I would appreciate it.

Mr BAILEY: The answer is yes.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 5, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (4.56 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. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (4.57 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

Suspension of Sessional Orders

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (4.57 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, notwithstanding anything contained in the sessional orders, the private member's motion be brought on for debate immediately, to be followed by the adjournment debate.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (4.58 pm): I move—

That this House condemns the Palaszczuk government's review-not-do approach to governing Queensland.

If we ever needed an example of that, we have it right now. Here we are just before five o'clock on Thursday and they have upped stumps. They barely got through to the dinner break on Tuesday night. They barely got after the dinner break on Wednesday night. Here we are moving everything forward, because guess what? They have nothing to do.

Mrs Frecklington: 'The Boss' is on.

Mr NICHOLLS: There might be a concert on, I imagine. I wonder if anyone has been scooting out to the Boondall entertainment centre to go and see Bruce Springsteen? What do members think? That might be the case.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Millar): Order! Members, allow the opposition leader to speak, please.

Mr NICHOLLS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I heard the newly promoted minister and member for Ferny Grove. All day all they have been able to talk about is Pauline Hanson. They have not been able to talk about policy. They have not been able to say anything else. All they can talk about is Pauline Hanson. I think when they go home they must have a picture of her on the back of their cupboard doors to which they say, 'Thank you, Pauline, because at least you're giving us something to talk about. We've got nothing else to do.'

This truly is a do-nothing government. We found out that it is a do-nothing government led by a know-nothing Premier. If we ever needed an example of that, we saw it this morning when asked the simplest of questions by the member for Hinchinbrook: please explain the nature and meaning of the sugar dispute. It is no wonder she went to see Bruce Springsteen! It was the safest place she could go. It is a do-nothing government led by a know-nothing Premier who cannot answer questions.

Mr Bleijie: Dancing in the dark!

Mr NICHOLLS: Dancing in the dark. She is on a downtown train to nowhere. There is something more important than the Premier going to see Bruce Springsteen or her not understanding the sugar dispute, and that is the fact that under this government unemployment is stuck at 6.3 per cent. What is more important is that almost 30,000 Queensland jobs were lost in the month of January—66,000 jobs lost so far this year, an unemployment rate that went up when the rest of Australia went down and a participation rate that continues to show employees have no confidence. People are giving up looking for work.

We have a government that is outsourcing its decisions—153 reviews, inquiries, task forces and new bureaucracies. There are more than six every month. A further 19 were announced this morning when they got one review back. This government would have been in review heaven when they got the Sofronoff report back because it said that we could have another 19 reviews. We have seen new bureaucracies—Building Queensland; Jobs Queensland, which they forgot about for 12 months; the Queensland Urban Design and Places Panel; the Queensland Productivity Commission; the Cross River Rail Delivery Authority; and the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council, just to name a few. We have a small business minister who has outsourced most of her job to a new bureaucrat at a cost of \$250,000 a year and do not forget the randomiser.

Child safety has not been dealt with. There are reports in respect of Mason Jet Lee that have been withheld, and more and more things not being delivered. What do they do? They reannounce our policies: ice; no-body no-parole; DV reform; Mason's law; survivors of institutional abuse; Royalties for Regions; container deposit schemes; plastic bags; the Great Barrier Reef—

(Time expired)

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (5.03 pm): The Palaszczuk government delivers.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members! I call the minister.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Callide! I call the minister.

Mr RYAN: The Palaszczuk government delivers and it has been delivering for two years. We proved it this morning. We proved it over the last two years. It has been two years of hard work and achievements. This opposition is all slogan and no substance; all rhetoric and no delivery. When they said in government they would review something Queenslanders shook in their boots. They were terrified. They shuddered in their boots. Queensland knew that when the LNP in government said they would review something it would be bad news. Who could forget the Commission of Audit by their good friend Peter Costello? What did that review lead to? It led to thousands of job cuts and thousands of service cuts and program cuts all over our state.

When they say they will review something we know that it is bad news. Who could forget the Keelty review which led to senior police officer positions being cut? A total of 106 senior police officer positions were cut. Who could forget that as a result of the Keelty review the Public Safety Business Agency was set up as part of a sneaky plan to privatise, civilianise and outsource watch houses, speed camera operations and the police academies in Townsville and Brisbane. What else happened as a result of that review? Front-line police and emergency service officers were transferred to the PSBA away from the front line.

Who could forget their other review, the Aroney-Callinan report into the CMC, which some claim the former government used as a basis for nobbling key features of our integrity structures? Let us also not forget that when in government they reneged on their commitment to provide an extra \$20 million for extra police and police training to patrol safe night out precincts, when they forced police officers to buy their own body worn cameras, when they set up a trial of automatic numberplate recognition but then failed to fund the rollout. Who could forget when they tried to strip two weeks leave away from sworn police officers? Who could forget when they refused to release annual crime statistics to let the people of Queensland know what was happening in their community? That was just the police portfolio.

They seemed to have a lot of 'do' when it comes to asset sales but not a lot of 'do' when it comes to infrastructure delivery. Who could forget that their only piece of major infrastructure was their ego-stroking, over-the-top tower of power—that great deal which the member for Clayfield bestowed on the good people of Queensland?

Let us compare their record to our record. What I see is a government of delivery and a government of action. As I told the House this week, let us have a look at what we have done. We have rolled out 2,700 body worn video cameras to our front-line police. We have provided police with funding for QLite iPads, which means less time for our police behind their desks and more time out in the community. We have increased funding for organised crime by almost \$40 million. We have passed—and they always like it when I say this—the strongest, toughest, most comprehensive organised crime laws in the nation which target all forms of organised crime—outlaw motorcycle gangs, child sex exploitation networks, fraud and boiler room scams. Then there is Taskforce Maxima, which we continue to support and which continues to make arrests—133 arrests over just the last two months.

We have provided police with more resources to tackle child sex exploitation in a statewide blitz and we have passed stronger counterterrorism laws. Only today we announced the biggest reform to parole in Queensland's history—more resources, better laws and a better framework to ensure that we keep Queensland safe.

(Time expired)

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (5.08 pm): Oh, to be a fly on the wall at the Peel Street politburo just across the river with Mr 'Preference Deal or No Deal', Evan Moorhead. Surely he is sick and tired of hearing Elvis's lyrics on the radio 'A little less conversation, a little more action' which reminds him of his current class of review comrades on that side of the chamber.

In just two years, this do-nothing Palaszczuk Labor government has outsourced government through 150 inquiries, reviews, committees, task forces and bureaucracies. The democratic socialists have not got a thought bubble to share between them, so they review, not do. The people of Queensland are rightly asking, 'What is this government doing?' All week, the democratic socialist tyros opposite have been rattling off their achievements, and it is a pretty bare bones list. Incredibly, they are focusing more on what they are not doing.

When we look at the long, long list of reviews, it is clear they are clueless about crafting policy of their own and are content to rebadge LNP policies. Moreover and worse, instead of keeping sensible legislation, they are repealing some of them and as a consequence we are going nowhere. Let us have a look at some of Labor's priorities as outlined in the long list of reviews. What review do you get when 'Mr Renewables and Sensible Walks', the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply, crosses the road? A review into the cassowary crossing at Mission Beach. With unemployment over 11 per cent in North Queensland, clearly this is a hold-the-phone, top priority.

Then there is the category I call the union appeasement reviews, task forces and gulags. This one is a long one and, unfortunately, I only have a few minutes. This one is brought to you by the Minister for Housing and Public Works, who as we all know bends over backwards to assist fellow parliamentary colleagues. Just ask the member for Cairns how helpful he is. This surrogate member for the Gold Coast—because there is not much surf around Springwood and there are no democratic socialist members on the Gold Coast—has established: a plumbing industry regulatory body, with a special note of thanks to the Plumbers Union; a reference group to review industrial relations laws, a Queensland Council of Unions special just to keep that preselection in check; and a review into labour hire operators, just to keep the CFMEU bovver boys happy and to establish an independent training ombudsman.

There is the suite of reviews to pay homage to the ETU, who have just left, for the member for Kallangur, that colossus of the union movement—just ask him. What was in his basket of review goodies? It included: establish a Queensland Electrical Safety Office; establish the electrical safety commissioner to advise on electrical safety matters—genius; establish the Electrical Safety Education Committee; and, closely followed by, establish the Electrical Equipment Committee.

With the most left-leaning government in Queensland's history, we have the 'Ms 41 per cent Primary Vote', special Jackie 'Don't call me Lambie' reviews—from the grand mistress of all things Emily's List and Greens preferences, the member for South Brisbane. Ain't she special? Under her watch, we have seen: a review into religious instruction in schools; a review of sex education; a review into the Daisy Hill reserve; a review into the human rights bill; and a review into combat sports—like she of all people needs that.

Perhaps the most galling are the self-reflective reviews into the many failures of this inexperienced, do-nothing, Sergeant-Schultz-like, 'I know nothing' Palaszczuk Labor government. This included: the Strachan inquiry, when Labor could not hire enough drivers—absolute geniuses, we did not see that coming; a review into the Christmas Day rail fail, when they had a review already going on but, unbelievably, they had to do an extra one on top—next stop Doomben, via Wilston; an advisory council to develop the Queensland Family and Child Commission; and a working Queensland cabinet because of Queensland's jobs crisis. It is a scary thought to have this mob in charge of creating jobs when many simply park their shoes in between getting kicked out of here with cushy union jobs and would not have a clue about generating real jobs.

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (5.13 pm): I rise to speak against the motion put by the member for Clayfield. The very idea that a government could be deemed somehow bad for consulting is astonishing to me. It is astonishing because the very hallmark of good, progressive government is its ability to be flexible and to consult with experts, even scientists and engineers, in order to gather facts—not alternative facts, but information that helps inform government on the best way forward.

An excellent example of the value of reviews is the Palaszczuk government's commitment to undertake a commission of inquiry into the closure of the Barrett Adolescent Centre. The inquiry handed down its findings on 24 June 2016, criticising the decisions of the Newman-Nicholls government that

led to the tragic outcomes we saw. The commission also made findings that were critical of systemic issues and made six recommendations, including provision of a new bed based service for young people with complex mental illness.

As a result of this report, which was made public on 18 July last year along with the government's response, the Palaszczuk government accepted all recommendations in principle and has committed to building a bed based service for young people with complex mental illness. In fact, a detailed implementation plan for all recommendations has been endorsed by cabinet, as we know. I am pleased to say that the planning for the new facility, which will be at the Prince Charles Hospital, is underway, and it is underway in consultation with former Barrett patients and their families. I do not know what those opposite have against consultation and collaboration. To me, those two things are cornerstones of good governance.

I am often out and about talking to people in my electorate in Ipswich, and I can tell the House that they have not forgotten the chaos of the Newman-Nicholls government—and chaos is the word for it. People right across Queensland had services and jobs ripped away from them. What I am hearing time and time again from people in Ipswich, and what I can see firsthand in my community, is that my community is flourishing under the steady, consultative and collaborative hand of the Palaszczuk government. Those opposite need to be reminded that in the three chaotic years of the Newman-Nicholls government no fewer than 76 reviews were undertaken by their government. Even worse, many of those reviews were politically motivated—like the Queensland Commission of Audit which led to the doomed Strong Choices campaign. That is \$100 million down the drain, and that is just one example. I cannot help but think that the opposition are so opposed to reviews—real reviews, not politically motivated ones—because they do not believe in consultation. Maybe they do not believe in it, but I can assure them that Queenslanders believe in it and people in Ipswich believe in it.

In the lead-up to the 2015 state election and after, I spoke to many people who were directly affected by the closure of the Barrett Adolescent Centre. I can assure the House that the commission of inquiry that this government committed to was not an indication to them that we were not doing anything. It is quite the opposite. That is the difference between this government and the opposition. This is a government that brings Queenslanders with it. It is a government that listens and formulates policy based on facts—facts that are gleaned through consultation and collaboration and, yes, through reviews.

I would like to name some of the important reviews that this government has implemented. We implemented an inquiry into the Grantham flooding. Those people needed answers, and through this inquiry they got them. We implemented an inquiry into organised crime. This is such an important issue to Queenslanders, and this review highlighted areas that required further resourcing. We implemented an inquiry into the financial abuse of seniors. We found that in one year more than 1,500 seniors reported financial abuse through this review, and that is just the ones who reported it. If we want to have a community where our older people are free from abuse and feel safe, we need to actually consult with them and collaborate with stakeholders in order to help them.

I am proud to be part of the Palaszczuk government. One of the reasons for that is its consultative and collaborative nature. I do not think anyone has ever been criticised for listening. I am not the only one who thinks that. I would like to share a quote from the Borbidge-Sheldon review. It stated—

The overwhelming election win of 2012 led to a changed dynamic where the leadership team of the parliamentary party in a sense of hubris isolated itself from the organisational wing. The primary consequence of the breakdown was the lack of consultation on policy or political party or campaign matters for the best part of the crucial first two of the government's term.

Perhaps if they listened and consulted, they would not be sitting on that side of the House.

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (5.18 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition on this do-nothing Labor government. This is a Labor government that, when it comes to protecting vulnerable Queenslanders, is all talk and no action, all show and no go. After more than two years, what do we have from this do-nothing Labor government? We have seen 179 reviews, and not a lot done. We have ministers ducking and shirking responsibilities under the review mantra. While thousands of kids languish in abusive homes, this government reviews. A child dies and Labor reviews. Kids get locked in dark rooms as behaviour management and Labor reviews. Maternity services go into meltdown and we get a review. Thousands of people with a disability continue to miss out on support, and the minister announces a review for a plan.

Labor does not just review; it keeps everything secret. They sack staff with no justification for systemic failures. They promise drug testing of parents with no solution when druggie parents return positive results. We have a review into the foster care and blue card system with no end date, and a review that does not make the system better in the meantime.

We have Labor mate Linda Appelt—the architect of the Child Safety fail that led to a commission of inquiry—being brought back to review staffing. This is the same director-general who saw more than a thousand staff exit the department of communities during Labor's watch through voluntary redundancies in the dying days of the Bligh Labor government. Where are the results of this staffing review? They are nowhere to be seen.

We heard the Minister for Health promise a review of Health's handling of a child death last year. There was no public release; it was swept under the carpet and across to the Family and Child Commission. There was no public release at all. We have a Queensland Family and Child Commission review into Mason Lee, a review into a child's death—another review pushed back and delayed. Does this government even realise that under section 9(2) of the act it clearly says—

... it is not a function of the commission to investigate the circumstances of a particular child, young person or family or to advocate on their behalf.

Now we have a commission delaying reviews on the basis of legal matters—a commission that actually has no power to investigate individual cases in the first place.

Our child safety system has been waiting two years for a review of the Child Protection Act. Not content to review once, they have delayed the review to do it all again. This time it is an issues paper, so we will have no child safety reforms any time soon. We know the government sent a domestic violence public disclosure scheme for further review. Amidst all her reviews, the Minister for Child Safety bumbled and fumbled, forgetting all about child safety until a child died and she had to answer for it at estimates; shutting out key child safety stakeholders; closing the door on those she should include and inviting them back in when her failures were made public; failing to protect our most vulnerable children; overseeing hundreds, if not thousands, of cases of reported harm; taking off to music festivals while cases sit idle and kids wait for help; failing to resource her front-line staff so they can respond to child abuse; waiting for the LNP to raise her failures before she would act; leaving a failing placement system in disarray; failing to ensure case plans are there for vulnerable children; jeopardising significant reforms; creating a culture of fear and toxicity in her own department; assuring parliament no child is languishing and then overseeing another child death; and saying she is not happy with declining performance data under her watch but letting it get even worse.

Meanwhile, the Minister for Disability Services is once again reviewing another plan. Under Labor we now have a review for a plan. In June we were promised an overhaul of disability support in schools in response to a review. It was due in October but that was delayed until January and now it is February and still there is no solution. That review was only triggered by media headlines of children being locked in darkened rooms at schools to manage behaviour. On top of this we have seen reviews into maternity services at the Gold Coast and we have had a review into the ambos' pay that is a closed shop for union members only.

Amidst the smokescreen of reviews one thing is clear: this is a government with no idea and no clue. We have minister after minister who put reviews ahead of acting to protect vulnerable Queenslanders. When it comes to child safety, we have a minister who hides behind reviews to cover up her own failings. In the words of 'The Boss' she was born to run. It is not good enough for a minister to get up in front of a television camera and sigh while announcing more reviews into dead kids and it is not good enough to delay and hide the findings of internal reviews. It is not good enough to make statements to release findings and then not release them. Under Labor—

(Time expired)

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (5.24 pm): I will tell the House one thing: when Senator Brandis called members opposite mediocre, after tonight's performance we know exactly what he was talking about. He was spot on. What we have heard tonight is nothing of substance. We hear slogans, we hear one-upmanship between them about who can come up with the better character assassination, who can come up with the better joke and who can be a fly on the wall somewhere. Honestly, tonight's debate is almost embarrassing and puerile. I feel like I am back in high school. One would think that an opposition would come in here with a motion on the big issues—of course about reviews, which is such a big issue!

Mrs Frecklington: It is.

Ms GRACE: 'It is,' says the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. As members opposite were part of a government that had one of the biggest majorities but now find themselves over there after one term, one would have thought they would learn about consultation, but no. When they were in government

they were out of control and drunk on power. They thought they knew it all but now they are over there and, if they continue in that way, that is exactly where they are going to stay. The fundamental difference between this side of the House and those opposite is that we believe in genuine consultation and we believe in genuine—

Ms Howard interjected.

Ms GRACE:—cooperation, as the member for Ipswich said. It has been two years since the LNP left office, but their mindset is still exactly the same. They have no understanding of the terms of consultation. However, if we do something and they believe that people have not been consulted, then they say we have not consulted. They are the Vicky Pollard of politicians in this country: 'Oh yeah, but no, but yeah, but no.' It is embarrassing.

Let us bring a little bit more common sense to this ridiculous motion. The government has embarked upon a number of reviews because they have been warranted. Do honourable members know why? It is because we are cleaning up the mess left by those opposite. That is why. We are cleaning up their mess and we are reporting back to Queenslanders and we are delivering outcomes. Let me go through some of those messes.

The LNP criticised reviews into the Lady Cilento commissioning processes. That is a very important tertiary children's hospital that opened here in Brisbane. We had to do it to clean up their mess. Another was a review into the greyhound industry. The previous minister for racing left us with an absolute mess. I bet they are thankful that he has now joined One Nation. The review came out with recommendations and a plan forward that was not supported by any of those opposite. They had no idea what was required to put the racing industry back on track in this state and they voted against all the reforms because they had no plans, no idea and no policy. The member for Currumbin was running around Queensland trying to knock off the best laws that we have in this state. They have no idea about them.

I am proud this week to stand beside the Premier and to talk about trading hours in this state. In two decades nothing has been done by those opposite, but this government is putting in place a plan that will grow jobs, that will bring about an economic boost and will also bring about consumer confidence in the laws that we are about to bring in. I would not mind if they never had a review.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Ms GRACE: I put a challenge out to them tonight and I will aim it at the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who has not stopped interjecting although she makes no sense whatsoever. Here is my challenge: whenever they are in government in the years to come—and I point out that tonight not one of them got up and said they could never have another review. There is their challenge: go out there and tell the people that they will never have another review. Being the good government that we are, we will consult, we will listen, we will deliver, and that is exactly what we are doing.

(Time expired)

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

AYES, 39:

LNP, 39—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Cripps, Davis, Emerson, Frecklington, Hart, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Perrett, Powell, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Seeney, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Stevens, Stuckey, Walker, Watts, Weir.

NOES, 42:

ALP, 40—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Power, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

INDEPENDENT, 2—Gordon, Pyne.

Pairs: Miller, Springborg; Lauga, Elmes.

Resolved in the negative.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (5.35 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 28 February 2017.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (5.35 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Ingham Botanical Gardens, Flying Fox Colony

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (5.35 pm): This week I tabled a petition on behalf of 2,858 petitioners in relation to their concerns about the flying fox colony which occupies the botanical gardens in Ingham. These gardens serve as Ingham's memorial gardens, accommodating our Anzac cenotaph and other memorials erected by the community in the Hinchinbrook shire. For many years the flying foxes that have periodically roosted in the botanical gardens in Ingham have been a noisy, smelly hindrance to the local community. In the past the flying foxes have come and gone and, although an irritating hindrance, the local community tolerated them on the assumption that they would move on as they have done in the past. This time the colony has not moved on for an extended period. As such, the people of Ingham are no longer prepared to tolerate this colony of flying foxes and they must be moved on.

Their extended occupancy has resulted in a number of adverse outcomes for the local environment and for the community. For example, the flying foxes have forced a local primary school to abandon its use of a bus pick-up and set-down area adjacent to the botanical gardens due to the smell, noise, mess and fear of disease. The flying foxes are damaging the health of the trees inside the botanical gardens—in particular a stand of historic trees planted between 1935 and 1940—by stripping vegetation off the branches and creating a reluctance on the part of local residents to use the gardens for recreational and memorial purposes, including our annual Anzac Day services.

Individual Ingham residents have written to the environment minister about their concerns regarding the flying fox colony in the botanical gardens. The minister responded by advising that local councils have a standing authority to manage flying fox roosts in urban areas. The Hinchinbrook Shire Council does indeed have a management plan in place, but on 4 November 2016 council officers were directed to cease the management activities authorised under that management plan by officers from the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection.

It is unacceptable for the environment minister to advise Queenslanders that their councils are responsible for this issue, only to have officers from his own department intervene to prevent those actions being taken. Given that the minister's department intervened to prevent the Hinchinbrook Shire Council from undertaking these flying fox management activities, we can only assume that the department is now prepared to take full responsibility for managing this flying fox colony. The flying fox colony in the Ingham Botanical Gardens can no longer be tolerated. The numbers are larger and they are now permanently settled. There must be an intervention.

This petition requests that the minister direct his department to take the necessary steps to disperse this flying fox colony. The minister and his department must take responsibility for this given that they have prevented the Hinchinbrook Shire Council from undertaking management activities in accordance with its management plan.

Environmental Sustainability

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (5.38 pm): Over the last few months I have seen a number of innovative ideas and technologies being developed and implemented in Queensland with respect to environmental sustainability. I have also been fortunate enough to meet and speak with a number of scientists participating in world-leading research. I have also had the opportunity to visit and see some of the terrific work being undertaken with respect to heritage protection.

Recently I joined the member for Condamine, Pat Weir MP, on a visit to the Oakey beef abattoir. The biogas and wastewater treatment plant at Oakey Beef Exports uses abattoir effluent to create a fuel for hot water production. In traditional aerobic effluent ponds the methane produced by the breakdown of organic matter is released into the atmosphere as a greenhouse gas. However, in this new biogas system a covered anaerobic pond is used to capture the biogas which is then stored in a dual-membrane storage vessel. From here the biogas can be used on an as-needed basis in the abattoir's gas-fired boiler. This biogas system has many benefits. It can be used as a substitute for natural gas, as the boiler can work on a blend of both or independently. It is more environmentally

sustainable than traditional fuel sources as it is utilising an ever-present waste stream. A better quality effluent stream is produced which creates a better irrigation source. There is also less of an odour nuisance due to the covered nature of the anaerobic lagoon.

During my visit to the Darling Downs I also visited the Royal Bull's Head Inn at Drayton. It has a long and proud history of being an inn, a family home and a post office. It is now under the auspices of the National Trust. The Royal Historical Society of Queensland also has a rich array of artefacts and documents in relation to Queensland's convict and colonial history, and I appreciated the opportunity to visit the Commissariat Store Museum.

In my electorate of Moggill, the University of Queensland is advancing simple and low-cost algae farming in Pinjarra Hills. The use of such farming processes to further develop industry algae based biofuels to create high-quality livestock fodder and human food supplements for markets in Queensland and across Australia certainly cannot be underestimated with respect to economic growth and industry diversification. I was certainly impressed by the research of Professor Peer Schenk in this area and the potential uses of algae across a range of areas and for a number of emerging markets.

Recently, along with the shadow minister for science, innovation and the digital economy, the member for Mount Ommaney, Tarnya Smith MP, I visited the University of Queensland research station on Heron Island. This facility is well recognised for its excellence with respect to marine and reef research. The station manager, Dr Elizabeth Perkins, and her staff were most generous with their time in outlining the collaborative translational research they undertake with various academic institutions not only in Australia but also around the world. The capacity for scientists to collaborate on a range of research disciplines with respect to marine biology, ecology, geology and other areas certainly enables enhanced and expanded outcomes for the benefit of many communities right across Queensland.

Interruption.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Use of Images of Chamber

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.41 pm): I rise to make a personal explanation. On 1 December I tabled in this House a report card of the Palaszczuk government's performance. The document contained images taken inside the chamber but sourced from a public website. I apologise to the House for the use of those images.

ADJOURNMENT

Resumed.

Regional Queensland, Jobs

 **Ms DONALDSON** (Bundaberg—ALP) (5.42 pm): Tonight I rise to talk about the vital importance of job creation in regional Queensland. Unemployment causes financial and emotional strain on so many individuals and families in my electorate of Bundaberg. The Wide Bay region has an unacceptably high unemployment rate, so it is unsurprising that the businesses and jobseekers of Bundaberg have embraced the Palaszczuk government's \$100 million Back to Work program, which is giving regional businesses the confidence to hire. Already, 153 employers in the Wide Bay-Burnett have employed 230 jobseekers as a result of this initiative. This is one of the highest rates of any region in Queensland.

Youth unemployment in Wide Bay is also particularly concerning, but the Back to Work program offers hope for our unemployed young people, with 300 jobseekers aged 15 to 24 hired thanks to the Youth Boost in Wide Bay alone. Last week I visited Bundaberg Walkers Engineering with the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and had the pleasure of meeting Courtney Burke and Lorraine Chipangura, two of the four young people this local business has been able to hire because of the Back to Work program. I congratulate Bundaberg Sugar and Bundaberg Walkers Engineering for taking up this scheme with such enthusiasm.

The Palaszczuk government is not only incentivising existing employers to hire; we are actively working to create new jobs in my electorate, as we saw last Friday when the Minister for State Development announced a new state development area to turn the Port of Bundaberg into a growth hot spot for business and industrial development. This will build on the momentum created by the

Bundaberg gas pipeline and the Knauf plasterboard plant already secured for our region. We expect an increase in minerals and bulk commodity trade through the port including sugar, silica sands and wood pellets as well as new industries wanting to be near existing operators like Knauf. This is an exciting example of what can be achieved when government supports business and industry with the prosperity of everyday Queenslanders as their priority.

Let us not forget also that the Bundaberg port is now the home of ex-HMAS *Tobruk* while it is being prepared for scuttling to become a world-class dive site. It is already proving to be a tourist destination. As the preparation for scuttling continues, even more employment opportunities will be created.

Labor knows that earning a living wage is the foundation of a good life for Queenslanders and their families. We also know that investing in getting people back to work strengthens and grows our economy. That is why we are always implementing common-sense policy that makes a real difference in people's lives. That is why the Palaszczuk government has a proven economic plan for Queensland.

Everton Electorate, Neighbourhood Day; Youngcare

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (5.44 pm): I rise to speak about two events that will be occurring in my electorate in the coming months about which I am quite excited. On 9 April this year we will have Neighbourhood Day. There will be a series of events at Teralba Park at Everton Park, in the middle of my electorate. It will be a picnic race day with three-legged races, sack races and egg-and-spoon races. It will be open to the community free of charge. The local Rotary will be doing a sausage sizzle. YWAM will have its inflatable soccer pitch. The scouts and girl guides will be there along with local community groups and emergency services. It will be a great free day. It is all about promoting community and connecting with your neighbour. It is something we have done for the past couple of years and it has been very successful.

This year there will be an added bonus. The Easter egg hunt, which used to happen just down the road in the electorate of Aspley, has outgrown its previous location and is coming to my electorate. That Easter egg hunt is sponsored by local business Madeleine Hicks Real Estate. The combined Neighbourhood Day and Easter egg hunt means that literally thousands of people will be coming to Teralba Park.

I am also excited to talk about the pending opening of the Youngcare centre at Albany Creek. As most people in the House would know, Youngcare is a great organisation providing dignity and a home for young people who are disabled. In the past their only care option has been aged-care facilities. I am proud to have this organisation in my electorate. One of the great honours I had as the minister for housing and public works was helping to arrange for a gift of land to Youngcare so that it could build this facility, which will be opening in the middle of May.

On that day I will be launching Walk for Youngcare. Along with a number of other people I will be doing a walk around the electorate. We will start with an open day at the centre on Albany Creek Road. We will visit local schools and invite them to be part of a fundraising effort. We will walk from there to Mitchelton Special School, at the other end of the electorate. That is a school and a community that appreciates what Youngcare does, with very personal experience. It will be a great day. It will be a great chance to fundraise and show that Youngcare is welcome in our community. We look forward to its opening.

Gold Coast Waterways Authority

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (5.47 pm): I rise to reaffirm my commitment to the Gold Coast Waterways Authority. It is really sad that someone would have to stand up in parliament and reaffirm their commitment to an amazing authority on the Gold Coast that was set up by the LNP in 2012. The reason I have to do it is that people in my electorate and across the Gold Coast are concerned about what the Palaszczuk Labor government is going to do. As we know, the Labor Party has form when it comes to waterways authorities and harbour authorities on the Gold Coast. I see the member for Currumbin nodding. As we on the Gold Coast know, when the former Bjelke-Petersen government and the former Borbidge government set up independent authorities that vested control and power in the local community, as soon as the Labor Party had the opportunity and as soon as the Labor Party had the numbers in the House it scrapped those authorities.

The people of my electorate and more broadly across the Gold Coast are incredibly concerned about what the Labor government is going to do, because the minister has acknowledged in an answer to a question on notice that in the 2017-18 financial year there is zero dollars allocated for dredging in my electorate of Broadwater. For those who are not aware, my electorate covers about 80 per cent of the Broadwater, which is a sandy estuary. Every single time the tide comes in—for those who do not live by or near the water, that happens daily; it happens every time the moon rises—the Broadwater fills with sand. The Labor Party clearly does not have a commitment to the Gold Coast Waterways Authority because it is investing zero dollars in the 2017-18 financial year for the dredging of my electorate.

I am not the only one who is concerned about this, because constituents have said to me that they are very clearly concerned about what this means because no money for dredging means that it is not going to maintain the navigational channels and that raises some very serious safety concerns given that the Broadwater is one of the busiest waterways in Queensland. You just had to be out on the water on Australia Day, as I was, to see exactly how busy it is. Time and time again we have seen that the LNP is the party that believes in giving local communities power and say in what happens in their local communities. On the Gold Coast the waterways authority has vested power in the local Gold Coast community to make the decisions that are right for them and our waterways rather than trusting that power to boffins in Brisbane who would not know the implications of their decisions. This zero-dollar investment in my electorate smacks of Labor's record and its inability to understand the Gold Coast's concerns.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Achievements; Murrumba Electorate

 **Mr WHITING** (Murrumba—ALP) (5.51 pm): Tonight I rise to remind the House what the Palaszczuk government has delivered over two years to the people in the Murrumba electorate. We have achieved much and we have delivered much over that time. Let me start with the train—the biggest infrastructure project in a generation in our area, the Redcliffe Peninsula line. That was a \$1 billion project with 12 kilometres worth of line, six new stations, 2,850 parking spaces and a shared path all the way along for walking and cycling, and it is a great path. It is transforming the communities in our area for the better. That was certainly a Labor funded state and federal project, and we can be very proud of that. There are other projects that I want to talk about. One of my favourite ones that we have delivered is the Deception Bay Bus Station. That cost \$4.9 million but we saved \$800,000 delivering it. I love this because over two budgets the LNP promised it twice yet it was us who actually delivered it on the ground. When I was elected there were just two pergolas on the ground and that was it.

Other achievements include restoring front-line services to the people of Murrumba. This week, for example, 175 nurses and midwives have started in Metro North, and that includes 31 nurses and midwives at Redcliffe—a fantastic achievement. Thirteen new teachers are starting this financial year in the schools of Murrumba and there are three extra police in Redcliffe and one extra in Deception Bay. We are restoring those front-line services that were cut over those years. In addition—and this is one of my favourite ones as well—we have delivered \$32 million worth of new and refurbished classrooms to the expanding schools in the Murrumba electorate, and that includes a \$15 million new wing for North Lakes State College—one of the largest, if not the largest, colleges in Queensland.

There are so many other things that we have delivered, but I have to mention the Rothwell roundabout. That was a \$37.5 million project and we put in \$22 million of that. Reconstructing a roundabout to an intersection that carries 40,000 vehicles a day is a vital point in our area. We have to add on to that the Boundary Road interchange. We have put \$20 million into that \$100 million project which is absolutely crucial for the people of Deception Bay and North Lakes to get out to the highway. It is six lanes and is once again a shared path which will really help the people in my area. These are two huge projects that the LNP said it could only deliver if an LNP member was elected and it sold assets. Guess what? We are delivering all of these assets and services in our area without selling assets or cutting services.

Toowoomba Second Range Crossing

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (5.54 pm): I rise to speak about a very important project in my area—the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing. The Toowoomba Second Range Crossing has been sitting around waiting to be done for years and years and years under Labor governments with no action being taken at all. The previous Labor member was in office for 11 years and was a minister

in cabinet and not one cent was spent towards getting this project underway. Absolutely nothing was done during that time. Under the LNP government we commenced the project and money was funded in the budget. It is a fantastic project. It is 41 kilometres. It will take thousands and thousands of trucks off James Street through the centre of Toowoomba, but more than that it will allow the people of Toowoomba—mums and dads—to drive north across south without having to do battle with industrial traffic.

Recently I was very fortunate to be allowed to visit the site. Whilst visiting the site, photographs and video were taken and I really wanted to give a bit of an update to the people of my electorate about what was going on and the 1,800 jobs that have been created. Unfortunately, although Nexus was very generous in allowing me access to the area and to take photographs, today I have been told that I am not allowed to use the video footage that was shot on that day and I am told that that has been blocked by the minister's department. I would hate to think that people would be playing politics with this great community project that is being 80 per cent funded by the federal government—an LNP federal government I might add—and which had a full commitment from us while in office. I am told the minister is visiting my electorate on Saturday and will be standing there with video cameras and the media taking shots. I do not know what he is going to do with that footage. I assume the department will allow him to use it as an elected member of this House.

I am very disappointed about this. This project goes through the heart of my electorate. It affects thousands of people—thousands of Queenslanders who live in my electorate. They deserve to know what is going on. For the minister or the department to be blocking me from telling them that and showing them the footage, showing them the progress and allowing them to see what is going on on the ground where their money is being spent when they are being denied access to see that is very disappointing. It is something I would not expect from an open and transparent government, but clearly it has something to hide. Clearly it has politics to play. I wonder if former member Kerry Shine will be standing next to the minister taking a photo opportunity on Saturday so that he can promote himself in an election whilst the current elected member has been denied access. I wonder if the minister will do that. I wonder if he is too embarrassed to come into this place and say that he will reverse it and allow me to use the footage and allow me to let my constituents know about this wonderful project—this wonderful LNP project—that is delivering a great piece of infrastructure and delivering 1,800 local jobs.

Pumicestone Electorate

 **Mr WILLIAMS** (Pumicestone—ALP) (5.57 pm): Things are great in Queensland and for the people I represent in Pumicestone, all thanks to the hard work of the Palaszczuk Labor government. Unemployment is down to six per cent from 6.6 per cent, yet we are still trying to repair the damage done by those opposite. The Palaszczuk Labor government recognises that small business employs 90 per cent of employees. This is key to future economic planning and is recognised by the Palaszczuk Labor government. Pumicestone businesses have recently been telling me that their stores are fully stocked for the first time in the last four to five years and that they have had the best Christmas they have had in four to five years. Pumicestone Passage, Bribie Island National Park and Ocean Beach are the untapped jewels of the Moreton Bay region. Visitors come to enjoy our nature, surf, sun and our lunches. All of this was placed under risk by those opposite.

My community and businesses were placed under threat by the LNP's three-year term in office. It engaged in wholesale development approvals without consideration of the community and did not provide proper infrastructure, and, yes, I refer to the single-lane Bribie Island Road. The LNP placed my community in a dreadful position and suffering traffic gridlock every weekend because there are up to 24,000 vehicle movements on that one-lane road. You might say that people will get there eventually but, sadly, with only one access in and out, many people turn around and go back home rather than spend the two hours to travel the 25 kilometres. Ambulances get stuck in traffic while trying to get patients to hospital. The only way disaster is averted is that we have highly trained paramedics.

The LNP offered a new bridge. However, the deal was to subdivide the island, the national park, and sell off assets. The Palaszczuk government is working to provide that infrastructure upgrade when economic conditions prevail—without the sale of assets. Six months ago, the forward-planning Palaszczuk Labor government purchased the land on Bribie Island where the future bridge will eventually end.

Again, I say this is the best position that retailers in my electorate have been in for the past four to five years. Those opposite would have us believe that they are the champions of small business. I think they need to take a look at themselves. The community did and that is why they are over there.

Cairns, Health Services

 **Mr PYNE** (Cairns—Ind) (6.00 pm): I would like to express my concerns about a number of issues concerning health services in the Cairns area. I will start by saying that I well remember the savage cuts of the Newman government and campaigning outside Cairns Hospital with the member for Barron River and the member for Mulgrave. I was very enthusiastic in my condemnation of the cuts by the former Newman government.

It was an enjoyable experience during the first 18 months or so of this government to work on a number of worthwhile and positive projects, such as the new PET scanner at Cairns Hospital, the new community care unit and a number of other positive initiatives in the healthcare area, including the nurse-to-patient ratios and the introduction of 20 navigator nurse positions.

However, over the recent period we are seeing cuts from the current state government, which concerns me greatly. Over 12 months ago now, with the current health minister, I announced a new mental health facility for young people. A young Cairns boy by the name of Declan Crouch committed suicide. Together with Declan's mother and a number of other people, we announced the building of a new facility in Cairns North. It has been very disappointing to find out that that facility has been withdrawn following objections from nearby residents. I believe that there are plans to build it elsewhere, but the clock is ticking. Mrs Crouch and the Cairns community would dearly love to see that facility prioritised by the government.

My other concern is the failure of the Cairns birthing suite becoming operational. It has been completed for a long time now. It is hard for someone on the outside to work out if that failure to become operational is owing to funding restrictions or maladministration, but there is the fear that it is owing to funding cuts. Of course, this is occurring within the context of the last health board being sacked. The minister certainly said that that was about overspending the budget, but it seems clear to me that the budget was expended on worthwhile, valuable health services for my electorate. I would hate to think that we are seeing cuts to balance the budget when it simply would seem to me that, if other areas are in surplus, the needs in my region could be met by the transfer of funds. I will be objecting outside the Cairns Hospital to any funding cuts on my own—without the members for Mulgrave or Barron River—because I will always stand up for my electorate and oppose cuts to health care.

Cronulla Park

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (6.03 pm): As both the member for Woodridge and the Minister for Health, it is a pleasure to deliver initiatives that improve the health and wellbeing of the residents of the Woodridge electorate. That is why last week I was so pleased to join the Treasurer, Curtis Pitt; the racing minister, Grace Grace; my local Logan Labor colleagues, Shannon Fentiman, the member for Waterford, and Mick de Brenni, the member for Springwood; and Logan City Council Mayor, Luke Smith, to announce the Palaszczuk government's commitment to provide up to \$6.6 million to help establish a new PCYC and sports precinct at Cronulla Park at Slacks Creek in the Woodridge electorate.

The 10.2-hectare Cronulla Park had previously been designated for greyhound racing, but I am pleased to say that it will be adults and children who will now be doing the racing at Cronulla Park. My government has listened and acted on the community's concerns about the planned development of a greyhound racing facility at Cronulla Park. I have also been campaigning, since my election in 2015, for a new PCYC for Woodridge. A new PCYC and a multi-use sporting facility is a terrific outcome for the electorate of Woodridge and the City of Logan.

The new PCYC, to replace the old Logan Central PCYC, will do more than help improve the health of our young people; it will enrich their social lives and promote positive and constructive relationships with our local hardworking police—and I know how community minded they are. The benefits of physical activity go further than health outcomes. Physical activity, particularly team sports, provide life lessons such as teamwork and the importance of resilience, persistence and participation.

The council will soon commence a consultation period within the community to invite the community in determining how best to utilise this site. I thank the mayor and the council, in particular councillors Russell Lutton, Jon Raven and Steve Swenson, for taking responsibility for this site for future

community use and for their genuine commitment to this project. I am proud to have been able to deliver the new Cronulla Park to the electorate of Woodridge—a place that will be a wonderful community facility that will benefit local residents for generations to come.

Interruption.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Retirement

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, recently a number of members have announced that they will not be standing at the next election. My parents are elderly and in the coming years will need my help. For this reason I, too, will not be standing at the next election as a candidate. It has been a real honour to be your Speaker and to be a member of state parliament. None of this would have ever been possible without the tireless support of my wife, Jenny.

I will have more to say at a more appropriate time in the future. Until then, I look forward to continuing to be your Speaker—if that is the will of the chamber—and I look forward to continuing to fight for my constituents in the electorate of Nicklin until the next election, which I understand is scheduled for about this time next year.

ADJOURNMENT

Resumed.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 6.06 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, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Power, Pyne, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Seeney, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Trad, Walker, Watts, Weir, Wellington, Whiting, Williams