



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT

Wednesday, 23 August 2017

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WEDNESDAY, 23 AUGUST 2017



The Legislative Assembly met at 2.00 pm.

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

SPEAKER'S RULING

Member for Pumicestone



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, on 10 August 2017 the member for Buderim wrote to me forwarding a complaint from a member of the public regarding the conduct of the member for Pumicestone, alleging that the member threatened the member of the public with legal action. I note the jurisdiction of the Ethics Committee is set out in sections 104B and C of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 and, further, that section 37 of that act sets out the definition of contempt.

Having considered the correspondence provided, there appears to be nothing described in the complaint that would amount to a breach of parliamentary privilege or a contempt. The alleged conduct complained of, that is a member threatening legal action against a member of the public, does not on the face of it appear to have any relationship with the exercise of the functions of the Assembly or its committees or the performance of the duties of a member. In addition, there is nothing described in the complaint that would indicate a failure by the member for Pumicestone to comply with any of the enforceable obligations set out in the Members' Code of Ethical Standards. Accordingly, I rule that the matter does not fall within the jurisdiction of the Ethics Committee and I will not be referring the matter.

PETITIONS

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

Flying Foxes

Mr Millar, from 621 petitioners, requesting the House to timely disperse flying fox colonies from urban areas at any time of the year regardless of breeding cycles [[1413](#)].

Macintosh Island and Gold Coast, Police Resources

Mr Langbroek, from 51 petitioners, requesting the House to increase the Police presence at Macintosh Island; install a permanent speed camera on the northbound lanes of the Gold Coast Highway at Macintosh Island and increase Police numbers generally on the Gold Coast [[1414](#)].

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

Moggill and Ipswich West Electorates, New High School

Dr Rowan, from 1,735 petitioners, requesting the House to build a new high school to serve families and residents of the suburbs of Mount Crosby, Karana Downs, Lake Manchester, Karalee, Chuwar and Barellan Point [[1415](#), [1416](#)].

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

Bellbowrie, Traffic Congestion

Dr Rowan, from 247 petitioners, requesting the House to commit to an integrated and coordinated road and public transport plan for a bridge at Bellbowrie to ease traffic congestion and allow for access to rail services [[1417](#)].

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

Nudgee Train Station, Park and Ride Facility

From 82 petitioners, requesting the House to increase the size of the Nudgee Train Station park and ride facility by making the vacant land adjacent to the station available for commuter parking [[1418](#)].

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

MEMBER'S PAPERS


The following member's papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Member for Cairns (Mr Pyne)—

- [1407](#) Letter, dated 22 August 2017, to the Premier and Minister for the Arts, Hon. Palaszczuk, titled 'Corruption must be addressed by Palaszczuk Government'.
- [1408](#) Document, dated August 2017, titled 'Fraser Coast Regional Council'.
- [1409](#) Document (with redactions), dated 21 August 2017, titled 'Ipswich YUPI Program Inc.'.
- [1410](#) Document, undated, titled 'Pisaswich/Ipswich Inc. A Discussion Paper'.
- [1411](#) Document, (with redactions), dated 8 May 2001, regarding Bremer Institute and YUPI Inc.
- [1412](#) Bundle of documents (with redactions), dated 11 March 2004, regarding Ipswich City Council.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS


Queensland Security Cabinet Committee

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.04 pm): Prior to parliament sitting today I chaired a meeting of the Queensland Security Cabinet Committee. The meeting was called to discuss the federal government's strategy for protecting crowded places from terrorism. Officials from my government also dialled in to that meeting from Canberra where they had received a range of briefings on security issues.

My government has been asked to strengthen our laws to give even greater protection to our community and greater powers for our front-line resources. Recent incidents in Nice, London and most recently Barcelona highlight the importance of our ongoing vigilance and the necessity to continue to strengthen our laws and our front line. It is important that Australia's governments continue to work together updating our laws and responding to intelligence.

These matters will be discussed further at a special COAG meeting on national security issues proposed to be held in October. This new strategy also highlights the partnership with the private sector and the wider community on providing protections in crowded places.


Counterterrorism

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.05 pm): My government is committed to ensuring Queensland remains a safe and secure environment as a place to live and work, as a place to do business and as a place to visit. In a world of ever-evolving terror threats we are building a new \$46.7 million world-class counterterrorism training facility. We want to avoid situations where our law enforcement authorities have to use force. When they do, we want that use of force to be as effective as possible, minimising the danger to people, property and police. The Westgate counterterrorism facility will specialise in use-of-force and weapons training in a range of complex scenarios that mirror evolving incidents which can present a risk of damage, injury or harm to members of the public.

My government is investing a further \$1 million to increase the long firearm capability of front-line officers. This commitment will see 127 additional long-arm firearms rolled out across the state and additional training for our officers. We must always look at ways to enhance officer safety, particularly when confronted with difficult and dangerous situations. Increasing long-arm capabilities for front-line officers significantly increases the safety of all officers. There is no doubt that service rifles provide an important part of the use-of-force options in dangerous situations or in situations where conventional use of force is not effective. The ability to deploy these rifles at great distances from incidents increases the safety of all officers on the scene.


My government has also committed \$32.3 million over four years for an additional 30 police to be allocated to counterterrorism within the QPS. That funding also supports an additional 20 police being deployed by the commissioner throughout Queensland in areas that require an additional police presence. These are significant investments in ensuring the safety of Queenslanders and providing our police with the resources and infrastructure they need to be better prepared to respond to any future critical incidents in our state.

Multiculturalism

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.07 pm): Mr Speaker, I was honoured to join you and the Minister for Multicultural Affairs today to jointly sign the Multicultural Queensland Charter to reaffirm this parliament's ongoing support for multiculturalism. Queenslanders from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have made, and continue to make, a major contribution to the economic, social and cultural development of our state. In February last year the parliament passed the Multicultural Recognition Act 2016, which established the Multicultural Queensland Charter: eight aspirational principles promoting Queensland as a unified, harmonious and inclusive community. These principles espouse our values as an outward-looking and welcoming society, one that respects the contributions made to Queensland by people from across the world.

At the weekend I had the opportunity to join the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and others including the Police Commissioner, the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Greenslopes in attending the Indian at Roma Street Parklands to celebrate the 70th anniversary of Indian independence. Queensland is home to more than 74,000 people of Indian origin. Their links and their original motherhood help Queensland build cultural and trade links that make our society richer in both economic wealth and diversity. This is just one example of the important role multiculturalism plays in strengthening our society. I look forward to many such opportunities to come in the future. I urge all members of the House to support a multicultural Queensland.

Crime and Corruption Commission; Comments by Member for Bundamba

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.09 pm): For almost 30 years Queensland has had a standing royal commission, based on the recommendations of the Fitzgerald inquiry. That inquiry uncovered a culture of corruption and cover-up that had festered for many years inside the Bjelke-Petersen government. I take deep offence at the allegation my government is anything like that which led to the Fitzgerald inquiry. Former members representing my electorate, my father and the late Kev Hooper, had the courage to raise issues of corruption that led to the Fitzgerald inquiry and the formation of the CJC—today's CCC. Their courage and the integrity of people like Tony Fitzgerald and Wayne Goss are the reasons that I stand in this parliament today.

My government has been determined to strengthen the independence of the Crime and Corruption Commission and its oversight body, the PCCC. This was not the approach of the government we replaced. Any politician—or any member of the public, for that matter—who has allegations of official misconduct or corruption should immediately take those allegations to the CCC. As I said after documents were tabled in this parliament by the member for Cairns this month, 'Take those allegations to the CCC.'

When I was opposition leader, the member for Bundamba raised issues with me about alleged corruption involving then Ipswich mayor Paul Pisasale. She did not provide me with any specific documentary evidence, but she advised me that she was taking her concerns to the CCC that day. I understood she had done that. As a former minister for police and a former deputy chair of the PCCC, the member for Bundamba knows how to approach the CCC. Indeed, after the member for Cairns tabled documents in the parliament in June, the member for Bundamba tweeted a statement on 22 June that said—

After studying the documents tabled in Parliament and given the serious questions I believe now need answers, I have concluded that I have no choice but to refer these serious issues to the Crime and Corruption Commission.

I table that document.

Tabled paper: Extract, dated 22 June 2017, from the Twitter profile of the member for Bundamba, Mrs Jo-Ann Miller MP [\[1419\]](#).

It shows the member knows that the proper procedure for acting on allegations of corrupt conduct is to refer these allegations directly to the CCC.


I am proud to lead a government that has restored integrity and accountability in Queensland. We reduced the threshold for disclosure of political donations from the LNP's level of \$12,800 to \$1,000—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Kawana and any other members—sorry, it was not you. I apologise, member for Kawana. If members are going to be unruly I will take action—against both sides. I will listen to the Premier in silence. She is not being provocative.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We introduced the real-time disclosure of political donations in 2017; we appointed the independent chair of the Crime and Corruption Commission; we reinstated job security and fairness for government employees; we restored community objection rights removed by the LNP government; we removed the LNP's gag clauses from service agreements; and we will never waver in our commitment for a transparent and accountable government.

Bus Driver Safety, Review

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (2.13 pm): Queensland has more than 2,500 bus drivers, who make around 127 million bus trips each year, and they do a fantastic job. They take us safely to work, school, hospitals and then back to our homes and families. To ensure our bus drivers have a safe work environment, in September last year the Palaszczuk Labor government initiated an independent statewide review of bus safety. After receiving this comprehensive review we have engaged with bus drivers, the industry, unions and government agencies on the key findings to prepare our interim response. Today I am pleased to release a copy of the report and the government's interim response for the benefit of the House.


Tabled paper: Department of Transport and Main Roads, Queensland Bus Driver Safety Review, 20 April 2017 [1420].

Tabled paper: Department of Transport and Main Roads, Queensland Bus Driver Safety Review, interim government response [1421].

The review identified 20 potential initiatives that could be implemented to improve bus driver safety, and I am pleased to announce that 11 are already underway. These include a trial of shatter-resistant window film that is currently in place on 30 Gold Coast buses and 10 Cairns buses and an evaluation of the effectiveness of partial driver barriers that are currently in use. The results of this evaluation will inform our future decisions about the rollout of driver barriers on a broader basis. We are also investigating the statewide rollout of de-escalation training for bus drivers. In addition to these initiatives we will work with key stakeholders over the coming months, including members of the Bus Safety Forum, to investigate what further work we can do in areas such as policing, contract terms, driver recruitment and high-risk passenger management. Following these further investigations government will release a final response to the Bus Driver Safety Review.

Travelling on buses remains a safe form of transport, but we can always do more. This government will continue to work together with bus drivers, operators, the industry, unions and other government agencies to deliver safer buses for drivers and passengers.

Comments by Member for Bundamba

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (2.15 pm): Last night the member for Bundamba raised serious claims about the government, the Premier and me. Like the Premier, I take deep offence at these claims. I can advise the House that in my time as local government minister, and indeed since, I can recall no occasion when the member for Bundamba discussed with me alleged corrupt conduct by the former mayor of Ipswich. I can also advise the House that I can find no evidence of her corresponding with me regarding this matter. I have today—

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Southern Downs, if you have noises to make, please make them outside. That applies to all members. It is not intended as a joke. I can hear your rumblings from here, and I find they are designed to try to disrupt the Deputy Premier in her contribution.

Ms TRAD: I can also advise the House that I can find no evidence of her corresponding with me regarding this matter. I have today also asked the director-general of the Department of Local Government, Infrastructure and Planning to review all correspondence received from the member for Bundamba by the department. Following that search the director-general has advised me that no correspondence exists from the member for Bundamba to me or my department raising alleged corrupt conduct by the former mayor of Ipswich. I table a letter from the director-general confirming this.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 23 August 2017, from the Director-General, Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, Mr F Carroll, to the Deputy Premier, Hon. Jackie Trad, regarding departmental correspondence from the member for Bundamba [1422].

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: What was that, member for Lockyer?


Mr RICKUSS: Yes, I said I have been at meetings and the conversations we have had—

Mr SPEAKER: Resume your seat.

Ms TRAD: As the Premier said, if any member in this House has any allegations to make, any evidence of corrupt conduct, it must be referred to the CCC. My record in responding to allegations of corrupt conduct is clear. When matters are raised I refer such claims to the appropriate investigative authorities, including the Crime and Corruption Commission.

The member for Bundamba is a very experienced member of this House. She is a former police minister and a former member of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee. She is well aware of the proper process for raising alleged instances of corruption in this state. As always, anybody who has evidence of corrupt conduct should take that evidence to the police or the Crime and Corruption Commission for investigation.

Jobs and Investment

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.18 pm): The Palaszczuk government is powering ahead in Queensland with a nation-leading plan to attract investment, create jobs and deliver more certainty for our energy sector. We came into government with a clear commitment to increase the uptake of sustainable renewable energy, which in turn will strengthen Queensland's generation capacity. Industry has embraced the stability and certainty the Palaszczuk government has delivered in the energy sector. Queensland is seeing a renewable energy boom with an unprecedented level of renewable energy investment.

We have kickstarted the renewable energy industry in Queensland. I am pleased to update the House with the latest figures. We now have 20 large-scale renewable energy projects which are currently either financially committed or under construction in Queensland. This pipeline of projects will bring significant benefits to regional Queensland, including an estimated \$3.4 billion worth of investment supporting over 2,700 jobs in construction. Once operational, these projects will more than double Queensland's large-scale renewable energy capacity, which will help put downward pressure on wholesale electricity prices. I would like to highlight the projects which are part of this renewable energy boom. They include AGL's 453-megawatt Coopers Gap Wind Farm, which reached financial close last week. The facts on Coopers Gap are impressive: (1) it will be the largest wind farm in Australia once constructed; (2) it is an investment worth approximately \$850 million; and (3) it will support up to 200 jobs during construction and up to 20 ongoing operational jobs.


Edify Energy's Daydream and Hayman solar farms in Collinsville also both reached financial close last week. Together they have 200 megawatts of capacity and will support up to 250 construction jobs. I also have an impressive list of other projects that I would like to highlight: the \$240 million Lilyvale Solar Farm that will support up to 200 construction jobs; the \$217 million Darling Downs Solar Farm that will support up to 220 construction jobs; Ross River's \$225 million solar farm near Townsville that will support up to 270 construction jobs; and the \$380 million Mount Emerald Wind Farm that will support up to 150 construction jobs, and I am looking forward to seeing those big blades make their way up the range into Mount Emerald. It is going to be something for the people in Far North Queensland to see.

These projects represent a vote of confidence from the energy sector in Queensland's economy and the Labor government's energy policies. We are leading the nation in large-scale renewable energy projects under construction or starting in 2017. Queensland has the most megawatts, the most investment and the most jobs in the country around renewables. Our commitment to establishing a new large-scale renewable industry is creating jobs, further diversifying our economy and more generally providing a foundation upon which we can continue to put downward pressure on wholesale prices. The Palaszczuk government is 100 per cent committed to adopting the cheapest and most efficient forms of energy generation to lower power bills and create jobs in regional Queensland. The Palaszczuk government has a plan for our energy future, but we need the federal government to follow our lead and ensure the national energy market is equipped with the right policy settings to deliver stability to energy prices for consumers and for industry.

Interruption.

PRIVILEGE

Crime and Corruption Commission; Comments by Member for Bundamba

 **Mrs JR MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (2.20 pm): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. I want to make it very clear that I do know the procedures in relation to the CCC. I had in fact referred those matters to the CCC. However, that does not in any case stop me from advising any other minister or Premier in this House of what I may have done.


Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I want to get your direction as to whether that was indeed a matter of privilege suddenly arising. It seems to be provoking a debate, but I just want to get your guidance so other members can learn the proper procedures of the House.

Mr SPEAKER: My ruling is that that was not a matter of privilege suddenly arising.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Resumed from p. 2371.


Employment

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (2.21 pm): All of us in this House understand that we operate in an adversarial system and that at its heart politics is a vigorous and tough contest, but the instinct for combat is tempered by the responsibility inherent in our work—the duty we have to those we represent who hope and trust that we will serve their interests, that we will work to improve their communities, that we will pursue policies that seek to make their lives better.

When the government says that we are pursuing a jobs agenda, we do more than make a rhetorical point. When we talk about restoring front-line services, about reinstating and renewing the workforce, including in our health system, it is not merely to prosecute a political argument. The idea that there is dignity in work has been well ventilated, but it is more than that. Meaningful paid employment is the ticket out of the hardship and degradation of poverty. Work can provide purpose and direction to our lives, deliver material sufficiency to us and our families and help shape our social identity. There is no more serious obligation on the parliament than to work every day to provide the opportunity for every Queenslanders to engage in paid employment. It has always been at the heart of the political ideology of the Australian Labor Party and it is the engine that drives the agenda of the Palaszczuk Labor government.


The Public Service serves the public. When jobs are cut, it has a direct impact on the quality of services delivered to the people of Queensland. The Leader of the Opposition has said that there will be no forced redundancies in the Public Service under an LNP government. That is like the fox saying you can trust him with the henhouse because he is now a vegetarian. Jobs are at the top of the government's agenda because we believe in the transformative power of work. Before the last election we promised we would restore front-line services, and that is what we have done across government and particularly in Health. Since coming to office, we have employed an additional 1,250 doctors, more than 4,300 nurses, including 3,550 nurse graduates through our Nursing Guarantee initiative, and almost 1,200 allied health professionals. There have been jobs in construction through our Enhancing Regional Hospitals program, jobs in mental health, jobs in aged care, in Indigenous health, in paediatric care, in preventative care, in palliative care and in research. The Palaszczuk government is working for Queensland by getting Queensland working.

Education, Disability Funding

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events and the Commonwealth Games) (2.24 pm): We want all Queensland children, including those with a disability, to get the best possible start to education, and that is why I am pleased to announce today we will invest an additional \$3.8 million to support not-for-profit community organisations to provide specialist education for students with a disability. These organisations like Autism Queensland, Act for Kids and Vision Australia work in state and non-state schools to support around 8,200 students with a disability. These are students who require significant levels of support and adjustment to participate in education and to improve their learning outcomes.

In recent years we have seen growth in the number of students with a disability at more than twice the rate of general employment growth, so we are increasing funding by more than 50 per cent to \$11.6 million. Not-for-profit organisations will use this additional funding to help schools address the specific needs of students as well as enabling more students with a disability to benefit. The funding will also be used to provide additional support for students already receiving services under this program. This is part of our record billion-dollar investment in supporting students with a disability to achieve their educational outcomes. It is great news for students with disabilities across the state and demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that every child is able to participate and learn to their best ability.

Back to Work Program

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (2.26 pm): The Palaszczuk government's \$177.5 million Back to Work jobs program just keeps going from strength to strength. It is one of our principal jobs policies and it is delivering in spades. Already there are 6,577 Queenslanders in jobs thanks to this hugely successful program, with an additional 573 pending applications being processed. If these applications are successful, it will mean that Back to Work is already supporting more than 7,100 Queenslanders in new jobs—within striking distance of the 8,000 new jobs targeted, and that is just over halfway into the two-year program which has gained further impetus since it has been expanded into the south-east as part of this year's state budget.


I am pleased to report that employers in the south-east are getting on board. There are almost 80 jobseekers now back to work in the south-east thanks to this program, including pending applications, and our Back to Work teams have received almost 400 inquiries from south-east employers who are considering hiring. Employers throughout Queensland just cannot get enough of Back to Work, and the figures speak for themselves. Across every single region in Queensland it is supporting jobs: Far North Queensland leads with 1,503 new jobs; North Queensland with 1,306; 949 in Mackay-Whitsunday; 987 in Central Queensland; 233 in north-west Queensland; 284 in south-west Queensland; and, coming in second, 1,309 in the Wide Bay area, from where we will be governing very soon.

Our historic trading hours reforms have given Queensland employers another incentive to hire. Roz White from Master Grocers has congratulated the government on these reforms, highlighting the positive effects they will have on local jobs and the stability they will provide for small business. She wrote—

This provides our sector with some certainty at last and will provide Queenslanders with the best outcomes for jobs, will ensure diversity and will preserve the vibrancy of our regional and rural communities.

I also note that, according to data released today by the Commonwealth Department of Employment via its Internet Vacancy Index, Queensland has recorded the strongest annual growth in job advertisements, up 12 per cent over the last year—the strongest in Australia and another sign that our employment policies are delivering the goods for jobseekers which have resulted in 94,500 new jobs since the election of the Palaszczuk government.

Fisheries Management

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Economic Development) (2.30 pm): I need hardly remind the House that the previous Liberal National Party government removed 28 per cent of Fisheries Queensland staff and did very little to reform fisheries management in Queensland. The Palaszczuk government is cut from a different cloth.

I am pleased to announce that, since its release last month, significant progress has already been made in implementing the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy. On 25 July I announced the appointment of the Sustainable Fisheries Expert Panel to provide independent advice to the government on fisheries management. This will ensure a more evidence based approach to decision-making. The expert panel will meet for the first time on 29 August.

The expert panel will be complemented by stakeholder based fishery working groups. It is critical that we have all stakeholders around the table as we implement fisheries reforms. Last week, the first three working groups—being trawl, crab and east coast inshore fisheries—were appointed following an expression of interest process. I would like to thank everyone who applied. More than 100 applications were received—a fantastic response. Working group members include recreational fishers, commercial fishers, charter operators, conservationists, seafood processors and scientists. I am looking forward to hearing the outcomes of the first working group meetings, which will be held in September and October.


Fisheries Queensland has also started rolling out new monitoring for scallops, sharks, coral reef species, mangrove jack and blue threadfin. This will build upon our existing monitoring programs and fill important knowledge gaps. The recruitment process for the new Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol is well underway, with 20 new officers to start in October after a rigorous selection process has been finalised. The Gladstone office will reopen in October—

Mr Butcher: Hear, hear!

Mr BYRNE: I know that the local member is very pleased about that—with a new boat being purchased for Gladstone to assist with operations out of the new office.

A trial of vessel-tracking units also commenced last week on a range of commercial fishing boats to support the rollout of vessel tracking on net, line and crab boats by the end of 2018. I am aware that there is considerable community discussion about this action. Fisheries Queensland is looking at all options to ensure the costs for industry can be minimised, including subsidising the cost of units, and will be consulting with fishers before the end of the year to get their feedback about the rules that will apply. While there has been some cost to industry—inevitably there will be—this is a reasonable business cost and it is an obligation that applies to the majority of commercial fishers around Australia and the world. It will help support compliance and provide valuable information to understand the health of our fish stocks. Licensed fishing charter operators will also be required to have vessel tracking by 2020. Consideration is also being given to requiring vessel tracking for recreational sectors under certain situations, for example for recidivist offenders. I will continue to keep the House informed of the progress of these important reforms.

Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, Athletes Village


 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (2.32 pm): As I informed members yesterday, one of the contractors, Ware Building, has failed while working on the townhouse development that will become the Commonwealth Games village. Ware Building was engaged to deliver 82 townhouses for Grocon as part of the Parklands project. Shaw Gidley Pty Ltd was appointed as the liquidator on 18 August 2017. Approximately 95 per cent of Ware's contract was completed, with the remaining works primarily including internal and external defects rectification and landscaping. Grocon is progressing discussions with a number of Ware's subcontractors in order to complete the outstanding works. Grocon is holding retention funds which could be used to make payments to Ware's subcontractors.

There is an obligation, I believe, for all parties to conduct themselves with honesty and integrity in working together to deliver this major project. There is no contractual mechanism for the Queensland government to directly pay affected subcontractors; however, I am assured by my department that the Queensland government, represented by the Department of State Development, is engaging directly with both Grocon and Shaw Gidley Pty Ltd to ensure appropriate steps are being taken to resolve any subcontractor claims.

The Department of State Development has made direct contact with a group of affected subcontractors, including a legal representative, to understand the current situation and to discuss the options that may be available to them. The next step is to develop a full picture of all the affected subcontractors and their outstanding claims, and that detail will be coming to me shortly.

The government will maintain contact with the affected subcontractors to ensure firsthand that everything possible is being done to ensure subcontractors are paid for the work already completed. The Department of State Development will be attending a creditors meeting with the liquidator next Wednesday. Following this, the government will communicate the outcomes to the subcontractors that may be unable to attend. The construction of the townhouses remains on schedule to be finished by the due date. The Parklands project will be handed over to the Queensland government later this year for lease to the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games Corporation as the Commonwealth Games village.

Illegal Firearms, Amnesty


 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (2.35 pm): The Palaszczuk government will continue to support Australia's strict, internationally acclaimed gun laws, because they work. This includes remaining part of John Howard's bipartisan National Firearms Agreement, introduced 21 years ago after the Port Arthur massacre. Last October, amid concerns over gun violence and illegal firearm imports, all states and territories, along with the Commonwealth government, agreed to a number of measures to deal with illegal firearms, including a national firearms amnesty. The amnesty enables any person, including licence holders, to register or surrender unregistered firearms to a firearms dealer or police station without penalty or fear of prosecution. I am pleased to report that, as at 18 August, since the amnesty commenced on 1 July, 5,894 firearms have been surrendered in Queensland. Among those surrendered were 17 firearms that had previously been reported stolen and more than 1,400 which were unregistered.

We were expecting to hear some unusual stories about the surrendered weapons and we were not disappointed. One lethal-looking machine gun was turned in by a Brisbane widow who discovered a cache of weapons while cleaning up her late husband's estate, which also included two grenades

and a number of handguns. The machine gun was used to train Royal Airforce fighter pilots in World War I but, thankfully, did not fire any bullets. Instead, it had a camera inside its barrel to take pictures when the trigger was pulled to register hits and misses during training.

I have absolutely no doubt that by reducing the number of unregistered firearms we are improving the safety of the public and the people of Queensland. This amnesty will continue until 30 September. I encourage others to take this opportunity to either register or surrender their unregistered firearms. The Queensland Police Service has asked that anyone intending to surrender a firearm should, in the first instance, attend their local firearms dealer rather than a police station. As there are significant penalties, it is important that anyone intending to surrender a firearm first makes an appointment with a firearms dealer before proceeding directly to that dealer. A detailed list of all participating dealers is on the Queensland Police Service website.

Byrne, Justice J, AO

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (2.38 pm): Last week I was privileged to attend and speak at a valedictory ceremony for the honourable Justice John Byrne. Over the course of his long career Justice Byrne has provided distinguished service to Queensland as a member of the legal profession and of the judiciary.

Justice Byrne took silk after only nine years at the bar, before joining the Supreme Court bench in 1989. His Honour never shied from his responsibilities on the trial division of the Supreme Court, presiding over novel and notorious cases. Since 2007, His Honour has managed the trial division of the Supreme Court as Senior Judge Administrator. His legal intellect and leadership to the court have been paramount in guiding the court through the challenges of these times.

The ceremony was a fitting farewell for a great servant of the Queensland legal profession. Justice Byrne's achievements, outside of arguing and applying the law, are manifold. At various times, His Honour served as a member or leader of bodies as diverse as the Litigation Reform Commission, the Supreme Court Library and Rules Committees, the Queensland and Australian Councils of Social Services, the National Judicial College and the Australian Institution of Judicial Administration. He contributed to legal education at three great Queensland tertiary institutions—Griffith University, Bond University and his alma mater the University of Queensland. His Honour was a member of the Army Reserve for over 19 years, finishing with a rank of Lieutenant Colonel and a reserve force decoration. Fittingly, His Honour was awarded the Order of Australia in 2013.

I personally thank Justice Byrne for his advice and reflections while I have been in this role. His insights have been appreciated. I also express my gratitude for His Honour's advance advice of his retirement to allow for a smooth transition within the court. On behalf of the Queensland government and all members of this House, it is my pleasure to wish Justice Byrne well in all future endeavours.

Go Local, Grow Local

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (2.39 pm): Today I can announce the Palaszczuk government is ramping up its Go Local campaign to encourage Queenslanders to support their local small businesses right across the state. Our new Go Local, Grow Local campaign launched today highlights the important role small businesses play in supporting Queensland jobs and the economy. The new campaign includes newspaper advertising and social media. It is designed to create awareness of the benefits of spending money locally and encouraging Queenslanders to proudly share their experiences supporting their local businesses.


Supporting local businesses pays off in more ways than one. Where you choose to spend your money can have a direct impact on economic growth. This support helps build strong and resilient communities, generate employment and develop civic pride and helps new businesses to start, existing businesses to grow and it puts money back into the community. Even better, it creates local jobs. This new campaign and our overarching Go Local campaign are part of the Palaszczuk government's \$4 million disaster recovery package announced in the wake of Cyclone Debbie and the subsequent weather event.

The Palaszczuk government has not forgotten about cyclone affected businesses and their families. Small business owners, operators and their families are still doing it tough after the disaster and need all the help available. The Palaszczuk government is continuing to work closely with these small business owners to help them recover. Under our \$4 million recovery package, a free counselling service is available in the affected local government areas of the Whitsunday Coast, Mackay, Isaac,

Rockhampton and Logan. We are also helping 92 small businesses get back on their feet under the first round of our Small Business Recovery Grants, helping owners and operators to rebuild. These businesses will share in more than \$845,000 to engage business consultants, mentors, coaches or an advisory service to assist with their recovery.

Our Go Local and Go Local, Grow Local campaigns complement the Buy Queensland policy released last month. The Palaszczuk government is committed to supporting jobs for Queenslanders right across the state. Our government is serious about ensuring all of our agencies are buying local. The Palaszczuk government knows small businesses are the lifeblood of communities, particularly in our state's regional areas, and they need our support. It has not been an easy ride, but when strong communities band together and everyone from consumers, local tradies, and the government lend a helping hand, good things can happen.

Seniors Week

 **Hon. CJ O'ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland) (2.42 pm): I am pleased to advise the House that this week is Seniors Week. I have already had the opportunity to attend some great events, both in the north and in Brisbane. Seniors Week is a great way to celebrate and acknowledge our older Queenslanders who deserve our respect and, more importantly, our support.


Leading into the last election our government made a strong commitment to pursue concessions for Queensland seniors and I am proud to report that we have delivered. We know that cost-of-living pressures are high and we know that our seniors have been hit hard through cruel changes to the pension and cuts in Commonwealth supports and services. True to our word, we have stepped in and made up for the Commonwealth's cuts to concessions. In this year's budget we have increased the total for seniors concession funding to \$296 million.

Eligible seniors can receive assistance of up to \$341 per year through the Electricity Rebate Scheme; \$341 per year through the Medical Cooling and Heating Electricity Concession Scheme; \$720 once every two years through the Home Energy Emergency Assistance Scheme; \$200 per year through the Pensioner Rates Subsidy Scheme; \$71 per year through the Reticulated Natural Gas Scheme; \$120 per year through the South East Queensland Pensioner Water Subsidy Scheme; and those people who require medical equipment at home, such as a dialysis machine or oxygen concentrator, can receive up to \$465 and \$694 respectively per year.

In addition to these concessions, our government is working hard to ease the cost-of-living pressures through our seniors discount card scheme and through the carers card scheme. The Seniors Card enables eligible seniors to access a wide range of business discounts which are in addition to the concessions that I have already mentioned. As at 30 June 2017, we had more than 870,000 cardholders in the Seniors Card and carers card schemes, an increase of approximately 121,000 cardholders since coming into office. In May of this year, the 200,000th Seniors Card + go card was issued, combining access to concessions and deals with the transport concession rates available with a seniors go card. We promised that we would fight for a fair and dignified life for our seniors and we have been a government of our word and have delivered. I wish seniors across the state all the best this week and hope that all members of the House have the opportunity to acknowledge the seniors in their electorates.

NOTICE OF MOTION


Tully-Millstream Hydro-Electric Project

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (2.45 pm): I give notice that I will move—

That this House support the construction of the Tully-Millstream hydro-electric project.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (2.45 pm): The Premier, Anastacia Palaszczuk, went to the last election espousing the virtues of openness and transparency and draping herself in the legacy of Fitzgerald. Late last year she penned an opinion piece titled 'We push for transparency in the fight against corruption' but, like everything else we see from this weak Premier, the actions never match up

with the rhetoric. Annastacia Palaszczuk and Labor are always all talk and no action. Everything this Premier does is in the political interests of herself and her government and not in the interests of Queenslanders.

There have been issues involving several ministers, but time and time again the Premier only ever acts as a last possible resort after she has been dragged kicking and screaming to lance the political boil. We have seen the energy minister stood aside after months of media speculation because the Crime and Corruption Commission found that his use of a private email account raised a reasonable suspicion of corrupt conduct. He remains dispatched to the back corner of the House while the CCC and the State Archivist continue their investigations.

Last week we saw the Minister for Police and Corrective Services referred to the Crime and Corruption Commission for his conduct and treatment of the Pullen family of Mackay, the family of a homicide victim who were paraded in front of the media while being kept from the truth about the release of an offender who was convicted of the unlawful killing of their son. In response to the three days of media attention last week the Premier did her usual cut and run response, literally hiding from scrutiny and failing the test of leadership once again. The swiftest action we have seen from this government is to discipline the whistleblower in the department who made a disclosure in the public interest so that Queenslanders could be let into the secret of the actions of senior ministers in this Labor government.


Yesterday I spoke of a government of cons, costs and crisis. Today I add another C to that list—corruption. As the member for Bundamba aptly put it in her extraordinary address to this House last night—

To walk past corruption is a corrupt act in itself. To walk past corruption is a value statement of one's very low value system.

This is a Premier who has presided over ongoing secrecy, cover-ups and corruption speculation and has failed her commitment to provide openness and transparency time and time again. These ongoing corruption claims strike at the very heart of our democracy, just like we saw last year when the voting system was changed with 18 minutes notice.

(Time expired)

Multiculturalism

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (2.48 pm): You can talk about cover-ups when you disclose your donations of \$100,000.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member, can you please make sure you no longer use the word 'you'. That applies to all members. All comments are to be directed through the chair.

Ms GRACE: When it comes to the integrity and leadership of the Premier, I will back her any day over those opposite. In Queensland August is Multicultural Month and it has been fantastic. Last Saturday I joined the Premier, the member for Clayfield and other members at Roma Street Parklands for the India Day Fair. On Sunday I had the pleasure of attending the festivities in Toowoomba. The Palaszczuk government's vision for a united, harmonious, welcoming and inclusive Queensland was on display for all to see. This morning we reaffirmed our commitment to that vision when you, Mr Speaker, and the Premier together signed a copy of the Multicultural Queensland Charter for permanent public display in the parliament.

That is why it pains me to refer to last week's events in the Australian Senate. Two remarkable events occurred. Firstly, there was the appalling and disrespectful stunt by One Nation and Senator Brandis's passionate speech in response. In the words of the Prime Minister, Senator Brandis 'spoke with eloquence and with wisdom' against that disgraceful stunt. Secondly, this side of the House will always give credit where credit is due, which is why Senator Brandis's response received a standing ovation from Labor and crossbench senators. I must admit I have never before witnessed such a scene in Australian politics. However, when I watched it on the news it was interesting and telling that not one of his own LNP senators stood up and applauded—not one.


In politics, you have to stand up and be counted for the things that you believe in. That is why I am proud to be part of the Palaszczuk Labor government, which will always stand up for respect, fairness and inclusion for all Queenslanders, no matter where they come from. It is why I plead with those opposite to show leadership and join the Premier in denouncing One Nation's abhorrent and disrespectful antics and their disgusting attempts to stir fear, hatred and division amongst Queenslanders. When the member for Clayfield refuses to rule out any preference deals with One

Nation, he is simply playing with fire. The recent events in Charlottesville, USA, show that when you do not show leadership in this space you allow Neo-Nazis and supremacists to display hatred and violence to the public.

Supporting our rich, vibrant multicultural community requires more than just showing up at festivals and eating their food. Those opposite should reject any deal with One Nation. Not to do so sends the worst possible message to our wonderful diverse rich multicultural community.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I remind members to not use the word 'you'. It simply inflames the atmosphere in the chamber.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.52 pm): Just as the shadow Treasurer said, yesterday it was the three Cs of cons, costs and crisis; now we have the four Cs of cons, costs, crisis and corruption. This government is an embarrassment and a disgrace. Yesterday the Deputy Premier made a humiliating blunder. Yesterday the play at student politics by the so-called tactical genius who is the Deputy Premier blew up in her face. Yesterday the Deputy Premier came in here to play political games and, as I said, it blew up in her face. The normal business of parliament had to stop. We all had to stop and listen to the Deputy Premier's motion that tried to score some form of cheap point.


What happened right here in the parliament yesterday? The Deputy Premier lost control of the parliament. Obviously she lost control of the votes in the House. Yesterday, right here in the House, she lost three votes. It was a complete debacle. Embarrassingly, the government could not even muster the numbers to guillotine her motion.

Right now, the most important issue that is before Queenslanders is electricity prices. Last night the government lost the motion in relation to electricity prices. This parliament condemned Labor for their secret tax that is electricity prices. This parliament condemned the government for their hike in electricity prices.

What happened when we finally got around to debating the motion of the Deputy Premier? We saw the member for Bundamba stand up and sensationally call out the Premier and the Deputy Premier for ignoring an alleged corruption. This is a corruption crisis entirely of their own making. The self-proclaimed tactical genius who is the Deputy Premier gave the member for Bundamba the floor and didn't Jo bring in the fireworks! We all know that Labor continues to gag the member for Bundamba, which is why she no longer gets a voice in this House. Now we all know why. It is because she has a lot to say about this government. Yesterday, the Deputy Premier's cheap stunt clearly shows that this government is not open—

(Time expired)

Leader of the Opposition

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (2.55 pm): The Leader of the Opposition has been out on his road-to-nowhere tour around regional Queensland.

Ms Trad: He's got a dirt bike.

Mr DICK: No, he was not on the dirt bike or in the tinnie. He was out in a place so familiar to him that he once called it Slovakia. Last week it was Townsville's turn. There he was: he had gone back to 'Stunts R Us', put back the thongs and the stubbies, and pulled on the Maroons jersey. What a figure he cut! He was game ready, match fit and ready to run right on to Suncorp Stadium as the mascot.


When the new Townsville stadium is built by Labor, when the new Townsville stadium is completed by Labor, the Leader of the Opposition will be able to reflect on it knowing that not one ounce of his effort, not one moment of his time and not one dollar from any of his budgets went into building it. The same goes for Metricon Stadium. We proposed it and the LNP opposed it. If it had been left to them, there would be no Gold Coast Suns, no Commonwealth Games, no Robina Stadium, no Titans, no Gold Coast University Hospital, no Gold Coast Light Rail and no Cross River Rail. That goes to show that Labor builds Queensland. When it comes to infrastructure, the LNP are as short-sighted as Mr Magoo.

In contrast, the Palaszczuk Labor government stands up for Queensland, including through our Queensland first procurement policy, which was quickly attacked by the trade ministers of Australia and New Zealand. I do not want to accuse anyone of conspiring with a foreign power to undermine the

government of Queensland. Of course, that would be completely ridiculous, so I will leave it to Julie Bishop. However, I remind the federal trade minister, Steve Ciobo, that he has been elected to represent Queensland, as has the Leader of the Opposition. We do not know where he stands on Cross River Rail. We do not know where he stands on the procurement policy. We do not even know where he stands on the member for Gaven, but we know where he stands on the member for Broadwater. That is very clear.

The Leader of the Opposition has been called on to stand up for Queensland before and he proved to be an absolutely profound disappointment. However, it is not too late for redemption. When he travels around rural Queensland, he can stop at Barcaldine, stand under the Tree of Knowledge, the birthplace of the Australian Labor Party, and get a little bit of conviction. He can show that a Maroons jersey means something for Queensland and he can start standing up for Queensland.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.59 pm): Certainly we know where all the members opposite stand when it comes to the member for Bundamba, because we are now seeing the Labor Party at public and open warfare with itself. We have just seen that play out in the last two hours in this place.

We have a Premier who stood up, after avoiding the media for as long as she possibly could, and said in relation to the member for Bundamba that she felt hurt. What does she normally feel? She normally feels angry. Is she disappointed this time around? She is either disappointed, angry or hurt. What a terrible thing.

We have a Labor government deeply divided and at war with itself. If it were not enough that it is occurring among the existing parliamentary members, we now have input from the former member for Rockhampton, 'Rocky Schwarto'—the mentor of the member for Ashgrove—who is now at war with the member for Bundamba as well.

Obviously, when we talk about warfare we cannot leave out the member for South Brisbane, who is the epitome of internal warfare in the Labor Party. I can tell members that for free. They cannot get anyone from the Labor Party in Townsville to turn up when the member for South Brisbane turns up there. I can tell members for sure what the mayor up there thinks. What this reminded me of were the words that were spoken on 8 September 2006.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Deputy Premier, I find your interjections are designed to try to disrupt the Leader of the Opposition. I know I allow a bit of free flow, but I would urge members to allow the Leader of the Opposition to finish his contribution.

Mr NICHOLLS: What this reminded me of were the words that were spoken on 8 September 2006: 'If you can't govern yourself, you can't govern Queensland.' They were the words of Peter Beattie. That is the story of this Labor Party—a government so internally riven that it has lost focus on delivering for Queenslanders. This is a government so riven and rotten by its own internal fighting that its members are lining up one by one to throw it under the bus.

When the member for Bundamba spoke last night she laid out yet another con. She triggered another Labor crisis and she exposed the cost to Queenslanders. More importantly, she revealed a Premier who walks past corruption—cons, cost, crisis—

Ms PALASZCZUK: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. I find those comments personally offensive and I ask them to be withdrawn.


Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, will you withdraw?

Mr NICHOLLS: I withdraw.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Question time will finish at 4.02 pm.

Crime and Corruption Commission, Referrals

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (3.02 pm): My first question without notice is to the Premier. The Crime and Corruption Act 2001 at section 38 requires a public official who becomes aware of a reasonable suspicion of corruption to refer those allegations to the CCC. Why did the Premier not refer information about corruption provided by her parliamentary colleague, in her time as police minister, to the CCC in conformity with the act?

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I expect there will be ample opportunity for questions to you, Deputy Premier.

Mr Minnikin interjected.

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

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. In terms of achieving some consistency in the House, members on this side have been warned for far less a challenge to your authority than that. That was a direct challenge to the chair.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. The Deputy Premier's interjection was well timed. It did not interrupt anyone. It was within the standards that have been established in this place for many years in what is a robust debating environment. Mr Speaker, you quite rightly chastise members for deliberately interjecting to disrupt members while they are on their feet. The Deputy Premier's interjection was clearly timed to allow the member to have finished his question and sit down and before you called the Premier. It was a perfect example of an appropriate interjection. I just think it hurt a little bit too much.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister for Industrial Relations, be careful: you might be mentioned. I believe the questioner had finished his question. The Deputy Premier interjected prior to the Premier starting to respond. My finding is that technically she did not interrupt the questioner, but I am going to issue a general ruling to all members that I have a low tolerance today, and I think everyone understands why. The Premier has the call.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. Let me make it very clear—and I said this in my ministerial statement and I will say it to all members of the House—that if any member of this House has any substantive evidence about corruption then they should refer those matters to the CCC immediately. That is the principle. Members need to refer substantial evidence to the CCC.

I can confirm from my director-general, Dave Stewart, that he has searched the department's electronic records management system and the search has not revealed any correspondence between Jo-Ann Miller and me as Premier in relation to complaints—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, the Premier's answer is relevant and not provocative.

Ms PALASZCZUK:—about former Ipswich mayor Paul Pisasale. I table that correspondence.

Tabled paper: Document, undated from the Director-General, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Mr Dave Stewart, to the Premier, Hon. Annastacia Palaszczuk, regarding correspondence from the member for Bundamba in relation to complaints about former Ipswich Mayor Pisasale [1423].

Comments by Member for Bundamba

Mr NICHOLLS: My second question without notice is also to the Premier. Last night the member for Bundamba said—

My concerns were ignored and all I got was, 'Just fix it.'

What did the Premier mean when she told the member for Bundamba to 'just fix it'? How did the Premier satisfy herself that the issue had been fixed?

Ms PALASZCZUK: In relation to fixing it, that was in relation to community consultation for the Ipswich communications centre. There were representations made by the then mayor of Ipswich, the local members for Ipswich—both the member for Ipswich and the member for Ipswich West—and the federal member for Ipswich raising concerns that there was no community consultation in relation to the Ipswich communications centre. I said to fix it.

Country Women's Association, Halls

Mr MADDEN: My question without notice is to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is supporting the upgrade of Queensland Country Women's Association halls in Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Ipswich West for that very important question. On this side of the House we value the hard work that the Queensland Country Women's Association does throughout Queensland. We only have to look back over the years to see who has been supporting the Queensland Country Women's Association.

I know how hard they worked after Tropical Cyclone Debbie and after the floods. They were there helping families, helping students and helping people who were impacted by the floods. I also know that the member for Ipswich West has a beautiful CWA hall in Rosewood, which is part of his electorate. Can I say from the outset congratulations to the Queensland Country Women's Association for achieving 95 years of service to this great state.

I was very pleased at the Royal Queensland Show, the Ekka, to meet with members of the Country Women's Association, along with the Minister for Agriculture, where we took great pleasure in announcing \$1 million to help fix the halls right across Queensland. When I had been in Ipswich previously, some of the members of the Country Women's Association personally spoke to me about how they were finding it very difficult to repair their halls that were in disrepair. As they were ageing, they did not have the qualifications, nor did they have younger people coming through who were able to fix those halls. This is also a job-generating project, especially for those women living in those regional towns. It means jobs for local tradies. It means jobs for people who can do painting, who can do decking, who can help fix up those halls.

On behalf of my government, I want to congratulate the Country Women's Association. In particular, I mention Mrs Joy Coulson, who advised that she had been inundated with calls from the Country Women's Association committees across the state, with members saying that they were 'ecstatic' about the news of this funding. Mrs Coulson has just finished a tour of Far North Queensland to look at Country Women's Association halls in Cooktown, Tully, Atherton, Mount Molloy, Mossman and Gordonvale, and she knows how important this funding is to restore these meeting places.

The Country Women's Association will be undertaking an expression of interest through their branch members by October 2017. I have no doubt that the investment of \$1 million into rural and regional communities across our great state will be a boost to local economies, helping to support jobs and, in particular, tradies.

Pisasale, Mr P

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier. Did anyone provide any information to the Deputy Premier regarding allegations of corruption against Paul Pisasale and what actions were taken in relation to those allegations?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Nanango for the question. Earlier today I addressed the matter in relation to the allegations made by the member for Bundamba in the House last night, and my ministerial statement was directly focused on the comments made by the member for Bundamba. In relation to whether or not any other individual in Queensland—one of the 4.8 million Queenslanders—had raised issues in relation to corrupt activities, I will have to absolutely consult my records. I will do that and report back to the House.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, the Deputy Premier's answer is relevant.

Ms TRAD: I advise the House that it is not the complaint management system currently in place that people personally raise allegations of corruption with other political figures. What ordinarily happens in relation to local government complaints or allegations of corruption or misconduct or breaches of local government laws—

Mr Dickson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Buderim, you are warned under standing order 253A. The Deputy Premier's answer is relevant. I could not even understand the words you were using. If you persist, I will take the appropriation action.

Ms TRAD: For the benefit of the House, if any individual has a concern in relation to the activities of a local councillor, they are ordinarily referred to the director-general of my department, as is the system and the processes that most local councils abide by.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Callide, you are warned under standing order 253A. The Deputy Premier's answer is relevant. If you persist, I will take the appropriate action.

Mr SEENEY: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. My interjection was exactly the same as the interjection that was made by the Deputy Premier earlier. The Deputy Premier was not speaking—

Mr SPEAKER: Resume your seat. I have made a ruling. You have the call Deputy Premier, if you have anything further to add.

Ms TRAD: We have a well-developed local government complaints mechanism in this state. If people have allegations of corruption then they are referred to the CCC. I will note that it is the Liberal National Party that is also currently under investigation for the Fadden Forum and activities that were undertaken during the last council election on the Gold Coast.

The CCC is a standing royal commission of inquiry in Queensland. It has broad sweeping powers in relation to investigating allegations of corruption, whether it is at a council level or whether it is at a state level—and that is the appropriate forum. I will provide a response in relation to the broad question by the member for Nanango, but I can assure the House that at no stage during my time as local government minister did the member for Bundamba personally raise with me, my office or my department any allegations of corrupt conduct by the former mayor of Ipswich.

Public Transport, Security

Mr RUSSO: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on any recent improvements to security on our public transport network?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Sunnybank for the question. I am glad that he got a question in today and I am glad that I will be able to answer it. The Palaszczuk Labor government is absolutely committed to providing a safe and reliable public transport network for the people of Queensland. We are working hard to improve the safety and security of our public transport network, particularly in the lead-up to the 2018 Commonwealth Games. That is why I am very, very pleased to announce today an additional \$1.5 million to overhaul the CCTV technology on the Gold Coast rail line in time for the Commonwealth Games. These upgrades will deliver better resolution and significantly improve the quality of CCTV images to Queensland Rail and to the Queensland Police Service.

I am sure that every single member from the Gold Coast will be elated about this announcement, even those who are hoping to be members again in this place like David Crisafulli. I am sure that he will come out in support of this great announcement. I know that it is especially the member for Gaven who will be really happy about this announcement. I read with interest a message that the member for Gaven gave the Gold Coast Central Chamber of Commerce last year when he said that CCTV cameras are useful for deterring 'anti-social activities as well as assisting the QPS in their operations and ultimately, their prosecution'.

We know that the member for Gaven has some issues of his own with on-camera activities. We know that last month he was called into the LNP headquarters to explain a dispute with his neighbour that was caught on camera. I have to say the footage must have been pretty bad because they will not release it. Again, they will not release who their secret donors are. They will not release the camera footage of the altercation between the member for Gaven and his neighbour. I do not know why. It must be really bad, but nothing could be as bad as the pictures of the former member for Redlands. Nothing could be as bad as those pictures.

Again, what we see from those opposite is a culture of cover-up: 'Let's cover up this video. Let's cover up the donors. Let's cover up the \$100,000 worth of secret donors. Let's make sure that it is the Queensland taxpayer who funds the resolution of this issue.' What are they hiding? What is the member for Gaven hiding? What is the LNP hiding? What is the Leader of the Opposition hiding in terms of secret donors?

(Time expired)

Comments by Member for Bundamba

Mr POWELL: My question without notice is to the Premier. Last night the member for Bundamba said that knowledge and concerns about Paul Pisasale's allegedly corrupt actions were widely known inside the Labor Party. She said—

The State Secretary, Evan Moorhead, and the State President, Dick Williams, of the ALP also knew, as did many ALP branches in Ipswich, trade unions and loyal and honest ALP branch members.

Premier, how deep is the rot inside the Labor Party that none of its leadership took any action on the information provided by the member for Bundamba?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. As I said, again, if anyone has any substantial evidence about alleged corruption in this state, they should refer it to the CCC. I can remember when we were in opposition there was a person called Scott Driscoll, who was the member for Redcliffe. What did those opposite do? There were rumours going around about the former member for Redcliffe. When there is substantial evidence, those matters should be referred immediately to the CCC.

Sheep Industry

Mr PEARCE: My question is to the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Economic Development. Will the minister update the House on the success of the government's investment in the sheep industry and any federal involvement in this investment?

Mr BYRNE: I thank the member for the question. I have a tale to tell of 'Baa-naby, Sheep and Water'. Everybody in this House knows the great success that we have had as a government investing in the sheep and wool industry in western and south-west Queensland. A total of \$8.75 million—

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr BYRNE: I know the member for Southern Downs is keen to hear about it. A total of \$8.75 million over the last two years from the Palaszczuk government has been invested. The most rewarding part of that is that it has been complemented by \$9 million from the federal government—a collaborative approach that is having a great effect on the ground in Western Queensland. I always suspected that Barnaby was a great supporter of the sheep industry in Queensland, and it is clear and evident now that it is all due to his blood line. I had to do it; I could not let it go.

It has been a very interesting journey that we have been on in regard to this matter. What I cannot get over is those opposite, particularly the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, when we were rolling out this program which has been a great success. These are the lines that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition used—

The Palaszczuk Labor government is clearly not interested in the impact wild dogs have on our grazing industries ... Labor seems to believe the wild dog menace will be solved by shiny new fences being erected in cluster models promoted by individuals and some local shires.

Well, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, yes, we do and what a brilliant success it has been! It has been fantastically successful and most of those opposite who come from the regions impacted by this know full well what a fabulous program it is. There are many shires that are trying to complement and get involved with the program.

I have been around for a considerable period and in politics you have to be careful about what you say. I notice that the federal member for New Zealand has a habit of making many comments that come back to haunt him. This is what he said when speaking earlier in the piece about the citizenship problems of Greens senators: 'The message is quite clear. We have got laws of the land out there; we expect you to obey them.' He then went on to say, 'But, unfortunately, ignorance is no excuse.' Is it not amazing how in a short period of time what you say in public comes back to bite you? It is typical of the Liberal-National approach: 'Do what I say, not what I do.' Leadership 101: fail.

It is funny that leadership has been the subject of conversation here in recent days. The leader of the federal National Party cannot look after his own administration, cannot look after water issues, makes a mess of the Murray-Darling Basin and those opposite have the gall to stand up here and back him in in this House.

(Time expired)

Comments by Member for Bundamba

Mr EMERSON: My question is to the Premier. Last night the member for Bundamba said—

To walk past corruption is a corrupt act in itself. To walk past corruption is a value statement of one's very low value system.

Has the Premier's value system been shown to be of a very low value by the revelations made by the member for Bundamba?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I seek your guidance: can you clarify whether that question is seeking an opinion? I do not think that is allowable under standing order 115.

Mr SPEAKER: I will allow it.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I reject what the member for Indooroopilly has said. I said very clearly that I 100 per cent support—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. The Premier's answer is relevant. It is not provocative.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I have said it in this House, I have said it outside in public and I will say it again: if anyone has any substantial evidence of corruption in this state, we have a standing royal commission. Why do we have a standing royal commission in this state? Because of 32 years of National Party—with Liberal Party—rule in this state. That is what we saw. That is corruption. The police minister of the day went to jail. Ministers went to jail.

Mr Springborg: Gordon Nuttall.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Kawana. I know you are there. Premier, I urge you to make your answer relevant to the question that was asked.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Now we have a standing royal commission in this state—the anti-corruption watchdog in this state—that we respect, unlike those opposite. The last time they were in power they sought to curb the power of the CCC, they sought to influence the CCC and they sought to nobble its independence in this state. What did we do? We restored the independence of the CCC. The CCC continues to do outstanding work in this state. If you have any substantial evidence of alleged corruption in this state, you must send it to the CCC. People in this House know that and people outside know that. What we do need to know about, when we are talking about integrity and accountability, is the \$100,000 of secret donations from the LNP. This House has passed a motion asking—

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, Premier. I urge you to make your answer relevant to the question.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I believe it is relevant, Mr Speaker, because of what the member for Indooroopilly asked me—

Mr Emerson: Is why you ignored corruption.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Because I do not. If anyone has substantial evidence they refer it, but on that side of the House \$100,000 of secret donations from—

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Premier, I find that you are debating the issue with the member for Indooroopilly.

Water and Electricity Prices

Mrs LAUGA: My question is to the Treasurer and Acting Minister for Energy. Will the Treasurer and acting energy minister update the House on what the Palaszczuk government is doing to help low-income Queenslanders with everyday water and energy living expenses?

Mr PITT: I thank the member for Keppel for her question. A major focus of state budgets handed down under the Palaszczuk government has been to reduce cost-of-living pressures, particularly on some of our most vulnerable people—something the LNP never did. In the 2017-18 budget we have concessions for the expected five million Queenslanders we will have by October this year of more than \$5.34 billion. We do not take this decision lightly because it is important to ensure that people understand that our government understands them.

Our government understands the cost-of-living pressures that are hurting Queenslanders. Last night we debated in this House a motion which was a suggestion of some secret tax on people which is affecting their cost of living. We still do not agree with the proposition that was put forward by those opposite, but if we follow their line of thinking we can see that they put in place a 43 per cent tax on Queenslanders, and there was nothing secret about it. Queenslanders to this day are still having to suffer through the legacy of price rises under the LNP. We have kept electricity prices lower. In terms of price rises, we have stemmed the tide. Unfortunately, people still have to put up with the 43 per cent that it went up under the last government.

Let us look at what we have done to support concessions and support people. We have put in \$170 million over four years to extend the electricity rebate for 157,000 health care card holders—something those opposite could have done but did not. It is a very simple choice when it comes to which side of politics actually cares for people who are dealing with cost-of-living pressures—it is this side of the House. The \$340 that that provides makes a real difference to those households which are eligible for the rebate. Pensioners, seniors and veterans will be able to continue to get that rebate.

We all remember one of the budgets handed down by the member for Clayfield when he was treasurer when he forgot all about seniors—‘Oops, we forgot about them’—and then two days later he did a massive backflip and had to come into this House and fix the situation which they should have thought of in the first place. We do not act after the fact to try to fix their mistakes on these things; we try to get ahead of that. We try to understand the problems people in regional Queensland are facing. We empathise with them and make sure we are providing as much support as possible. That is the Labor way. We cannot fix the problems those opposite created, but we can ensure we are pulling every lever possible as a state government to deal with rising electricity prices.

We are making real inroads, but we cannot do it alone. We need those opposite to tell their federal counterparts to get off their backsides and do something for people in terms of the national energy market. It is broken and we are sick and tired of the federal Liberal government coming out and having a crack at our government for inaction.

(Time expired)

No-Body No-Parole Legislation

Mr MANDER: My question without notice is to the Minister for Corrective Services. How could the minister stand next to the Pullen family and congratulate them on their advocacy in support of the no-body no-parole laws in good conscience knowing that the convicted killer of their son had been given parole but his remains have not been found?

Mr RYAN: I thank the member for the opportunity to add to my public statements in respect of this matter. As I have said publicly, I had received advice that the information I was provided with was confidential and there are consequences for disclosing that information. As the member would know as well, this matter has been referred to the CCC for investigation and there are a number of aspects which need to be considered. We have heard those members opposite talk about the importance of referring matters to the CCC for investigation, so we need to allow those processes to be pursued. I stand by my public statements. I refute absolutely the allegations that have been referred to the CCC, but I am happy to work with the CCC and fully cooperate with the investigation.

Health, Vaccines

Ms LINARD: My question is to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Will the minister advise the House what measures the Palaszczuk government is taking to ensure that lifesaving vaccines are accessible to Queenslanders?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Nudgee for her question and her ongoing interest in preventive health measures. Early this year, we made an announcement that we would make available \$6 million for a 12-month meningococcal A, C, W and Y vaccination program targeted at young Queenslanders aged 15 to 19 years. We were forced to take this measure because the Turnbull LNP government federally had been completely quiet and had taken no action on this important issue. Up to 10 per cent of cases of serious meningococcal disease can be fatal, and again we have the state governments having to fill the void left by the federal coalition and the LNP. The fundamental question you have to ask is: what is the problem that the LNP have with public health care? The fundamental answer of course is that they do not believe in public health care. They do not believe it.

Mr Perrett: What a load of nonsense.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection from the member for Toowoomba North saying, 'What a load of nonsense.' How do they care about the young people at the Barrett Adolescent Centre—

Mr SPEAKER: Just to assist you, Minister, I think the interjection was from the member for Gympie.

Mr Perrett: Absolutely.

Mr DICK: Thank you, and the member for Gympie wants to reinforce it. What was their commitment to public health care and the young children who were in the Barrett Adolescent Centre when the member for Clayfield demanded \$100 million out of the health department in three months? No wonder he is looking down at his phone.

Mr Hinchliffe: Appalling.

Mr DICK: It was appalling. I take the interjection from the Leader of the House. We want to talk about the character of leadership. You have been talking about the character of leadership, member for Clayfield.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, Minister. I know you are on a roll but I have tried to temper down the debate and I have urged members not to use the word 'you'.

Mr DICK: No wonder he looks at his phone, because four years ago this month the member for Clayfield made a decision to close the Barrett Adolescent Centre and the member for Clayfield has never apologised to the families. He has never had the character to stand up and say, 'We made a mistake.' He has never had the character to do that. I have been speaking for two minutes and he is

still looking at his phone. That is the character of the man. It is about time he came forward. The only thing the LNP has ever said is when the shadow minister who purports to be the next health minister said that it was a witch-hunt. That is not good enough for the Barrett families. That is not good enough at all.

I am calling on the member for Clayfield. If he cannot release the list of donors then the least he can do is apologise to the families who were catastrophically impacted by that decision. That is the least the member for Clayfield can do. If he wants to be the premier of Queensland, he had better start by fixing up the messes he created when he was the treasurer. For as long as I am in the House, I will be making sure he is never the premier.

No-Body No-Parole Legislation

Mr WALKER: My question without notice is to the Premier. The media reports today that the brave public servant who alerted the public about the way the Pullen family was treated by the Minister for Corrective Services has been stood down and may be forced out after many years of service to Queensland. Will the Premier now rule out sacking the whistleblower who exposed Minister Ryan's actions?

Ms PALASZCZUK: My understanding is that this matter has been referred to the CCC. I have been advised that it has been referred and that the officer has been stood down pending that inquiry.

Education, State Schools

Mr WILLIAMS: My question is to the Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events and the Commonwealth Games. Is the minister aware of the opposition education spokesperson's attack on our Queensland state schools?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for that question. I am very aware of the roadshow that the shadow minister is on as she goes across Queensland talking down state schools and trashing state schools. That is exactly what she has been doing. It is in complete—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms JONES: A Labor government will always invest in state schools and we will always stand by the hardworking teachers in state schools and the principals who work in our schools every day. Recently, I was with the member for Pumicestone when we opened the new Pumicestone State School and I know that, like me, he was very impressed with the work that was happening at that school where we are providing great quality education. They pride themselves as a school on their school motto, which is, 'We nurture. We challenge. We care.' They do care. Every single day when we go to our schools in our communities, we see the great work that is happening in our schools—whether it is independent schools, state schools or Catholic schools.

All we have seen from the member for Aspley is her going around trashing state schools. Let me warn the LNP that the teachers have seen the comments made by the member for Aspley and they know what will come if an LNP government is ever elected. They will go back to what they did: talking down schools, cutting back services and support. We know that when they were last in government they cut 500 teachers from Queensland's classrooms. That is what they did. They walked away. They shut schools without any consultation with local communities.

Ms Grace interjected.

Ms JONES: I take the interjection from the member for Brisbane Central in regard to Fortitude Valley. They closed that school.

Ms Grace: Up for sale.

Ms JONES: It was up for sale with no consultation. The only one they took off was when the member for Everton thought that he might be in trouble electorally.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. Thank you, one and all. Do you have anything further to add, Minister?

Ms JONES: Absolutely! What we have seen with regard to state schools is a glimpse into what the LNP would be like if they got back into power. The teachers and the parents know exactly what they think of them in state schooling. We will remind them at every single turn that it is a Labor government that has provided record investment in state schooling, not the LNP.

This goes to the character of the LNP and the character of the man who is supposedly their leader. The member for Clayfield will not declare his secret donations, the member for Clayfield will not rule out a deal with One Nation and the member for Clayfield will not take responsibility for the decision he made to sack 14,000 workers in this state. The member for Clayfield is unfit to be premier. This is a man who is spineless. He is too spineless to even endorse the member for Gaven or release the secret tape. God knows; there might be another red wine glass! This is a man who is spineless and unfit.

(Time expired)

Mount Isa, Airfares

Mr KATTER: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier. The strong negative social impacts of excessively high airfares out of Mount Isa are well established. Particularly hard are the stories of people who are unable to visit sick or dying family members because of the cost. Will the Deputy Premier acknowledge that high airfares are causing social problems in regional communities and that the government has a role to play in ensuring that private carriers such as Qantas are not exploiting their market dominance in this remote area?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Mount Isa for raising this issue with me in the chamber. Of course he has also raised this issue in the past with the former transport minister as well as me on becoming transport minister again earlier this year. I want to acknowledge the member's strong advocacy in this area.

I can assure the member for Mount Isa that the Palaszczuk Labor government does take this issue very seriously. In fact, when we came back into office in 2015 we reinstated the very popular Local Fare Scheme for members of very remote Indigenous communities in the cape. The member for Mount Isa will know that in this year's budget we actually extended that to the western cape, to communities within his own electorate: Doomadgee and also Mornington Island.

I want to assure the member for Mount Isa that we do understand the cost impost and how much pressure high airfares in regional and very remote areas of our state put on Queenslanders in these locations in terms of doing a whole range of things that we take for granted. That is why last year the former transport minister and Leader of the House commissioned a review into the long distance passenger service. The former minister did that so that we could come back to the parliament, to the member opposite and to members in regional communities with an assessment of whether or not service levels were appropriate, whether or not, for example, we were also choosing the right routes in terms of regulation. Were there routes that should be deregulated to open up for further competition?

We engaged Deloitte to work with government and assess all of the airlines and the services that were being provided to make sure that Queenslanders were getting a good deal out of the government's intervention in the air services area in terms of our regulation and our provision of lower air costs for communities. I can advise the member for Mount Isa that that review has been completed and we are considering the outcomes of that review. I am very happy to offer the member for Mount Isa a personal briefing in relation to this when the government has considered all of the recommendations.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work

Mr WHITING: My question is to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills. Will the minister please update the House on how many people in Central Queensland have got a job as a direct result of Skilling Queenslanders for Work and if there are any alternative policies?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for Murrumba for his question. I know he is absolutely passionate about Skilling Queenslanders for Work. We know the benefits of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative. The member for Murrumba knows the benefits of Skilling Queenslanders for Work in his own electorate as well as in Central Queensland, North Queensland and South-East Queensland.

I can advise that as at the end of July we have now had 15,274 Queenslanders exit a Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. Of these Queenslanders, 9,690 now have jobs because of the Palaszczuk government, 2,385 have taken on further training and 351 have now returned to school. These are great figures, but of course they are not just figures; they are individuals. They are individuals who have faced barriers in their lives, whether it is disengaged youth, mature age workers, single mums seeking to re-enter the workforce, people with disabilities wanting to enter the workforce or people whom I met recently who are full-time unpaid carers for loved ones. They have gone and got qualifications and a certificate III as individual support workers and now want to go out and care for

other people's loved ones. Who better to do that than people who have a loved one with a disability and who have been a carer themselves? There is no better person to be trained who would actually understand not just what the person themselves needs but also what their loved ones expect.

The Leader of the Opposition was all about cut, sack and sell. He cut Skilling Queenslanders for Work when treasurer because he said, 'This is a federal government responsibility. They shouldn't be in this space as a state government.' They redistributed the government department workers who oversaw SQFW; they made them redundant or put them on a list to become redundant later but this time without a package. The people of Queensland want to know, with all the NGOs who shut their doors and put off staff because it was scrapped, what is the Leader of the Opposition going to do if they are in government after the next election? Will they scrap Skilling Queenslanders for Work? What the people of Queensland do know is that under a Palaszczuk Labor government this program will remain and will be supported.

(Time expired)

ID Scanners

Mr BLEIJIE: My question without notice is to the Attorney-General. I table a media report that states that the Police Commissioner has today apologised and advised that the Queensland Police officers were so confused about the law around Labor's ID scanners they breached the law.

Tabled paper: Article from ABC News online, dated 23 August 2017, titled 'Prince Frederik debacle: Police Commissioner apologises after officers breach law for royal' [\[1424\]](#).

Does this not prove what a complete mess Labor's implementation of ID scanners has been and that it has been bungled so badly?

Mrs D'ATH: We heard so much from the opposition on this issue yesterday. I think they wanted to ignore the story on page 2 of the *Courier-Mail*, which was about their political donations, so they wanted to talk all about the Crown Prince and ID scanners. Those on the other side have had so many positions on ID scanners it is not funny. The member for Kawana yesterday in the same speech said, 'How on earth could you send away the Crown Prince for not having identification?' and 'How on earth could you let the Crown Prince in without identification?' That was in the same speech! The member for Kawana does not know whether he is Arthur or Martha.

Mr Bleijie: Which is it?

Mrs D'ATH: The member for Kawana is asking me 'Which is it?' You need to figure it out, member for Kawana. Is it that you did not want him in—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. Attorney-General, I would urge you to make your comments through the chair, please.

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Speaker, the member for Kawana does not know whether he is coming or going. We are not sure whether we should let the Crown Prince in without identification or turn him away without identification. It is very confusing. What is more confusing is that it is the member for Kawana who introduced and passed the laws that sets the framework for these ID scanners. The only difference is—

Mr Bleijie: Five years ago.

Mrs D'ATH: Five years ago and they still do not know how it works!

Mr SPEAKER: You have the call, Attorney-General, if you have anything further to add that is relevant.

Mrs D'ATH: The member for Kawana is asking about the ID scanners that have been implemented based on the framework in the legislation that was introduced by the LNP. The only difference is that the LNP originally had plans to have ID scanning start from 8 pm. They say it is all about implementation, but their complaints—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, you have had a pretty good go. The minister is answering the question. I find it is relevant.

Mrs D'ATH: What I want to make clear is that, despite what has been reported out there, the Commissioner of Police has acknowledged and reinforced that Crown Prince Frederik was not refused entry to the Jade Buddha despite the way it was reported. Some want to play politics with this issue—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, if you persist you will be warned. I find—

Mr BLEIJIE: I rise to a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: No, let me finish. Resume your seat. I find the minister's answer is relevant to the question you asked. What is your point of order?

Mr BLEIJIE: My point of order with respect to relevance was about the Police Commissioner's statement that I tabled which said, 'Staff have asked them to do something that is a breach of the legislation, there is no doubt about that.' The Queensland Police Commissioner has said the police officer—

Mr SPEAKER: I hear what you say, member for Kawana. I find the minister's answer is relevant. I think she has only just spoken about the Police Commissioner. I will review *Hansard* later.

Mrs D'ATH: The facts are that the Crown Prince was not refused entry because he did not have identification on him. He did not arrive and was then sent away and came back again. All of this has been confirmed by the Commissioner of Police. Appropriate protocols were followed. The commissioner has indicated a technical breach, but proper security protocols were followed and we respect those protocols. If the member for Kawana is not happy with it he can—

(Time expired)

Rural Fire Brigades, Resources

Mr SAUNDERS: My question is to the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services, and I ask: in the lead-up to this year's bushfire season, will the minister advise what the government is doing to ensure that rural fire brigades have the resources to keep Queenslanders safe?

Mr RYAN: I thank the member for Maryborough not only for his question but also for his outstanding support for rural fire volunteers in his electorate. There are a number of them, and I know the member for Maryborough is a strong supporter of them, as is this government. This government has provided a record budget to Queensland Fire and Emergency Services this year to support their good work right across the state, ensuring that Queenslanders are kept safe and that we are prepared for the bushfire season. Over the weekend we have seen the devastating effects of bushfires not only to the environment but also the threat to persons and property. I am very proud to be the minister who has been able to facilitate a record budget for Queensland Fire and Emergency Services this year, and I am sure they will put that to good use. In our preparation work for the lead-up to bushfire season, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services have been undertaking Operation Cool Burn to assist landowners, occupiers and other stakeholders reduce the risk of bushfires and the potential danger to persons, property or the environment in respect of a bushfire event.

During this operational period, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services proactively focuses on assisting and coordinating government and private landholders, occupiers and other stakeholders with managing the risk of bushfires for the upcoming season. Mr Speaker, you would be interested to hear that particular priority is given to identifying high-risk bushfire areas and using mitigation techniques which combine a number of mechanisms like mapping, statistical information collection and, importantly, gathering local information from those area fire management groups. This year Operation Cool Burn commenced in April. It has already undertaken a number of priority activities, including 69 hazard reduction burns, 41 fire trail or firebreaks and 57 community education activities in identified high-risk areas. The total number of priority activities planned for the entirety of Operation Cool Burn, which encompasses all of those activities, includes up to 162 hazard reduction burns and over 200 community education activities. Queensland Fire and Emergency Services are also holding fortnightly state weather briefing videoconferences as required. They receive regular updates on emergency management reports and will continue to undertake all the preparations needed for the bushfire season.

As I said, the Palaszczuk Labor government is very proud to support our Rural Fire Services and, of course, our rural fire volunteers. Who could forget what those opposite did when they were in government? They tried to sack Rural Fire Service staff, and at a federal level they refused to continue funding the National Bushfire Mitigation Program.

Sexual Violence

Ms BATES: My question without notice is to the Premier. With a nine-year high of 6,286 sexual offences reported to police in 2016, why are the Premier and Labor ignoring the crisis of sexual violence across Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: From the outset can I say that in a bipartisan manner I believe this parliament has been working to combat domestic and family violence across our state in terms of the over \$300 million which has been invested. We are rolling out our courts to ensure that people have access to specialised domestic and family violence courts. I was in Townsville the other day announcing the rollout of the court there. We are also providing services to Palm Island and Mount Isa for first time. We have also seen the establishment of the Southport domestic and family violence court.

As I said—and I will say it again—we work best in this state when we work together, and together we can achieve great things. That is why, after I raised it personally at COAG with the Prime Minister, we had the first ever prevention of domestic and family violence summit which was held in Queensland. In fact, it was so successful that at the last COAG meeting the Prime Minister committed to holding a second one either in the Northern Territory or Victoria. I look forward to Queensland participating in that.

We will continue to stand up against family violence. My ministers are working actively, having been designated Indigenous communities, including those in the cape. We are seeing a downward trend as more children go into education and gain those qualifications that are needed.

Ms Jones: They cut funding and services.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I take that interjection, because from those on the other side we saw cuts to services.

Ms BATES: I rise to a point of order. My question was specific to the 6,286 sexual offences cases, not domestic violence cases.

Mr SPEAKER: I find the Premier's answer is relevant.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am reminded about the cuts that were made under the LNP when it comes to—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I would urge the Premier not to debate the question. Do you have anything further—

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Speaker, I do need to put those facts on the table—that is, that the Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence suffered cuts of \$34,000, \$60,000 was cut from Working Against Violence Support Service, \$13,000 was cut to the state's only service providing sexual assault support for women with a disability and Wide Bay Sexual Assault Services was cut by \$29,000. In the 2017-18 budget my government is investing \$8.375 million for 27 services across this state.

Ms Fentiman: Up to 19 new services.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right; up to 19. We will continue to do that. We will maintain our commitment because it is unfortunate that in this day and age one in five women can be the victim of sexual assault. We need to work together—let me say those words again, work together—because when we work together and build up the capacity we hope to reduce those numbers.

Road Safety, Speed Limit Reviews

Mr PEGG: My question is directed to the Acting Minister for Main Roads and Road Safety. Will the minister update the House on speed limit reviews undertaken by the Palaszczuk government?

Mr SPEAKER: I call the minister. You have one minute.

Dr MILES: I thank the member for his question and for his interest in road safety; it is particularly relevant in this week which is Road Safety Week. We know that speed not only increases the risk of incidents but also increases their severity. Recently the LNP doubled its number of policies by releasing a new one. It was not really a policy; it was more of a pamphlet. First of all, it dropped to the media that it was going to increase the speed limit on the M1 to 120 or maybe even 130 kilometres per hour. That is despite all of the evidence showing that that would increase the number of incidents. In fact, a study of just a 30-kilometre stretch said increasing the speed limit by 10 kilometres an hour would increase the number of incidents by 1,200. When that was pointed out to those opposite, they dropped that from their announcement. Their policy changed before they had even stood up—gone by lunchtime! Then they talked about their 100 reviews in three years. Little did they know we do 100 every year. Their policy was to cut—

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Question time has concluded.

TRANSPORT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 23 May (see p. 1253).

Second Reading



Hon. JA TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (4.02 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I want to start by acknowledging the members of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee for their time considering the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. I thank the chair of the committee and all committee members for their work on the inquiry into the bill and I also extend my thanks to the committee staff. I am pleased to see the recommendation of the committee for the bill to be passed. I note that the committee made four recommendations all up and I table the government response to the committee recommendations.

Tabled paper: Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee: Report No. 48, 55th Parliament—Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017, government response [[1425](#)].

I will address the recommendations of the committee in the course of reminding the House of the matters contained in the bill in this second reading speech and what they are designed to achieve. Firstly, the bill will allow a photo identification card to be issued for those aged 15 years and over. Currently, adult proof of age cards can be issued to those 18 years or older. The bill changes the name of that card to the photo identification card and lowers the age of eligibility from 18 to 15. It is anticipated that young people will benefit from having another option for a reliable form of identification to access different services. Prior to the card being released in 2018, information will be provided to industry groups including the Queensland Hotels Association and the Australian Retailers Association, liquor licensees and the security provider industry. Public engagement and notification will also be undertaken so that the general public is given information about the new card.

The committee in its second recommendation asked that I consider offering concessional discounts on the proposed photo identification card for young people aged 15 to 17 years. However, as indicated in the government's response that I have tabled, the Department of Transport and Main Roads is mindful that the price of products and services must be covered so that its services can be administered and maintained. The fee to obtain a photo identity card reflects the cost to produce it. I would also like to note that there is no obligation on young people to obtain a card. If they think it might assist them, then we will make that option available to them.

The bill also makes amendments to provide for more flexible and customer friendly service delivery by removing the requirement to use a form to apply for a range of transport products and services. These amendments follow similar changes made earlier this year to the driver licensing and vehicle registration regulations which will enable customers to apply for registration and licensing products over the counter without the requirement to fill in a form. These new processes are currently being trialled by the Department of Transport and Main Roads at Toowoomba customer service centres. For example, a customer may apply for, or renew, their driver's licence simply by attending a centre and providing the relevant supporting materials. There is no requirement to transpose that information onto a form. Initial feedback from customers and staff at the trial locations has been overwhelmingly positive, with many commenting on the ease, convenience and speed of the new processes. The amendments in this bill are an example of the government's commitment to putting our customers first.

The bill also makes some minor and technical amendments to ensure that transport legislation remains up to date and accurately reflects government policy. For example, there is a minor amendment which clarifies that fees that apply in Queensland under the Heavy Vehicle National Law can be specified in a regulation. Another minor amendment ensures that vessels that are not regulated under the national maritime safety law continue to be appropriately regulated under Queensland legislation. Amendments in clauses 58 to 79 of the bill will clarify provisions that deal with small quantities of dangerous goods that are exempt from transport legislation. The committee asked in its third recommendation that I clarify the implications of these amendments and I am happy to do that. These are technical amendments, so the explanation is somewhat technical and requires tracking through the legislation. Currently, section 440 of the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 and section 151 of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 set out that small quantities of dangerous goods can be transported by road or rail without having to comply with the other requirements set out

in those acts. These small quantity exemptions allow people to transport small amounts of, for example, nail polish or perfume which are flammable liquids without being subject to dangerous goods legislation. For example, they do not need to place a dangerous goods placard on their vehicle.

The actual quantities to qualify for these exemptions are called up by regulations and are linked to the quantities for which, under the Australian Dangerous Goods Code, certain inner package labelling is required. Due to broader reforms, the inner packaging labelling requirements are being removed from the code and in Queensland can be removed from our dangerous goods legislation. This is happening by virtue of the amendments in clauses 117 and 128 of the bill. As a result, sections 440 and 151 must be amended to reflect the new small quantity exemptions. The amendments to those sections state that the exemption will be available if, firstly, the dangerous good being transported is not an infectious substance and, secondly, the total quantity being transported is less than a quantity prescribed in a regulation. It makes clear that the transport of any infectious substance cannot fall within the small quantities exemption. This has always been the intent of the legislation.

It was this aspect of the amendment that the committee was keen to understand and sought further clarification on. Infectious substances fall into two categories. Category A infectious substances can have a much greater risk than category B. Exposure to a category A substance can cause permanent disability or life-threatening diseases. The amendments I have just mentioned do not in any way impact on the transport of category A infectious substances. They have never been exempt from the dangerous goods legislation and there was no prospect of them falling within the small quantities exemption. The committee raised an example relating to the transport of the Hendra virus. This is a category A substance and transport of that virus is in no way affected by the amendments in this bill. Category B substances are infectious substances that do not fall into category A. They are substances that present a relatively low risk in the event of a release. Samples of human blood and tissue may fall into category B.

As I said before, the amendment makes clear that infectious substances, whether they be category A or B, are not eligible for the small quantities exemption from the dangerous goods legislation. Under the current legislation, which cross-references the inner package labelling requirements, there may have been an argument that category B substances could have fallen within the exemption. This was not the intention of the legislation and is not the way that industry has been treating category B substances. The amendment will, however, remove any potential argument that the small quantities exemption applies to the transport of category B substances. I state clearly that no-one in industry has mounted this argument and the department has no evidence to suggest that category B substances are being transported in any way that does not comply with the legislation. The potential argument was identified by the Australian Dangerous Goods Maintenance Group and the amendments in the bill will address it. I trust that information assists members and reassures them that there will be no impact on industry from these amendments.

In its fourth recommendation, the committee recommended that the Department of Transport and Main Roads undertake appropriate consultation on proposed amendments to legislation. As I indicated in the government's response to the committee, my department is committed to undertaking appropriate public consultation on all legislative changes, particularly where there is a direct impact on the public. The level of consultation undertaken is generally commensurate with the extent of the impact upon the public. On significant policy changes the department may release a discussion paper, conduct focus groups or seek input directly through industry forums. On less significant amendments, however, more limited consultation may be undertaken. Amendments in this current bill either will have no adverse impact on the public or are beneficial. As a result, the level of public consultation was limited. The amendments to the dangerous goods legislation outlined above were subject to public consultation facilitated by the National Transport Commission.

I would like to briefly outline other amendments in the bill. There are a number of minor and technical amendments to the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 and the Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994 in the bill that will contribute to a reduction in regulatory burden through the streamlining or simplification of provisions. For example, amendments to the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 will streamline consultation with local governments, railway managers or light rail managers in relation to state controlled road declarations, revocations or designations, and allow the department to carry out consultation on behalf of the minister. Amendments to the Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994 will support the consolidation of relevant assessment matters into the state development assessment provisions and clarify the interaction between roadworks and impacts on passenger transport services with local government. All of these amendments, other than those for the interaction between roadworks and impacts on passenger transport services, commence on assent of the bill.


The amendments to clarify how the Department of Transport and Main Roads will work with local governments to mitigate the impact of local government roadworks on passenger transport services will commence by proclamation. This will give local governments time to implement any changes necessary.

The bill will also make minor amendments to the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994. The proposed amendments will ensure authorised persons have clear powers to safely remove persons from public transport infrastructure, including an area adjacent to public transport infrastructure. This does not extend the circumstances in which an authorised person may use force, other than to clarify that a person can be removed to the nearest safe location. An important part of their functions is ensuring the safety of the public transport network and the persons using it, and this amendment is designed to achieve that objective.

Another minor amendment will clarify the circumstances in which a person may be automatically refused driver authorisation by the Department of Transport and Main Roads. This is considered justified on safety grounds due to the gravity and nature of these types of offences. For safety and security reasons, a further minor amendment is the change that will restrict information about a transit officer in a written report that is given to a detained person. This will be achieved by excluding the transit officer's name and the address of the place the transit officer receives instructions from on the day the detention happened.

The bill also includes two changes to the Transport Security (Counter-Terrorism) Act 2008. The first amendment will increase the maximum penalty that applies for a breach of the confidentiality provisions in the act from 60 to 200 penalty units. This change is for legislative consistency and is necessary to mitigate against the potential risks associated with the misuse of sensitive security information. The second amendment will maintain the five-year review framework of this act. This amendment was informed by face-to-face discussions with relevant industry stakeholders. The regular review of this act will enable the Department of Transport and Main Roads to ensure that the legislation remains appropriate in the current security environment and continues to meet its objectives in the most efficient and effective manner.

I trust that this demonstrates clearly for all members that this bill works to deliver improvements across a range of legislation, particularly in terms of making sure that legislation functions efficiently for users. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (4.15 pm): I rise to address the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. As we just heard from the Deputy Premier, the bill is largely a technical bill, with a number of minor amendments to a range of transport related legislation that is often the case regardless of who is in government, who is the transport minister and the day-to-day operations of the Department of Transport and Main Roads. For the record I will read into *Hansard* a number of those minor amendments.

As the Deputy Premier mentioned, there are changes to the transportation of dangerous goods. These come about as a result of nationally agreed amendments that particularly relate to infectious substances. The amendment removes any technical argument that an exemption available for the transport of small quantities of dangerous goods could also be available for the transport of infectious substances. The example given by the Deputy Premier, I think, was nail polish. Certainly we appreciate that clarification provided following the recommendation of the committee.

Infectious substances are pathogens such as bacteria, viruses or fungi that can cause diseases in humans and animals. The bill proposes to provide that the exemption only applies to the transport of a load of dangerous goods on a rail vehicle if the dangerous goods are not and do not include infectious substances of United Nations division 6.2 and the total quantity of each type of dangerous goods in the load is less than the quantity prescribed by regulation for that type. Again, the committee did look at this and called on the Deputy Premier for clarification. I note that she provided that this afternoon.

The bill does make a minor amendment to the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012 by inserting a new section to clarify the head of power for the specification of fees payable under the Heavy Vehicle National Law (Queensland). This will mean that fees under the national law can be specified in a regulation.

There is a minor amendment to the Rail Safety National Law (Queensland) Act 2017 to delete a redundant definition on local regulation; an amendment to the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 to clarify the process that allows DTMR to carry out consultation on behalf of the minister with a local government, railway manager or a light rail manager prior to making a relevant declaration, revocation

or designation or entering into a road franchise agreement; and an amendment to the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 to ensure that vessels which are not regulated under the Commonwealth act continue to be appropriately regulated under Queensland legislation. There was some discussion, if I recall correctly, around this exact scenario when that bill was debated.

There is an amendment to the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 that proposes to make amendments around safety and security reasons limiting the information about a transit officer to be included in a written report to a unique identifying number; to clarify that the powers of an authorised person to use reasonable force extend to an area adjacent to public transport infrastructure; and to clarify when a person may be automatically refused driver authorisation.

There is an amendment to the Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994 to provide a more effective process for working with local governments undertaking roadworks, enabling DTMR to mitigate the impacts on scheduled passenger services. This will also remove the requirement to declare a prescribed transit node and clarify that the value of works does not affect the compensation payable for the resumption of land.

As we also heard from the Deputy Premier, there is an amendment to the Transport Security (Counter-Terrorism) Act 2008. Since that act was introduced, the security environment has clearly evolved. I do not think anyone in this House, across Queensland or across Australia would dispute that. For very clear reasons, the security information the department obtains and shares has obviously increased. To mitigate against the risk of any misuse of secure information that is administered under the act, the bill proposes to make the following amendments to the act that will increase the maximum penalty for a breach of confidentiality under the act from 60 penalty units to 200 units and provide for a five-year periodic review of the act to ensure the legislation remains appropriate and effective. They are the minor amendments and technical amendments that this bill addresses.

The major aspect of the bill is around the development of a proof of age card. As has been said, Transport and Main Roads currently offers an adult proof of age card, which was previously known as the 18+ card. Obviously that card is only available to people 18 years of age and over, but it does contain a photo of the person as well as their name and date of birth along with identifying features such as an ID number. This bill is proposing to change the age of eligibility for a card from 18 to 15 years, with a consequential name change for the card. What that technically does is allow young Queenslanders who do not yet have a driver's licence or a passport to access an official government ID card. We all know the kinds of facilities that would require such a proof of age card: banks, telecommunications and utilities companies and government agencies. As a father of five children, the eldest of whom is 16, I can see the eminent sense in developing a card for 15- to 18-year-olds. Part of me wishes that my 16-year-old son had not gone and got his learner's. I think the roads are definitely a lot more unsafe since he has! No, he is a very sensible young man who is well on his way to getting his 100 hours and he will be knocking on his DTMR's door in no time to get his provisional licence.

Mr Cripps: You were 16 once.

Mr POWELL: I was 16 once.

Mr Minnikin: A long time ago.

Mr POWELL: It was an awfully long time ago, member for Chatsworth. For those young men and women between the ages of 15 and 18 who, unlike my son, have not gone and got a licence, have not had a need for a passport but do need some form of photo identification, this proof of age card will clearly come in handy.

In summing up the amendments, there is nothing really that the opposition finds overly contentious. We will not be opposing the bill. In the last couple of minutes of my contribution I want to address two elements that were identified by the committee. I acknowledge the committee members, particularly deputy chair Ann Leahy and the member for Gympie. There were two items that the committee did ascertain. One of those was around the consultation on the bill. I take on board what the Deputy Premier said: that depending on the nature of the scope of change that is being mooted in the legislation that there are varying degrees of consultation, but I do find it rather interesting that under questioning the committee discovered that the only consultation that really occurred was with government agencies themselves. Basically, a group of public servants sat around a table, had a bit of a discussion and said, 'Yep, we think this is a good idea. Give it a thumbs up. We will throw it into the parliament.'

Mr Perrett: *Yes Minister.*

Mr POWELL: I take that interjection from the member for Gympie. It is a bit of a *Yes Minister* episode. It is important to note that the entire committee, not just the non-government members, made the following comment—

The committee is concerned that the department did not undertake any specific community or industry consultation in relation to the amendments proposed in this Bill. The committee is of the view that consultation undertaken during the committee inquiry process should not be seen as a substitute consultation process and that consultation would have allowed the department to resolve any concerns raised by the public prior to the Bill being introduced to Parliament. The committee therefore strongly recommends that in future the department undertakes public consultation on proposed amendments, no matter how minor the issues may appear.

That is something that all members in this House need to be aware of. As we continue to strengthen the robustness of the committee system, the ability for the committee to ask probing questions of the department and to garner submissions from third parties and other interested stakeholders does form a level of community engagement, of consultation, but it should never replace that initial consultation when progressing amendments of this nature with the broader community in the first place. I am concerned that departments in particular will fall into the trap of relying on the committee process for the broader consultation rather than doing it themselves.

We do not always want to have to amend legislation. In this case we are not, but we saw it most recently in the Trading (Allowable Hours) Amendment Bill. That could have been prevented if the minister and the department had done the consultation properly in the first place. I acknowledge the committee members for drawing that out. I think it is a warning to all ministers and departments: do not get lax in your community engagement, in your consultation with the broader public around amendments, no matter how minor you may consider them.

One of the reasons that would have been important, and I commend the committee for drawing this out, is had the community heard what the government is proposing to charge for this proof of age card there may have been a significantly higher level of consternation from some of the key stakeholder groups. What is being proposed is a \$66.65 charge. Many on the committee believe that that is too high, when one thinks about the age bracket, 15 to 18, and I certainly agree with them when you compare it to what other jurisdictions are charging for similar cards. Let us look at it: South Australia \$22; Victoria \$10; the Australian Capital Territory, \$6.27—that is \$60 less than what the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads is going to be charging our young 15- to 18-year-olds for this card.


I note that in addressing the recommendation by the committee the Deputy Premier basically said, 'The cost of the card is the cost of the card is the cost of the card and we need to recoup that cost from whoever purchases it.' That is true to some extent, but governments have an ability to offer concessional fees. They do it all the time. They do it around public transport, they do it around seniors cards and they do it around electricity. Councils do it around rates. Every government of every tier can offer a concessional rate if they see it is of benefit to the consumer who is purchasing that product. In this case why would we not take the lead from some of the other jurisdictions and demonstrate a willingness to offer an affordable product to young people aged 15 to 18 more commensurate with what potentially the benefit for them is? Why are we not charging what South Australia is charging, which is \$22? Even better, why are we not charging \$10 like Victoria or \$6.27 like the ACT? I suspect part of it is that our costs of production are way too high. I suspect those jurisdictions are producing cards far more cheaply than what Queensland is and therefore even there the concession is not as great as what it potentially is.

I guess we have come to expect from this government that whenever there is an opportunity for a fee, a tax or a revenue-raising exercise they will go for the maximum dollar. We have seen that with car registration where, after freezing family car registration for the entire term under the LNP government, we have seen year on year 3½ per cent increases to vehicle registration—that is double CPI—despite constant notices of motion in this House, despite regular debate and petitioning by many Queenslanders for some relief from those increases. The government has finally agreed to cap it to CPI but not this year and not next year. They will do it in two years time. There is no relief in sight for the many motorists of Queensland who have to pay those exorbitant increases in vehicle registration.

I want to take this opportunity to remind members that the LNP has made a commitment that, like we did between 2012 and 2015, we will again freeze family vehicle registration for the term of an LNP government. People have a very real choice. There is the LNP opposition that is offering relief when it comes to those cost-of-living bills that I know mums and dads around Queensland are facing—they are sitting at the kitchen table, they are trying to work out how they will pay their rego, their vehicle


insurance, their electricity, their water, their rates—by freezing vehicle registration, or there are those opposite, who will continue to jack it up double the rate of CPI, by 3½ per cent. They might eventually offer CPI relief in a couple of years time, but my guess is that one cannot trust them on that.

There is a very real choice between the LNP, which is hearing what Queenslanders are saying and knows that the cost of living is hurting, and the ALP, which is turning a deaf ear to that. Again, I implore the Deputy Premier and the Palaszczuk Labor government to reconsider the cost that they are proposing for the proof of age card. A charge of \$66.65 is outrageous in comparison to the charges in other jurisdictions. Let us take a lead from the southern states and offer the card at a rate that is far more affordable for young people. Let us show them a level of courtesy and understanding that clearly this Labor government is incapable of doing. We will continue to listen to the debate this afternoon, but, as I said, given the technical nature of most of the amendments, the LNP opposition will not be opposing the bill.

 **Mr CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (4.30 pm): I rise to speak briefly to the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. As a member of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee, I can confirm that the committee has recommended that the bill be passed. The committee received two submissions on the bill and both of those submissions were supportive. The bill centres around the current Department of Transport and Main Roads issued adult proof of age card, or the 18+ card, which, to state the obvious, is available to people aged 18 years and over who reside in Queensland, whether or not they have a driver's licence. The bill proposes to amend the age qualification for the card to include 15- to 17-year-olds to allow them the ability to prove their identity if required, for example, for employment, access to venues, access to transport ticketing and the like. The committee recommended that concessional discounts be considered for the proposed photo identification card for young people aged 15 to 17 years, as the committee understood the cost to be around the \$66 mark, as opposed to lower costs in other states.

The bill includes changes to the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act, clarifying the head of power for the specification of fees payable for a matter under the Heavy Vehicle National Law. Clauses 58 and 79 amend legislation governing the transportation of infectious substances. The amendment removes any technical argument that an exemption available for the transport of small quantities of dangerous goods could also be available for the transport of infectious substances. The committee recommended that the Deputy Premier, in her second reading speech, clarify the implications of clauses 58 and 79. Having listened to her second reading speech I am satisfied that she has done so.

The final recommendation made by the committee was around consultation by the department. The committee did not believe appropriate public consultation took place in the preparation of the bill. I acknowledge the Deputy Premier's address of that matter in her second reading speech. With that, I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (4.32 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. I thank the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee staff for their assistance with the inquiry and the professionalism with which they produced the committee report No. 48, especially given the workload they had at that time. I also thank the members of the committee from both sides of the House for their participation in the committee process and consideration of the bill. This bill is what is sometimes referred to as an omnibus bill. As we heard earlier from the member for Glass House, the LNP opposition will not be opposing the bill. However, omnibus bills should always be treated carefully. On occasions, it is the little changes in omnibus bills that can result in profound and unintended consequences. Sometimes there is a bit of a sting in the tail with these bills and they do demand significant scrutiny. The bill will amend 12 transport and non-transport acts. Those acts are listed in the committee report and also in the explanatory notes.

It sounds like we have a fairly benign piece of legislation before us. However, it is important that I point out to the House, so that members are aware, some of the government's lack of professionalism when it comes to this bill. For instance, on explanatory notes that accompany a bill, part 4 of the Legislative Standards Act 1992 requires that the explanatory notes be circulated when the bill is introduced to the Legislative Assembly. It sets out the information the explanatory notes should contain—that is, it should provide a reasonable level of background information and commentary to facilitate understanding of the bill's aims and origins. I draw members' attention to the committee comments on the explanatory notes in the committee report. The committee was of the view that the explanatory notes did not provide the level of detail and did not contain a reasonable level of background information and commentary to sufficiently explain the proposed amendments and their implications.

The committee was also briefed on the bill by nine departmental staff. During the briefing I raised a number of questions about the consultation undertaken in relation to the bill. It is stated in black and white in the explanatory notes that the department did not undertake any specific community or industry consultation on the bill's proposed amendments. At the public briefing, the committee asked the department if it was aware of any issues raised consistently during the consultation process. The department advised—

Nothing that we are aware of of any significance. So far we have had general support for the reforms.

Given that the explanatory notes state there was no public consultation undertaken, the committee questioned that response. The department was somewhat caught out. They backtracked and tried to clarify it by stating that consultation did occur through some government agencies on some of the bill's amendments.

In response to further questioning from the committee, the department provided written advice regarding the consultation undertaken for the proposed amendments on the adult proof of age card and the Transport Security (Counter-Terrorism) Act and in relation to the consultation undertaken by the National Transport Commission on the transport of dangerous goods. However, members should be aware that the National Transport Commission is an independent advisory body based in Melbourne. The department's advice confirmed that the department only consulted with other government agencies and did not undertake any public consultation on the amendments contained in the bill. I asked the question: how could the department know there was general support for the reforms if they had only asked other government agencies? That is akin to asking Dracula if he would like to be in charge of the blood bank.

In relation to the other amendments, and there are a number of them in the bill, the department advised the committee that no consultation had been undertaken because those amendments would not adversely impact on the public given they were clarifications of existing legislative provisions; they were administrative, technical in nature and consequential to other pieces of legislation; or they removed some redundant provisions. I asked the question: how can the government make an assumption when they have had no community or industry feedback on which to base this statement? The committee also heard in the hearing that the amendments had been identified over a period of some years now. That is even more reason to have good public consultation with industry groups, as matters do change over time.


It is very disappointing that there was no consultation with community or industry outside the committee process and the committee process should not be used as a substitute for proper consultation by governments seeking to make legislative amendments. As the member for Glass House did, I draw members' attention to the comments made by the committee, which strongly recommended that in future the department undertake public consultation on proposed amendments, no matter how minor the issues may appear.

I will now address some of the concerns raised in relation to the cost of the adult proof of age card. As at 15 July 2017, there were some 207,942 active cards. Since 2010, over 710,000 cards have been issued. The current cost of a card is \$66.65, making the Queensland proof of age card one of the most expensive proof of age cards on the eastern seaboard. I am advised that the cost, for instance, in Victoria is \$10, in South Australia it is \$22 and in the Australian Capital Territory it is \$6.27. In response to a question from the committee about whether there was any additional cost to the government to provide the proposed photo identity card, the department advised that—

The cost of acquiring the photo identity card, which the consumer pays for, covers the cost of manufacture and systems and interaction time.

Why do they cost so much more to manufacture in Queensland compared to other states? Something is not quite right here. If they are cheaper in other states, there must be some way that those costs can be driven down in Queensland. It is a sensible reform to ensure that all Queenslanders have access to a form of official ID. However, the cost should not be prohibitive for young people. I urge the Deputy Premier and the government to adopt the committee's recommendation and consider offering concessional discounts for young people aged 15 to 17 years.

The committee also made a recommendation in relation to clauses 58 and 79 of the bill that relate to legislation governing the transportation of infectious substances. Unfortunately, these particular clauses were not well explained in the explanatory notes. The department's explanations could not give a clear line of sight on the effect of the changes in clauses 58 and 79. I appreciate the Deputy Premier's clarification in the House today. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (4.39 pm): I rise to speak on the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. This bill covers a range of issues which are a reflection of how we go about our daily activities. The increasing necessity for having proof of identity, being able to apply for transport products online and being vigilant in the transportation of dangerous goods are just some of the issues which are addressed in this bill.

The bill also addresses minor administrative amendments such as clarifying the head of power for heavy vehicle fees, deleting a redundant definition, allowing the department to consult with local authorities and railway managers on behalf of the minister, ensuring marine vessels are regulated, enabling the department to mitigate the impacts of roadworks on scheduled passenger services and allowing for penalties for breaches of confidentiality and misuse of information. Considering the breadth of these amendments, I will address only some of the proposed reforms and the process that the government has undertaken in drafting the bill.

In an age when identity and proof of identity is required for almost every interaction we have with government or commercial institutions, more than 710,000 cards have been issued in Queensland since 2010 for those 18 years and older. As at June this year there are 207,942 active 18+ identity cards. It is easy therefore to appreciate that young people who are under 18 and cannot easily provide acceptable proof of identity and age are put at a disadvantage.

This bill extends the age range for the 18+ card to include 15- to 17-year-olds in order to make it easier for them to obtain evidence of identity. As we know, this is usually the age that young people embark on their first interactions with the workforce and for many it is when they need to apply for a bank account, apply for a tax file number, need general purpose validation when picking up goods at a post office and have interactions with telecommunication and utility companies and government agencies. This change will allow young Queenslanders who do not have a driver's licence or a passport to access an official government ID card.

Acknowledging this expanded age group, the name of the card will change from the adult proof of age card to a photo identification card. In recognition of the limited finances of many young people, the committee has recommended the minister consider offering concessional discounts on the proposed photo identification card. It believes that the anticipated \$66.65 cost would be onerous for many young people who are the primary beneficiary of these amendments. Other jurisdictions have addressed this issue by either offering a similar product at a greatly reduced cost or at a concessional rate. It is important that this is not another government sanctioned gouging exercise on those least able to afford it.

A comparison between the proposed cost of a photo identity card in Queensland to those offered in other Australian jurisdictions shows that most transport authorities charge customers less for a card. For example, to acquire a card in Victoria customers would pay \$10, in South Australia customers would pay \$22 and in the Australian Capital Territory customers would pay just \$6.27. A comparison between the card being proposed for use in Queensland for persons 16 years and older and valid for 10 years and the cost of a similar card elsewhere shows that a person would be charged \$93 by the transport authority in New South Wales. The Western Australian transport authority charges customers \$42.50 for a card which is valid for five years. More importantly, both of these jurisdictions offer concession discounts on their card to eligible concession card holders.

This bill also proposes to expand the requirements around how customers can apply for various transport products, such as licences and registrations. It will allow for a product to be purchased if there is an approved form, if an alternative way has not been made available by the chief executive or if there is no approved form or alternative way in writing. The department advised that a targeted trial commenced in Toowoomba in June where customers were able to verbally undertake transactions, reducing the need to complete long forms. It said that this trial and other reforms are 'aimed at minimising the amount of paperwork required to undertake various transactions' and 'these reforms have the potential to save customers significant time and effort to greatly enhance their interactions with the department'. The RACQ stated in its submission that it supported the removal of the requirement that 'certain applications be made only on approved forms or in writing and allow them to be made using other forms'.

In this bill we are also presented with amendments regarding the transportation of infectious substances. It removes any technical argument that an exemption available for the transportation of small quantities of dangerous goods could also be available for the transport of infectious substances such as bacteria, viruses or fungi that can cause disease in humans and animals.


My final comment is about process. This government has spent the past 2½ years excusing any inaction on many urgent issues by saying it is listening and it is consulting. The evidence is that consulting, in their words, means let us have another review. They are obsessed with reviews. To date they have ordered 213 reviews, which almost two reviews a week since coming to power. Saturday's *Courier-Mail* editorial said that this has created a government of inertia and apathy in place of compromise and decision-making. The evidence is that the government's idea of consultation is either as a delaying tactic or as mere lip-service.

This bill is a prime example of the government's lip-service to real consultation. The bill's explanatory notes advise that the department did not undertake any specific community or industry consultation on the bill's proposed amendments. In fact, after clarification was sought by the committee, it was established in true *Yes Minister* style that the department only consulted with other government departments and not with the public or any specific community or industry group. It was therefore no surprise that when the department was asked if it was aware of any issues that were raised consistently during the process, the department confidently stated—

Nothing that we are aware of ... of any significance. So far we have had general support for the reforms.

In view of the department's highly farcical process, the committee has recommended that the department undertakes appropriate public consultation on proposed amendments to legislation.

Consultation during the committee's inquiry should not be a substitute for broad-ranging and comprehensive consultation before the bill is presented to the parliament. It does not matter how minor the issue may appear, consultation is a vital part of the legislative process. To arrogantly fail to undertake this step is to treat the public and its interests with contempt. I support the recommendations and urge members of this House to support the bill.

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (4.46 pm): I too rise to speak to the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. For my contribution I will primarily concentrate on two areas. One is in relation to the cost of the proof of age card, which has already been outlined by some of the previous speakers. The other relates to the issue of consultation.

In terms of background, I note the committee's position on the bill. I thank the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee for their work. I note that the committee made four recommendations. One of them was that the committee recommends that the bill be passed. A further recommendation was for the department to undertake appropriate public consultation on proposed amendments to legislation. The previous speaker from this side of the chamber, the member for Gympie, outlined those concerns eruditely. I will come back to that point.

The transport of dangerous goods provisions make perfect sense. I was honoured in the previous government to be the assistant minister for transport. In terms of this omnibus bill, whilst some of the provisions might seem to be of a minor nature they do need to be tidied up from time to time. The amendments to Transport Infrastructure Act and the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act, amongst others, are sensible provisions to be tidied up as part of this amendment bill.

I come back to a couple of points. One relates to the proof of age card. TMR offers an adult proof of age card, which was previously known as the 18+ card. There is no problem there at all. I absolutely support the introduction of this new ID card, particularly for young people from the ages of 15 to 17. It will be incredibly useful. I, too, have sons. I have one who will be soon entering this age band as well. It makes perfect sense. I pick up the comments that were made by one of our first speakers—and that is the member for Glass House—in relation to the cost of the card.

As a corollary, recently I have had people come into my Chatsworth office who have been, and I think with complete justification, having a good old-fashioned whinge about the cost of documentation for JPs and commissioners for declarations, saying that the uplift in costs for those documents in the budget that was handed down a few months was outrageous. This government seems to be concerned in relation to the reviews that were outlined by the member for Gympie, who spoke before me, but I wish they would give a bit more consideration to some of these basic costs.


When you compare the cost of this ID card that is being proposed with other Australian jurisdictions, a similar card in Victoria costs \$10 and in South Australia it costs \$22, but in the ACT they are able to produce a card for \$6.27. That is a bit different from \$66.65 for this particular card. Whilst we will be not opposing the bill, it is something that has been brought up by previous speakers and I think it is worth noting in relation to the debate on the bill this afternoon.

I particularly want to come back to my last key point, and that is in relation to consultation. We hear time and time again different ministers in particular get up and beat the drum in relation to consultation, transparency et al. At the end of the day, it was said by the previous speaker, the member

for Glass House, and also by the member for Gympie on this side of the chamber that recommendation No. 4 of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee's report was that the department undertake 'appropriate' public consultation on the proposed amendments to the legislation. In fact, that is very concerning. It is almost like an episode of *The Hollowmen*, *Utopia* or *Yes Minister* all rolled into one, where you get all of the public servants in a room, who literally walk around—

An opposition member interjected.


Mr MINNIKIN: Yes, they have time for a muffin and a cup of coffee, and someone asks, 'Are we all good to go here?' and they say, 'Yes, sounds good to me.' They give the thumbs up and away they go. That is not true consultation. We know that members on that side of the chamber are under a bit of pressure at the moment. We understand that but, at the end of the day, there is no excuse for a lack of adequate consultation. Whilst in itself the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill does contain a lot of sensible, tidy-up provisions, I do highlight to the House, as previous speakers have, the cost of the proof of age card. The lack of consultation, in particular, is something that the government needs to take a lot more seriously.

 **Mr BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (4.52 pm): There are a lot of positive measures in this bill that I endorse. I note the hard work of the committee and the contributions of those opposite as well as members of the government in support of this bill. Certainly the new photo ID cards will be very welcomed by 15- to 17-year-olds. In some ways it is surprising that it has taken this long to do it across many, many governments because 15- to 17-year-olds have been a very important part of our economy for a long time. I can remember this issue coming up many times over the years. It will be welcomed in our community. It has been overdue for a long period of time.

It is good to see the removal of red tape—that is essentially what a lot of these administrative provisions are doing—and moving into the digital age, seeing Transport and Main Roads using the latest technology to make that engagement with the customer more user-friendly and to get away from the paper forms that are laborious and time consuming and are the old way of doing it. As with a whole variety of services that we provide, such as e-correspondence, online services and portals, it is important to see those services coordinated and it is important, I think, for people's faith in government to see the government and the Public Service moving with the times so that they feel that it is relevant and that it is engaging. As young people increasingly come into an age where they are interfacing with departments, I think it is important that we are moving with the times in the digital age.

The trial later this year is a real positive in terms of eliminating those duplications that are unnecessary, whether it is the driver's licence or the photo ID cards, and to use that experience and that research to inform departmental processes and, no doubt, that will be more prolific across-the-board. It is also very heartening to see us moving away from a customer focused model to an integrated model with the information technology focus in this digital age. That is a positive.

We see a lot of administrative clarifications in the bill in terms of a range of different acts, such as the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, mainly for efficiency means where the process for those responsible for doing those administrative tasks is being streamlined so we can get more efficient outcomes. In terms of the driver authorisation aspect for those charged with a driver disqualifying offence, it is good to see provisions in the bill as well. I do not intend to speak too much longer. It is a positive bill and a non-contentious one, and I endorse it.

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (4.55 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. I note the committee recommendations and, in particular, their first recommendation that the bill be passed. Like the member for Yeerongpilly and others, I do not intend to speak at any great length. Suffice it to say this bill is a practical measure being undertaken by the department. There are a great many young people out there who do have difficulty finding a meaningful source of identification that they can use when applying for things online or when travelling around and conducting their day-to-day affairs. If I can be a little indulgent and have a dad moment: as the father of four sons, I know that there have been many occasions when they have needed some form of formal identification. On occasions they have been issued with a student card by their school which has more often than not been sufficient, but there is nothing quite like getting their first learner's permit and having a more tangible form of identification that comes from a government agency.

Sadly, in this day and age there are many young people who, for all sorts of reasons, do not go off at 16 years of age with that sense of excitement and anticipation that many of us did in our younger days to secure a learner's permit. There are significant impediments to many of these young people. For some, their home life and their family circumstances make it somewhat restrictive for them to do so. There have been many of my sons' mates over the years who, when I have sat down with them and

had one of those heart-to-hearts and asked, 'What's going on? How come you are not going for your driver's licence? How come you have not applied for your learner's?', have sadly shared that either it has been out of their reach in terms of affordability or it has been difficult because they are living with a grandparent or perhaps living with someone else outside of a normal family environment. On some occasions they are living with their mum and they are having to work part-time to help support the family budget and their younger siblings.


I am pleased to see this initiative because what it means for those 15-, 16- and 17-year-olds who do not go down the normal path that so many other young people do of going for a learner's permit or eventually getting their driver's licence at 17 is they at least have access to a form of identification that will carry them through a fairly critical season in their life and that more than compensates for the lack of getting a student ID card or some other form of identification.

I note that the member for Chatsworth and the member for Gympie raised some concerns around the cost of the card.

Ms Leahy interjected.

Mr MOLHOEK: The member for Warrego also raised that point. For those of us in the House, \$66 probably does not seem like a huge cost, but I know for my sons and for many of their mates the prospect of paying \$66 for a card is expensive. I do hope that the minister will take those comments on board, look at what has happened in other jurisdictions and look at the possibility of reducing that cost or at least making some provision for hardship cases so that it is more affordable for young people to acquire those cards.

I was pleased to see that PACT, Protect All Children Today, wrote in support of the proposed introduction of the card. I note also that RACQ have registered their support. That is so like RACQ: they are always on the front foot providing very practical support for good initiatives, and this is a good initiative. I am sure there are many other organisations out there. I was reflecting on the interchanges that I had with the Create Foundation, which works with so many disadvantaged young people across Queensland in partnership with our Child Safety Services. I am sure that the Create Foundation and organisations like it will also welcome the fact that the government is doing something very practical to provide our young people with what is a very simple thing but, nonetheless, is a very important form of identification and access to something that can be logged and registered within the transport system. It provides a pathway of identification into the future.

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (5.01 pm), in reply: Can I start by acknowledging the contributions—and, thankfully, brief contributions—of members in the chamber in relation to this debate. As has been articulated in the debate on this bill, the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, this is an entirely practical approach to improving legislation regulation around transport and road users within Queensland. I thank all members for their contribution, but I do thank the opposition for their endorsement of the legislation as well.

I want to address specifically the issues that seem to be a recurring concern to members opposite. Firstly, in relation to consultation, as I said in my second reading speech it is really clear that these amendments seek to improve the current legislative and regulatory regime in Queensland around transport and road users. Some of it is very technical and very practical. Those who should have been engaged in the consultation process were engaged such as industry stakeholders.

In addition, in relation to the proof of age card, as has been acknowledged by all members who have made a contribution to this debate, this is an improvement and a benefit to young Queenslanders in this state. As such, I think having a protected consultation process around extending a benefit that already exists would simply have delayed this legislation going forward.

I did want to touch on the issues raised by those members in relation to the cost of the adult proof of age card and soon-to-be photo identification cards. It is true that some jurisdictions have a lower cost in terms of comparable forms of identification for young people. I do note that those opposite did not read out the costs for people within the New South Wales jurisdiction where photo cards for those aged 16 years or older are \$52 for five years or \$93 for 10 years.

Mr Perrett: I did.

Ms TRAD: I apologise, member for Gympie. I understand that you did refer to those costs. We take security very seriously in Queensland in relation to the provision of identification cards. In the current climate it is very important that when we issue forms of identification that can be used for entry

into premises, that can be used for a particular purpose, that we maintain a high level of security. The reason the current fee of \$66.65 reflects the production of the card is that cards issued in Queensland incorporate features such as holograms, watermarks and other security features that make these cards hard to tamper with. I think it is very hard to argue against maintaining a high level of security when it comes to photo identification cards.

I want to say, however, that I am acknowledging that for many young people it is a cost impost in terms of being able to pay for cards such as photo ID cards in the same way that it is if young people wanted to get a learner's licence or a passport, for example. These are forms of official identification that cost a lot more than the identification cards that we are talking about here today. It is quite comparable to those other forms of identification that young people can access when they need some sort of identification.

In recognition of the fact that young people may be coming to the department of transport for a number of services and products, if a young person takes a proof of age card—a photo identity card—but then comes back to the department of transport seeking a learner's licence what we will do is take into account the cost that has already gone into the photo identification card to date and we can provide them with a \$40 discount on that—

An honourable member interjected.

Ms TRAD: Lights out; time is up.

An honourable member: Electricity prices.

An honourable member: We can't afford the bill!

Ms TRAD: No, I think they are just toning down the ugly lights. As I was saying, for young people who come into contact with the department of transport for photo identification cards and then subsequently a learner's licence, we will take into account the money they have spent on the photo identification card and provide them with a \$40 credit towards their learner's licence. That will reduce the cost of a learner's licence from \$166.10 to \$126.10. I think that is a fair and reasonable compromise.

I will not protract the debate. I will again thank all members for their contribution. As has been said by me and other members in the chamber, this is a very sensible omnibus bill that seeks to clarify and ensure that there is modern transport and road user legislation in Queensland but also extends what is a very good service and product for young people in Queensland to those who are 15 to 17. 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 135, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (5.09 pm): I move—


That the bill be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (5.09 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.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND REHABILITATION (COAL WORKERS' PNEUMOCONIOSIS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 14 June (see p. 1605).

Second Reading

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (5.09 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

With this bill, the Palaszczuk government continues to deliver fairness in enhancing the workers compensation scheme, strengthening the electrical licensing framework and acknowledging the concerns of people affected by work related fatalities and serious injuries and illnesses. When coal workers' pneumoconiosis, or black lung, was reidentified in Queensland, the Palaszczuk government acted quickly to establish a stakeholder reference group involving representatives of workers, industry, the legal profession and the government, including the Department of Natural Resources and Mines. The reference group was tasked with identifying any gaps in the current workers compensation scheme for workers suffering from this disease—in particular, looking at ways to support retired workers and workers who have left the industry in obtaining a diagnosis, including the funding of the costs of this diagnosis. I would like to thank the members of the stakeholder reference group for their contribution to this important issue.

On 23 March 2017, I announced that the stakeholder reference group had reported back to me and that this government would implement its four recommendations in full—namely, medical examinations for former coalmine workers concerned they may have this disease and who retired or left the coalmining industry prior to 1 January 2017; ensuring workers with simple coal workers' pneumoconiosis who experience disease progression can apply to reopen their claim to access further benefits under the workers compensation scheme; extra rehabilitation support to assist workers back into suitable alternative employment; and streamlining workers compensation arrangements so they properly align with the Coal Mine Workers' Health Scheme.

On 29 May 2017, the parliamentary Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis Select Committee that was established to inquire into the reidentification of coal workers' pneumoconiosis in Queensland issued its report *Black lung white lies*. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee for its comprehensive investigation into this matter. The report adopts the recommendations of the stakeholder reference group but with a minor variation for the medical examination process to apply more broadly to all coalmine dust lung diseases.

The Palaszczuk government introduced this bill to amend the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003 to provide a new medical examination process for retired or former coal workers with suspected black lung or another coalmine dust lung disease—so the recommendation was accepted—with the costs to be borne by the employers responsible for the dust exposures through their workers compensation premiums. This medical examination will enable former coal workers, who are concerned they may have this disease or are at a risk of exposure, to access medical testing at no cost to them.

The bill also introduces additional support for workers diagnosed with pneumoconiosis in the form of an additional lump sum of up to a maximum of \$120,000. The new lump sum payment is based on the grading of the worker's pneumoconiosis injury under the International Labour Organisation guidelines. The Palaszczuk government sought the advice of the leading expert in coal workers' pneumoconiosis, Dr Robert Cohen from the University of Illinois. Dr Cohen's advice informed the development of the scaling of the lump sum payments to workers with pneumoconiosis to ensure that payments appropriately reflect the relative severity of the worker's disease. The new lump sum payment will address concerns expressed by workers with early stages of the disease that they are entitled to compensation under the workers compensation scheme. It provides financial support for those workers who will require ongoing medical monitoring and rehabilitation due to the nature of this disease. The bill also clarifies that a worker with pneumoconiosis can access further workers compensation entitlements if they experience disease progression. This amendment will provide certainty for workers if their disease deteriorates in the future.

I would like to thank the Finance and Administration Committee for its consideration of the bill and its report tabled on 11 August 2017. I would also like to thank those who made submissions to the committee about the bill and those who appeared at the committee's public hearing. The committee made five recommendations, including recommendation 1 that the bill be passed by the parliament. I am pleased to table the government's response to the committee's report.

Tabled paper: Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 44, 55th Parliament—Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017, government response [\[1426\]](#).

Recommendation 2 requested that I update the House on the progress to date in establishing and implementing an Australian B reader program. The Queensland government is committed to ensuring all workers compensation insurers in Queensland use the same cohort of doctors as those examining all coalmine workers' scans under the Department of Natural Resources and Mines health screening program. The Office of Industrial Relations is working with the workers compensation insurers to ensure this occurs. The Office of Industrial Relations is also working with the Department of Natural Resources and Mines to ensure there are sufficient Australian B readers to undertake the medical examination process.

Recommendation 3 requested that I provide clarity around the application of the common law 'once and for all' rule to sufferers of dust related diseases who have received compensation under common law where the disease progresses or the sufferer develops a new disease. The bill specifically addresses this concern by allowing the reopening of a statutory claim for pneumoconiosis to provide a worker with access to further statutory compensation where they experience disease progression. The bill does this without eroding the longstanding concept of a 'once and for all' for common law damages or permitting the reopening of a settled claim or award for common law damages.

Further, where a worker has been compensated and received damages, for example, for silicosis, and then later develops a new disease, such as lung cancer, in Queensland a worker is entitled to bring a new statutory claim for the injury and potentially common law action as the 'once and for all' nature of a common law claim applies only to the injury to which the previous settlement applies. There is a new claim and fresh evidence available.

Recommendation 4 is supported in part—in particular, to provide clarity on who bears the responsibility for medical examination costs for miners. The apportionment of workers compensation costs between different employers is already managed administratively by the scheme and is able to be effectively managed this way. Further, a protocol will be developed to provide a framework for apportionment of costs between WorkCover Queensland and the self-insurers to address these concerns. We will ensure that that protocol is developed properly and apportions costs appropriately.

The government agrees with the remainder of the committee's recommendation 4 that the bill be amended to clarify that all necessary and reasonable travel costs incurred to attend the medical examinations are not borne by the coal worker. It is the case that travel expenses were already factored into the costs for the medical examination and these costs were outlined to the Finance and Administration Committee at their public hearing on 10 July this year. However, an amendment to the bill is proposed to be moved—one amendment, member for Kawana—during consideration in detail to clarify that it is the responsibility of the insurer to cover the reasonable travel costs. This amendment will ensure that no worker will fear being out of pocket. This clarifies this issue. Just in case there is some doubt about who pays those costs, we have made it absolutely crystal clear in the amendment being put to the House.

Recommendation 5 requested that I provide clarity in relation to the transitional provisions in the bill. In summary, all new claims for pneumoconiosis made after the commencement of the bill will be entitled to: the new pneumoconiosis lump sum; statutory lump sum compensation; and where they experience future progression of their disease, to reopen their claim to receive a top-up of the new lump sum and their statutory lump sum compensation. For all pneumoconiosis claims accepted prior to the commencement of the bill, a worker will be entitled to the new pneumoconiosis lump sum payment as long as they have not yet had their permanent impairment assessed—this provision limits the new lump sum for pneumoconiosis to claims that are not yet finalised—and be able to reopen their claim to receive a top-up of the new lump sum and their statutory lump sum compensation where they experience future progression of their disease. Without these transitional provisions, workers with pneumoconiosis who have already made a workers compensation claim who experience a significant deterioration of their condition due to this disease would be prevented from accessing any further compensation under the workers compensation scheme. In effect, it gives them rights they would otherwise have been denied.

This bill also amends the Industrial Relations Act 2016 to make it clear that the power of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission to order a stay in relation to appeals does not apply to workers compensation appeals. This important amendment will ensure that injured workers are not denied access to much needed income support, medical treatment and rehabilitation while awaiting the outcome of the appeals process. This amendment ensures that both employers insured with WorkCover and the self-insurers are on a level playing field when paying workers compensation entitlements. The granting of a stay decision against workers with an accepted workers compensation claim is contrary to the beneficial intent and operation of the workers compensation scheme, which seeks to provide support for vulnerable, injured workers in Queensland.

These amendments are not about incentivising or creating an additional benefit to self-insure as against the main insurer of WorkCover. It now puts them on a level playing field. My understanding is that under both governments the wording has not changed. There was a decision recently which altered that. What we are doing is ensuring that both sides are treated equally and that not only is there the incentive to ensure that workers are adequately compensated but also there is no incentive to prolong a workers compensation claim, but to settle it quickly. We believe these amendments will do that.

The bill also amends the Electrical Safety Act 2002 to introduce mechanisms to improve the rigour of the electrical licensing framework. This includes implementing a coroner's recommendation by introducing provisions allowing the electrical safety regulator to immediately suspend an electrical worker's licence in specific and extremely serious circumstances in the interests of protecting the safety of others. Following the immediate suspension, the matter would be referred to the Electrical Licensing Committee, which currently has the powers and functions relating to disciplinary action for electrical licence holders.


The bill also ensures that the electrical safety regulator can obtain information about the competency of applicants for an electrical work licence. It will also allow the electrical licensing committee to direct an existing electrical work licence holder to undertake a competency reassessment where there are reasonable grounds to believe the licensee may not be competent. These amendments to the Electrical Safety Act are aimed at protecting workers and the public in general, whose safety may be affected by the electrical work carried out by licence holders.

With this bill, the Palaszczuk government delivers on another election commitment. We made a commitment to involve injured workers and families of persons who have died as a result of work incidents in a consultative committee. The bill establishes the Persons Affected by Work Related Fatalities and Serious Incidents Consultative Committee, which will provide advice on the information and support needs for persons affected by serious workplace incidents. People in this situation have a range of complex needs. The government agencies must recognise this when communicating with families and seriously injured workers. We should be able to go to work and come home safely. Likewise, we should all expect our loved ones to return home from work safely. In addition to the profound grief that comes with the loss of a loved one when there is a workplace fatality, there are other matters that can add to the burden such as liaising with government agencies about the investigation by the relevant regulator and any coronial inquest or claim for workers compensation. The interim consultative committee has already been able to help government agencies make improvements in addressing the support and information needs of the next of kin and seriously injured workers. I know that there are members of that committee in the gallery here this afternoon.

I would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank Michael and Lee Garrels, Paul Bailey, Jen Beveridge, Rachel Blee, Kevin and Christine Fuller, Dan and Debbie Kennedy, Bill Martin and Don and Julie Sager, and I recognise them in the gallery this afternoon. They have all shown great courage in sharing their stories with the wider community and in bringing greater awareness to the importance of health and safety at work. It is my hope that establishing this consultative committee will see the positive work done by the interim committee continue and will ensure genuine and practical support is in place for people affected by work related fatalities and serious incidents.

I personally thank those in the gallery. They are passionate through their grief. I think they have delivered outstanding results. Many of the changes we see in the bill we are debating this afternoon are because of their advocacy, their strength and their courage. I want to passionately thank each and every one of them. As long as I remain Minister for Industrial Relations, I look forward to working closely with them on every opportunity that is made available. I thank them most sincerely.

For many, these reforms are a long time coming. As I said, I want to say thank you to everyone who has worked with this government to make our workplaces safe and our workers compensation scheme fairer. With that, I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (5.26 pm): Today I rise to speak on the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I start by thanking the parliamentary committee that looked into the bill for their thorough examination of the bill, capably led on this side of the House by the member for Mermaid Beach, Mr Ray Stevens, as deputy chair.

This is a serious issue. The tragic news of the re-emergence of black lung disease was a devastation to coal-working families past and present right across Queensland. No-one deserves to contract illness due to simply going to work and doing the job they do to put food on the table and help provide for their family. No-one deserves that. The re-emergence of black lung in our coalmining industry should be above politics. It is a fundamental issue about the health and safety of coal workers. We want these workers to be able to go to work and return home safely to their families every day.

We on this side of the House are strongly united in our support for the coal industry in terms of energy security and also in terms of regional development and regional jobs. It is unfortunate that this debate has been delayed because Labor had to be dragged, kicking and screaming, to address some of these issues since the re-emergence of black lung disease. It first came to the House's attention when the LNP moved a motion to set up a royal commission—and currently the parliamentary committee led by the member for Bundamba and the member for Southern Downs are looking at the particular issue and doing a good job. As I said in August last year, the LNP led the way and called for the establishment of a royal commission or commission of inquiry into the re-emergence of coal workers' pneumoconiosis, a call that was rejected at the time. As I said, the parliamentary select committee has been established and is doing a good job.

Earlier this year it was reported that bureaucrats in the department of the Minister for Mines had been obstructing the work of the parliamentary select committee. Following the release of that interim report, which made 68 recommendations, the CFMEU was highly critical of the response by Labor's mines minister, calling it an insensitive and inadequate response. The CFMEU in fact called for the minister to be sacked. They stated—

We had this fantastic, honest and thorough report like a beacon of hope for men who feel like they're on death row, but Minister Lynham's actions undermine rebuilding confidence in the system—it was like a punch in the guts for victims ...

...

He has permanently lost trust with the victims of black lung disease—we believe he is running defence for those in his department. Black lung victims are on death row and have no time for a Minister to ... delay just because his department is nervous about their negligence.

We trust this legislation does what it intends to do and that coal workers who unfortunately contract this disease are looked after in terms of compensation arrangements and that the process is not too onerous. In that regard we will not oppose the bill. We also note the five recommendations of the committee which ought to be supported.

As outlined in the explanatory notes, the objectives of this bill are to amend the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003 to provide access for coal workers who have any concerns about coal workers' pneumoconiosis or a coalmine dust lung disease to a medical examination through the workers compensation scheme. It allows workers with pneumoconiosis, including coal workers' pneumoconiosis, to reopen their statutory claim to receive further lump sum compensation if their condition deteriorates. The bill introduces additional lump sum compensation for workers diagnosed with pneumoconiosis, including coal workers' pneumoconiosis, silicosis or asbestosis from working in a dusty environment.

The bill amends the Industrial Relations Act 2016 to clarify that the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission cannot grant a stay of decision that is subject to appeal under the Workers Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003, which I will talk a little more about later. It amends the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 to establish an affected persons committee involving injured workers and families of persons who have died as a result of workplace incidents and will provide advice to the minister on information and support for those who need it most.

On that note, I also welcome to the gallery the families who have been mentioned. When I was the minister for industrial relations and workplace health and safety I remember the Garrels family in relation to coronial issues and the Fuller family. I recall that we launched a workplace health and safety campaign with respect to electrical safety in roof spaces to try to ensure that people did not jump up into their roof cavity. The campaign involved a sticker which was put onto a manhole to warn people to be careful of live wires before they jumped up into their roof cavity.

As the current minister would know, and as I did during our time, we can disagree on many things in this House, but when grieving families suffer because of safety issues and they come to our departments to see us as ministers, then we ought to do what we can for these families' sake. They know that they cannot bring their family members back, but we can try to prevent further incidents and deaths from occurring in the future. That is why we worked with the families who have been mentioned to do what we can. Many families would probably say that things do not happen quickly enough, and we say that in this House as well, but many times the workplace health and safety amendments that we bring into this House are supported by both sides of politics because we do respectfully understand how important it is that people are able to go to work in the knowledge that they will come home safely to their families. No-one deserves to go to work and have that added burden or risk, and if we can eliminate or prevent the risk as much as possible then we should try to do that as much as we can in this House.

On that note, we also say that the bill amends the Electrical Safety Act 2002 to allow the electrical safety regulator to obtain information about the competency of applicants for an electrical work licence; allows the Electrical Licensing Committee to direct an existing electrical work license holder to undertake a competency reassessment where there are reasonable grounds to believe that the licensee may not be competent; and allows the electrical safety regulator to immediately suspend an electrical worker's licence in specific and extremely serious circumstances in the interests of protecting the safety of others.

As outlined by the minister and the explanatory notes, the bill will achieve its objectives by amending those particular pieces of legislation to: introduce a medical examination for retired or former coal workers who are concerned that they may have CWP or a coalmine dust lung disease; introduce an additional lump sum compensation entitlement for workers with pneumoconiosis; ensure that a worker with pneumoconiosis who experiences disease progression can reopen their claim and access further benefits under the workers compensation scheme; clarify that the power to grant a stay under the Industrial Relations Act does not apply to an appeal under the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003; establish a persons affected by work related fatalities and serious incidents consultative committee to provide advice on information and support needs for persons affected by a work related incident resulting in death or serious injury or illness; and allow the electrical safety regulator to immediately suspend a person's electrical work licence if the regulator forms a reasonable belief that the person may be responsible for electrical work that has caused a death or grievous bodily harm or have otherwise carried out electrical safety work that poses an imminent serious risk to the health or safety of any person.

The current minister would remember—as I did when I was the workplace health and safety minister—the workplace health and safety awards that we give out each year to businesses that go above and beyond to provide additional resources to make sure that workplaces are safer. I would assume that the current minister continues with the practice of workplace health and safety awards for businesses that innovate in terms of spending money. Once they do have safer work practices, a lot of businesses find that it is more efficient when their businesses are safer. There might be an initial onset cost to upgrade or upskill their workers or their businesses, but in the long run it saves lives, it saves incidents and it saves workers compensation because it keeps their premiums down. The fewer the incidents, the lower the premiums. I remember going out to Roma and talking to people about quad bike safety, and I recall the reviews that were undertaken in terms of quad bike safety. I remember that I walked with the NRL legend 'the Axe' when we did the asbestos campaign to raise money.

An opposition member: Gillie!

Mr BLEIJIE: That is right; Trevor Gillmeister, 'the Axe'. His father passed away from asbestosis, so we walked and walked—well, he walked a lot further than I did, but I joined him for a short portion of that walk and we raised lots of money for people who suffer from asbestosis.

In terms of cost, the explanatory notes state—

There will be minimal costs to Government associated with the amendments to the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003. The cost of undertaking medical examinations for former coal workers to determine if the worker has CWP is able to be met through the workers' compensation scheme. The cost of these examinations will be included in each employer's premium or borne directly by self-insurers. There will be no cost impact for other employers in the scheme. The cost of the pneumoconiosis lump sum compensation entitlement is also able to be met by the workers' compensation scheme.

There are minimal costs to Government associated with establishing the Persons Affected by Work Related Fatalities and Serious Incidents Consultative Committee. Members of the committee will not be paid remuneration, however, reasonable and necessary expenses for attending committee meetings would be paid. Administrative support for the committee will be met within existing resources of the department.

There are minimal costs to Government associated with amendments to improve the electrical licensing framework which will be met within existing resources of the department.

As I mentioned earlier, the Finance and Administration Committee made five recommendations to improve the operation of the bill. Obviously, recommendation 1 was that the bill be passed. As I said, I thank the member for Mermaid Beach with respect to the support he gave to the legislation because of the seriousness of the issue. Recommendation 2 provides that the minister update the House on the progress to date in establishing and implementing an Australian B reader program. Recommendation 3 asks the minister to provide clarity around the application of the common law 'once and for all' rule. Recommendation 4 provides that the bill be amended to provide clarity on who bears responsibility for medical examination costs for miners who demonstrate six months of exposure to coaldust at more than one worksite in Queensland and ensure that reasonable travel costs incurred to attend medical examinations are not borne by the coal worker.

I noted the minister's interjection to me when we were talking about that. She does have one amendment and, as I indicated to the minister—and I do again—one amendment is very good, because their first piece of legislation had 200 amendments.

Ms Grace: Who are you? What happened to Jarrod?

Mr BLEIJIE: He'll be back. There were 200 amendments to the racing bill, 32 amendments to the trading hours bill—

Ms Grace: That wasn't my bill. Stop it!

Mr BLEIJIE: I do take that interjection from the minister. It was not her bill. It was the member for Rockhampton's bill and she had to fix it up, but that is okay. Moving on to this bill—

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: The friendship ended. The one amendment will be supported by the opposition as it is a clarifying amendment with respect to reasonable travel costs, and I think that reasonable people would expect that to be paid.

Recommendation 5 again asks the minister to clarify the intent of proposed section 727, including whether it is to exclude workers who have been assessed under section 179 of the WCR Act before the commencement of the act from accessing the lump sum payment or additional lump sum payments.

The committee that reviewed the bill received eight submissions from six stakeholders: Queensland Council of Unions; Maurice Blackburn Lawyers; Queensland Resources Council; Association of Self Insured Employers Queensland, or ASIEQ; JBS Australia; and the Queensland Law Society. The Queensland Law Society noted their concerns with certain provisions of the bill with regard to aspects of changes to the Electrical Safety Act. They stated—

Firstly, proposed 64C(3) provides that the notice given to the holder of an electrical work licence must allow at least one month for this person to undergo an assessment of that person's competency. There does not appear to be a mechanism to allow further time for someone to undertake this assessment. This is concerning as there may be instances where a person's location and/or ability to pay for the assessment will prohibit this timeframe from being met.

I would submit that this could be particularly the case in rural and regional Queensland and would appreciate the minister's comments in relation to that concern in her summation. The Queensland Law Society goes on further to proposed section 121AB(b), stating—

... we are concerned that if there is delay in receipt of the notice, the licence holder may not be aware of the suspension and may face serious consequences for performing work with a suspended licence. We submit that the suspension take effect from when notice is received and we suggest that the regulator should be able to ask for proof of receipt.

I would again ask for and appreciate the minister's response to those concerns highlighted and raised by the Law Society.

The ASIEQ made two submissions to the committee and has also corresponded with members of the parliament. Its concerns relate to parts 3, 4 and 5 of the bill. Dealing with the specific provisions of the bill relating to the Industrial Relations Act, the ASIEQ submits that clauses 14, 15 and 16 be deleted from the bill. It states—

The power of the QIRC to grant a Stay of a review decision of the regulator should not be removed. The preservation of this power is also supported by the Qld Law Society.

As the minister indicated, a decision was handed down and the QIRC can at the moment grant a stay for a review of a decision which would mean that the worker would not get paid an entitlement or if a stay is granted the worker would not get paid an entitlement until such time as the appeal is held or heard and decided upon. The ASIEQ has submitted to the committee that that particular provision

be deleted and that the current power of the QIRC to grant the decision remain. As I said, the preservation of that current power is also supported by the Queensland Law Society and has been raised by other stakeholders. ASIEQ states—

The need for a Stay arises because claimants are not required to refund compensation that has been paid and where the QIRC or Industrial Court overturns a review decision and decides the insurer is not liable to pay the compensation.

It could be argued that it undermines the independence of the QIRC and possibly breaks an election commitment of this government in that regard in terms of the independence of the QIRC. However, I note the minister's comments with respect to the decision handed down and the level playing field for WorkCover and ordinary workers compensation for the body that employs most of the workers in Queensland as opposed to the self-insurers. For the benefit of the minister and the House, I table a copy of a letter that I have received—and no doubt the committee received similar correspondence, as did other members of the parliament—dated 21 August 2017 from the president of ASIEQ.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 21 August 2017, from the President of the ASIEQ, Mr David Gomulka, to the member for Kawana, Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP, regarding the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 [1427].

That letter highlights various issues with respect to its submission to the committee and it requests that clauses 14, 15 and 16 be deleted from the bill. It states—

The power of the QIRC to grant a Stay of a review decision of the regulator should not be removed. The preservation of this power is also supported by the Qld Law Society.

It notes in its letter that—

The need for a Stay arises because claimants are not required to refund compensation that has been paid and where the QIRC or Industrial Court overturns a review decision and decides the insurer is not liable to pay the compensation.

The minister has responded to that this evening by speaking about the decision that was handed down in the QIRC and a possible loophole that has been created in that before that the law was that the level playing field existed between the self-insurers and WorkCover. However, I would suggest that we ought to take note of this and keep a watching brief on the situation. If the need arises in the future to look at these provisions, then, as I said, we ought to keep a watching brief on those provisions.

With respect to that, the Law Society in its letter to the committee dated 31 July 2017 talked about that particular issue. It states—

Of particular importance to the Society is the very strongly held view that it is appropriate for the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission to determine whether a decision of the Regulator should be wholly or partially stayed pending the outcome of an appeal of the decision. The ability of the Commission to exercise this discretion only after a full hearing of an employer's application for a stay and in accordance with long established and entrenched common law principles is a right that should not be removed. The Commission, at a hearing of any application, is able to consider each application on its merits and its particular circumstances which enables a balanced and considered decision to be made where the potential hardship on the injured worker can be given proper consideration and weight.

It would be noted by many members in this House that from time to time I have had many differences of opinion with the Queensland Law Society. That begs the question: if it is raising this as a particular issue—and I am somewhat in agreement with it—then it should be taken with important note.

An honourable member: That's cause for concern.

Mr BLEIJIE: It is concerning, but it is a serious issue that the minister should particularly consider given that the Law Society says on the second page of its letter—


... the Society's view that the rights of injured workers are not abrogated by keeping this entitlement but rather, there is an opportunity for the Commission to determine whether it is appropriate for compensation to be paid prior to a final determination of the claim being made.

For these reasons, we submit that clauses 14, 15 and 16 of the Bill should be removed.

The Law Society has in fact agreed with ASIEQ with respect to those particular provisions. I note that the minister spoke about self-insurers, but I ask the minister in her response to address the issues raised by the Law Society a little further and the Law Society's view that the rights of the injured worker are not abrogated but in fact could be enhanced with the deletion of those provisions. I would appreciate some further discussion and clarification. I table for the benefit of the minister the letter from the Law Society dated 31 July 2017.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 31 July 2017, from the President of the Queensland Law Society, Ms Christine Smyth, to the Committee Secretary of the Finance and Administration Committee [1428].

As I said, I look forward to the minister's response, particularly with regard to the concerns that have been raised by ASIEQ and the Law Society, the level of consultation that was undertaken in relation to the matters and the compilation of this bill since it was introduced. As I said at the outset of my contribution, the LNP has been strong and united in its support for the coal industry in terms of energy security and also regional development and regional jobs. We also want to ensure that everyone who works in the industry can go to work and come home safely. All coal workers deserve that fundamental opportunity each and every shift.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (5.46 pm): Tonight I rise in the House to support the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The Finance and Administration Committee was referred the bill on 14 June 2017 when the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs introduced the bill into the House. The committee reported to the Legislative Assembly by 11 August after the inquiry process had taken place.

During its examination of the bill the committee invited and received submissions from the following: the Queensland Council of Unions, Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, Queensland Resources Council, Association of Self Insured Employers Queensland, Queensland Law Society and JBS Australia. The committee held public briefings with the Office of Industrial Relations on 10 July and a public hearing on 31 July 2017. The following organisations attended the public hearing: the Queensland Law Society, Queensland Resources Council, Association of Self Insured Employers Queensland, affected families and the Office of Industrial Relations from Queensland Treasury. I want to take this opportunity to thank all submitters, organisations and individuals who contributed to assisting the Finance and Administration Committee in its deliberations in considering this bill. I want to thank everyone who attended the public hearing. In her introductory speech the minister stated—

The Palaszczuk government is today introducing significant changes to improve the workers compensation scheme for workers who have been diagnosed or suspect they may have contracted ... CWP ... or other types of coalminers' lung dust diseases ...

The bill recognises the unique nature of the spectrum of diseases, collectively referred to as coalmine dust lung diseases, that may impact on coal workers and the Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring that the Queensland workers compensation scheme is responsive and provides the best outcomes possible for those workers and any retired workers affected by this disease. Workers in Queensland who are diagnosed with CWP or coalmine dust lung disease can claim no-fault statutory compensation and access common law damages which are not limited by a worker's employment status or age.

In its inquiry into the reidentification of CWP in Queensland, the CWP Select Committee raised concerns about difficulties with former and retired coal workers obtaining diagnoses, lengthy claims determination times and the availability of retraining and redeployment opportunities for impacted workers. The minister established a stakeholder reference group to address these issues. The reference group was tasked with identifying any gaps in the current workers compensation scheme for workers with CWP. The minister asked the reference group in particular to examine ways to support retired workers and workers who had left the industry in obtaining a diagnosis of CWP, including funding these costs and the adequacy of compensation, rehabilitation and return-to-work programs.

On receiving the recommendations of the reference group the minister committed to implementing all of the recommendations, including introducing medical examination for former coal workers who were concerned that they may have CWP and had retired or who had left the coal industry prior to January 2017. The costs of these medical examinations are to be passed to the relevant employers through their insurance premium. This ensures that a worker diagnosed with CWP, such as simple CWP, who experiences disease progression can apply to reopen their claim to access further lump sum benefits under the workers compensation scheme, providing extra rehabilitation and return-to-work support to assist workers find meaningful alternative employment and streamlining workers compensation arrangements so they align properly with the Coal Mine Workers' Health Scheme.


A further part of the bill deals with the issue that a number of self-insured employers have successfully sought to stay a decision of the Workers Compensation Regulator to accept the worker's claim for compensation in the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. The result of this has been that workers have been denied access to compensation and medical treatment for lengthy periods. The result undermines any chance of the injured worker returning to gainful employment and also denies workers access to medical treatment and rehabilitation for lengthy periods of time. This places those workers at a disadvantage compared with workers whose employers are insured with WorkCover Queensland. The bill now clarifies that the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission cannot grant a stay that is subject to appeal under the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003 to protect the rights of workers and to place all workers and employers in the same position.

When a family member loses their life due to a workplace accident, the effects on the family unit cannot be measured in any meaningful way. I am sure that we all have the experience of dealing with such a loss, be it a family member or a friend. The tragedy of these losses is the same; however, when that person is taken away in the prime of their life the tragedy is hard to comprehend. The committee heard evidence of the loss of one young life before they even had the opportunity to pick up their first pay cheque.

The bill fulfils an election promise to the families who, tragically, lost a loved one in a workplace incident. The proposed legislation sets up a consultative committee which will provide advice on the information and support for those who need it most at times of such tragedy.

As chair of the Finance and Administration Committee I thank my fellow committee members. I also thank Michael and Lee Garrels, who lost their son Jason in tragic circumstances. Together they put together the families forum, which will be enshrined in legislation once this bill is passed by this House. I also thank Paul Bailey, Jen Beveridge, Rachel Blee, Kevin and Christine Fuller, Dan and Debbie Kennedy, Bill Martin and Don and Julie Sager who all contributed to the much valued families forum. These people contributed their time on a voluntary basis and for this I thank them.

When passed tonight, the legislation will introduce a mechanism to improve the rigour of the electrical licensing framework and will ensure that the electrical safety regulator can obtain information about the competency of applicants for electrical work licences. It will further allow the electrical licensing committee to direct an existing electrical work licence holder to undertake a competency reassessment where there are reasonable grounds to believe that the licensee may not be competent. The bill will also introduce legislative provisions allowing the electrical safety regulator to immediately suspend an electrical worker's licence in specific and extremely serious matters. These amendments are aimed at protecting workers and the public in general whose safety may be put at risk. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (5.55 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis and Other Legislation) Amendment Bill. I thank my fellow committee members, who worked diligently on this bill. I also take the opportunity to say that just occasionally we can come together in this great chamber and do great things for the people of Queensland. I am very proud to be part of the debate tonight. As the member for Kawana said—I have heard other members say this in the past—no-one deserves to get up in the morning and go to their place of employment and either tragically not come home that night or receive some sort of a disease that may over the long term materially affect their health.

The committee of which I am proud to be a part made several recommendations. I will concentrate briefly on the objectives of the bill. Most importantly, that was to amend the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003 to provide access for coal workers with any concerns about coal workers' pneumoconiosis or a coalmine dust lung disease to a medical examination through the workers compensation scheme. It will also allow workers with pneumoconiosis, including coal workers' pneumoconiosis, to reopen their statutory claim to receive further lump sum compensation if their condition indeed deteriorates. Furthermore, it will introduce additional lump sum compensation for workers diagnosed with pneumoconiosis, including coal workers' pneumoconiosis, silicosis or asbestosis, from working in a dusty environment. It also seeks to amend the Industrial Relations Act 2016 to clarify, finally, that the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission cannot grant a stay of a decision that is subject to appeal under the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003.

The committee also considered amendments sought to be made to the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 to establish an affected persons committee involving injured workers and families of persons who have died as a result of work incidents and provide advice to the minister on the information and support for those who most need it. I take a leaf from the minister's book and acknowledge anyone listening to the debate in the public gallery tonight whose family members have been affected over the years or continue to be affected.

The re-emergence of black lung disease is a complete tragedy. Whilst we do not yet know the full work findings of the select committee, I do know that the members for Bundamba and Southern Downs, amongst others, continue to show a great degree of diligence in the work they are doing in this important area of public policy. I know from being on the committee that a total of eight submissions were received from six stakeholders including the Queensland Council of Unions, Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, the Queensland Resources Council, the Association of Self Insured Employers of Queensland, JBS Australia and the Queensland Law Society.

The re-emergence of black lung disease in our coalmining industry should absolutely be above politics. It is a fundamental issue about the health and safety of coal workers throughout the state. We on this side of the House are strong and united in our support for the coal industry—always have been and always will be—particularly in terms of energy security and also regional development and regional jobs. Whilst the economic imperative will always be there, at the end of the day something that does trump economics is the material safety and wellbeing of the Queenslanders that we are very proud in our 89 state seats to represent. I am very proud and pleased to be able to lend my support to this particular bill tonight.

Debate, on motion of Mr Minnikin, adjourned.

MOTION

Tully-Millstream Hydro-Electric Project



Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—KAP) (6.00 pm): I move—

That this House support the construction of the Tully-Millstream hydro-electric project.

This was a project that was approved in 1998 and would have provided up to 600 megawatts of power. It is disappointing that this scheme, which was approved and in the process of construction—from media reports there is a 1.5-kilometre tunnel under the mountain—and would have saved up to \$600 million in transmission costs from southern generators to North Queensland, will not go ahead. There has been a push for more baseload power or hydro power in North Queensland. Most of the water for the project will come from Millstream and Blunder creeks, which come from the Southern Tablelands. The project would generate enough power for 100,000 homes in the region. There is a 700-metre drop, which provides the energy to support the operation of the turbines.

Recently I raised with the Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply the construction of the Tully-Millstream hydro-electric scheme. Over the last six years I have raised this issue seven times, including to the previous minister for water and energy, Mark McArdle. In all that time I have been completely ignored. I do believe that this is a very good project. My father was employed at the Kareeya Hydro Power Station near Tully. I was born in Tully and grew up in an area called Cardstone, which housed the employees and the families that worked at the Kareeya Hydro Power Station. Sadly, although this project was approved and going ahead, it was knocked on the head because politicians never had the gumption to support it.

Over the last 35 years there have been no nation-building projects constructed in Queensland. There was the Burdekin Dam back in 1987. What we have now are nation sweeteners. The days of nation builders are over. It is time that we got back to what we traditionally used to do—that is, build power stations and dams and put infrastructure into place.

I have raised this issue seven times. I have worked with members of the Southern Tablelands Tully hydro-electric scheme lobby group and we have done a lot of media on this but it has been completely ignored. There is a project called the Southern Tablelands Development Scheme to which the federal government has provided \$750,000 through the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund. That is a scheme that irrigates up to 100,000 hectares of land but also, through a canal, sends the water back down through the Herbert River and provides about 200 megawatts of power.

I am very supportive of the Tully-Millstream hydro-electric project because it was approved. The foundation is there. There is a feasibility study already in place. It will generate 600 megawatts of power that will save this state up to \$600 million in transmitting power from the south up to the north. It has already started. I am asking the House to support this motion. I fully commend this motion to the House.



Hon. CW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (6.05 pm): I rise to speak against the motion moved by the member for Dalrymple. The Palaszczuk government, as members would be aware from the budget that I handed down in June, has made some real inroads into building infrastructure in this state. The member for Dalrymple talks about building dams and power stations. I think he needs to have a close look at some of the projects we have completed, not only in this budget but also in the last three years, where we have set tasks for our GOCs with energy and water to get on with the job and continue to build our state.

We are very clearly committed to a 50 per cent renewables target by 2030, which we believe will be achieved through a diverse mix of renewable generation and storage, including hydro-electric generation. We are committed to the development of North Queensland's energy assets for the benefit

of North Queensland. That is why we have committed in our Powering Queensland Plan a specific component which deals with North Queensland. That is progressing the Burdekin hydro project. That is also a commitment to a study into options for further developing Queensland's hydro-electric capacity.

However, whatever happens needs to stack up financially and environmentally. Unfortunately, investigations of the Tully-Millstream project show that it does not stack up either financially or environmentally. It falls into the same category as the LNP's confused solar energy policy. That is, of course, the extensive impractical development of a new coal-fired power station. Like the LNP's imaginary coal-fired power station, the Tully-Millstream project is going to cost billions of dollars to build and need high power prices to make it viable. We know the LNP's proposal around a HELE coal-fired power station would take seven years to build and would produce energy at about seven times the cost that it would to produce energy via renewables. It is simply not a bankable project.

In recent times the member for Hinchinbrook has decided to double down on this confusion. He was calling for a federally funded feasibility study for the Tully-Millstream project. Despite numerous previous feasibility studies all showing the project to be undesirable and unfeasible, the member for Hinchinbrook thinks the next one will just be the one that cracks it.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr PITT: A 2012 study into Tully-Millstream found it would cost between \$3 billion and \$4.2 billion to build and it would not be viable without power prices of more than \$200 per megawatt hour. He has not convinced his federal colleagues. Barnaby Joyce, Warren Entsch and the member for Hinchinbrook were meant to do a press conference last week. This was cancelled shortly after being alerted. This confused stand was there for all to see. The member for Hinchinbrook went onto ABC Far North.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr PITT: It was essentially a non-announcement announcement—a 'Claytons' announcement: the announcement you are having when you are not having an announcement. Everyone knew what the announcement was, but they said, 'We are going to reschedule it, we hope, for announcement later on.'

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr PITT: I was driving along in my car and I could hear Kier Shorey probing the member for Hinchinbrook and I said, 'Ask him a question! Ask him a question!' He said the reason Barnaby Joyce could not come was Fiona Nash's latest citizenship scandal. I was saying, 'Kier, please ask the question of the member for Hinchinbrook: why is it a different set of rules'—

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, Treasurer. I apologise for interrupting. Member for Hinchinbrook, I find your comments out of order.

Mr Cripps: You don't think he is addressing those comments towards me, Mr Speaker?


Mr SPEAKER: I think you are trying to talk over the top of the minister.

Mr Cripps: He mentioned me half a dozen times.

Mr SPEAKER: You are a big boy. We will move on. You understand the message, member for Hinchinbrook.

Mr PITT: I was really rhetorically asking the question, 'Why is Senator Canavan different from Fiona Nash or Barnaby Joyce?' when Kier Shorey asked why there was a different stance. The member for Hinchinbrook said that it was right for the Deputy Prime Minister and Senator Nash to stay in cabinet while Matt Canavan had to resign because—wait for it—Senator Canavan held Italian citizenship while Barnaby Joyce and Senator Nash respectively held New Zealand and British citizenship. Apparently, whether you remain in cabinet is dependent on what country you may or may not have dual citizenship of, which became very confusing.

We know that the Tully-Millstream hydro-electric scheme was proposed 20 years ago. We know that for many reasons it was never progressed, mainly because of both economic and particularly environmental concerns with the proposed flooding of over 1,000 'hectares', for the notice of the member for Burleigh, of a World Heritage area. Hydro-electric generation is something that our government supports, but we have already announced what we are looking to do on the Burdekin Falls Dam. We believe that the Powering North Queensland Plan is a considerable component of where we need to go with our future energy mix. We appreciate the sentiment behind tonight's motion, but we do not support it and we do not support yet another feasibility study into the Tully-Millstream proposal. I urge all members of the House to not support the motion.

 **Mr DICKSON** (Buderim—PHON) (6.11 pm): I fully support the motion put forward by Katter's Australian Party that the House support the construction of the Tully-Millstream hydro plant. This is a green energy project, so I really do not understand why the Labor Party cannot support it, as green energy is what they are all about. Throughout the budget I heard them talk about 50 per cent renewables, which is an admirable target. However, I think they want to go after solar and wind energy, which do not work well when the sun is not shining and the wind is not blowing, which is half the time. They are not that viable, but a project such as this one is extremely viable and there are many reasons for it.

The project had been in the pipeline for a number of years, but it was knocked over by previous Labor governments. They said they did not want to see projects such as this that would deliver base load energy. I know that the LNP is also in favour of building base load coal-fired power stations, which the Greens and the ALP are absolutely opposed to. We know that. They are in favour of exporting coal all over the world to sell to other countries that burn fossil fuels, but they will not allow Queenslanders to have cheap reliable energy to bring businesses to our state so that we can prosper and create many jobs. That is what the Tully-Millstream project is all about.


Those opposite get very upset when you start to speak common sense and logic. That is when they start to rant and rave. A moment ago the Treasurer talked about dual citizens. If he wants to talk about that, he should talk to Bill Shorten whose dad is a pom, but he does not want to declare that to the rest of world. We will wait to see what happens there.

Let us talk about what we could do with \$5.4 billion. We know, going back a few years, that Peter Beattie knew how to burn \$10 billion. We got a pipeline that was really well used. The money that will go towards the Cross River Rail project, which is not needed until 2036, could be utilised in other ways. The Labor Party talks about ideas and plans and things that they want to do, but we never hear about how they will pay for them. These are dreams, ambitions and goals that never come to reality. I am sure that we will have another study to find out how that will happen, despite the first 150 studies that they have already had. This is real money. Both sides of politics voted for it, so I know that the \$5.4 billion has to be there. Of that \$5.4 billion, why not use \$310 million for a project such as this one? Both major parties have said that the money is available.

We know that the member for South Brisbane needs \$5.4 billion spent in her electorate to get re-elected, but I think the Greens will get elected there, which will be a great outcome for Queensland. We might get a hydro-electric plant that can deliver real green energy and base load power for the 100,000 people who need it to turn on the lights at night. I have a good idea for the Labor Party: they could save up a whole lot of money and post candles to everyone in Queensland, so that they can see at night and keep warm in the winter. That would be a great initiative by the Labor Party, but they probably will not do that either. They want people to freeze to death and they want older people to fall over in the dark because they cannot see. That is not what we are about. We want to see energy created through projects such as this one.

There are some other things that we could do with that \$5.4 billion. We could take water to Townsville, which is also in desperate need of water. We could duplicate the north coast railway line. We could put some money into that. We could raise the wall of the Borumba Dam and drought proof South-East Queensland. That is another weird idea. People on this side of the room actually believe in building infrastructure; those on the other side of the room believe in talking about weird stuff that I have never been able to understand. When they do spend money, it is on dams that do not have treatment stations next to them to treat the water, such as the Wyaralong Dam, which is still sitting there. While it makes a great rowing pond, really it was just a good way to burn \$300 million.

Labor waste money, they tax people and they do not know what to do with resources when they get a hold of them. This is a very sensible project to deliver good clean energy. If the Labor Party does not want to support clean green energy for the people of Queensland, I really do not know what they want to support. They continue to let down the people of Queensland. Let us talk about that \$5.4 billion. Let us spend it on something reasonable. Let us put it towards the Tully-Millstream hydro project, which is a great project. I am pleased that the Katter's Australian Party has brought it to the table. I hope that the LNP backs this motion. This is a great motion. Let us move forward on clean green energy. We will see what the Labor Party does.

 **Mr CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (6.16 pm): I rise to oppose the motion. We all know that North Queensland is well suited to large-scale renewable energy projects and we are determined to unlock that potential to deliver secure, affordable, sustainable electricity to the people of Queensland. However, with so much potential available, we simply do not need to resort to projects such as the Tully-Millstream project, which do not stack up financially or environmentally.

A few years ago Stanwell brushed the cobwebs off that shelved project, but immediately reshelved it when it found that the project would destroy up to 1,000 hectares of World Heritage listed rainforest, require an investment of billions of dollars and need to be supported by unacceptably high electricity prices. The significant environmental impacts this project would involve do not seem to be a problem for the member for Hinchinbrook, and I note his recent media calls. Perhaps that is not surprising, considering the LNP's North Queensland obsession with building an expensive out-of-date coal-fired power station that would lock in high emissions and is the most costly form of new generation to build.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to unlocking the cheapest form of generation to build renewable generation in North Queensland. We are committed to transitioning to a clean energy future and to the jobs and economic prosperity associated with those projects. Our commitment to a target of 50 per cent renewable energy by 2030 has already unlocked a renewable energy boom across the state, particularly in regional Queensland with 20 renewable energy projects either committed or currently under construction, bringing with them over 2,700 jobs. However, we are not stopping there. We are committed to unlocking the hydrogeneration potential that exists across the state with a study to access the options to deploy new hydro. That study will identify hydro options that further our aim of an affordable, secure and sustainable supply of electricity.

Unfortunately, the Tully-Millstream project is very unlikely to make the cut. It has been shelved on multiple occasions, because it does not stack up. That will not change no matter how many times the member for Hinchinbrook asks or how much money his kiwi mate chips in, but other sites will. A recent ANU study found around 5,000 sites with potential for pumped hydro, many of them in Queensland. We have already committed funds to the upgrade of the Burdekin Dam and, if the feasibility stacks up, also to the Burdekin hydro project that will unleash the hydro-electric potential of our state's largest dam.


Federal policy uncertainty undermined the Burdekin hydro project in the past, but the Palaszczuk government is determined to deliver the economic and environmental benefits of the project to North Queensland. That is why this government has decided to reinvest \$100 million in dividends from Stanwell Corporation to enable building of the hydropower station.

Electricity generated from the hydropower station would deliver up to 50 megawatts of renewable energy to the grid, creating 200 jobs during construction and generating electricity to power 30,000 homes. We have also invested in the development of strategic transmission infrastructure in Northern Queensland to support a clean energy hub which will unleash the north's diverse renewable energy assets, including solar, wind and both pumped hydro and run-of-the-river hydro.

We expect the clean energy hub to link around 2,000 megawatts of renewable energy projects, including the Kidston hydro project, to support thousands of jobs and strengthen and diversify the north's energy supply. Powerlink kickstarted this project just last week with the release of an expression of interest process which will provide market intelligence about the financially viable projects which could be linked to this infrastructure to provide power for North Queensland.

We have not stopped there. Last week we also kicked off our Renewables 400 reverse auction which will support a diverse mix of large scale renewable energy generation and storage projects. This again has the potential to support viable hydro projects.

With all these actions underway to tap the renewable energy potential of the north, we just do not need to commit to an expensive, damaging, shelved project which will destroy World Heritage Listed rainforest and require the commitment of billions of dollars in public funds. The Palaszczuk government will unleash the hydro potential of North Queensland but not with the Tully-Millstream project.

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (6.21 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate of the motion moved by the member for Dalrymple. I think the debate cuts to the heart of the tension in politics between the environmental movement and public good. I am very proud of the environmental credentials of the many people who live in the north who are affected by the decisions of this government. Here is one project that has fallen victim to the decisions of this government.

Many would say that this is the low-hanging fruit in terms of renewable energy. We built the Snowy Mountains scheme and it had some real environmental impacts. It impacted some lovely countryside, but resulted in great public benefit. I am sure we could have trotted out a lot of feasibility studies back then. If the environmental movement existed then it would have said that the scheme would never make money.

In this case, the fundamentals are good. The proposal was to build a 600 megawatt power station. This is good clean energy that people would benefit from. I would much prefer to see this sort of infrastructure built in the north than more social infrastructure like football stadiums. To me, social infrastructure is subordinate to hard infrastructure that builds jobs and builds sustainable industries in the north. We desperately need sustainable industry.

Most people would be aware that the bulk of the power generated for the north suffers transmission losses coming from Gladstone. I think most people in the House would acknowledge that we need baseload power established north of the Tropic of Capricorn. Here is the prime opportunity to do that. The feasibility study was done in 1988. I was playing under-12s Rugby League in North Queensland at the time. I was a young fellow then—a great vintage back then.


Mr Costigan interjected.

Mr KATTER: I played with Paul Bowman at that time. The point I make is that that was a long time ago. We have had a lot of changes in the political spectrum since then. There has been a lot of growth in the green movement. Unfortunately, this project has fallen victim to that. I think the people of North Queensland have fallen victim to them.

We had a terrific opportunity to provide clean green power from this source. Yes, there is an environmental impact. Yes, I am sure some of the Atherton antechinus, a lovely looking marsupial, will be impacted. That is the way of the world. When we need industry there will be some impact. We have to weigh up the impact versus the benefits. I think everyone would agree that having a magnificent clean green power generator like this hooked into the north where we need it would be wonderful. It would result in energy prices reducing for industry. I think the fact that the feasibility studies have already been done and have been sitting there for that long and it has not been built speaks poorly of us as a state.

I make the distinction between the environmental political movement and environmentalists. I believe a lot of environmentalists out there have a good case to prosecute, but there are a lot of people who do it disingenuously and are more about the politics of it rather than the outcomes. I think we need a robust debate weighing up the costs versus the benefits. I think the pendulum has swung too far in favour of the environmental movement and that has hamstrung all sorts of developments in the north. I think we are a bit of a punching bag on that front because it does not affect as many voters up there. It is easy to stop development up there. We are paying the price for that in terms of the energy prices we pay and the transmission losses from our existing generators.

I thank the member for Dalrymple for bringing this issue forward. I understand he has a long attachment to that area. I think his father worked at the Kareeya plant in his day. It is certainly something that he has mentioned to me before. It is very close to his heart. I hope we have the maturity as a government to acknowledge that there would be some impacts on the environment but the benefits to industry from having clean green energy from a magnificent project like this would last for years to come in North Queensland.

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (6.26 pm): I rise to oppose the motion moved by the member for Dalrymple. In the process I would like to congratulate him for moving it. The member for Hinchinbrook has been championing this particularly bad idea in his local press, but he has not spoken about it here in the parliament. He talks a good game up north, but when he gets down to the big smoke there is not a whisper. In fact, he has not even spoken about it tonight. The member for Dalrymple, to his credit, has spoken about this project seven times plus he moved this motion tonight.

Having said that, this has been a bad idea for two decades, and it still is. The Tully-Millstream hydro-electric scheme was first proposed more than 20 years ago, but it has never progressed because it just does not stack up—not economically and not environmentally. Not that we would expect that to stand in the way of the LNP holding a press conference. No, it took the questionable citizenship of their federal Nationals leader to stand in the way of their press conference.

The member for Hinchinbrook and Barnaby Joyce were all lined up to announce this old, bad idea again, but they had to cancel it because Barnaby discovered he was a Kiwi. While Barnaby is busy practising the haka, I will fill those opposite in on why this is such a bad idea. The last study undertaken on this project in 2012 concluded that it could cost between \$3 billion and \$4.2 billion. To make it viable, those opposite would need to charge more than \$200 per megawatt hour. That is compared to an average wholesale price of \$76 so far this financial year.

We know that the LNP like to increase power prices, but the increases that would be needed for this project are extreme even for them. This project would force the closure of two existing hydro projects because they would no longer have access to water. It would affect water flows in sections of the upper and lower Tully River, with huge environmental impacts. It would even have impacts on the local tourism industry and the white water rafting that happens there.

The Palaszczuk government does support hydro-electric generation where it stacks up. Under our Powering North Queensland Plan, we are undertaking a statewide hydro study to find appropriate locations for potential new hydro projects. We are taking advantage of existing assets like the Burdekin Dam and the Kidston hydro project—two projects those opposite are surprisingly quiet about—but those projects do not require us to sacrifice a World Heritage area.

Not content to just trash our most important World Heritage area—the Great Barrier Reef—when they were in government, the LNP now want to demolish our second most important World Heritage area. They are seriously demanding that we flood over 1,000 hectares of the Wet Tropics World Heritage area. They are talking about flooding what has been deemed by the World Heritage Committee to be the second most irreplaceable World Heritage area in the world. You would think that they would be embarrassed by the way the World Heritage Committee spoke about their government's lack of action on the reef. If it were left up to them, we would be a laughing stock again for flooding the Wet Tropics.

The Wet Tropics is the world's most ancient tropical rainforest. It is over 100 million years old. It contains 50 per cent of Australia's bird species, 65 per cent of Australia's fern species, 60 per cent of Australia's butterflies and 45 per cent of Australia's vertebrate animals.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. You have had a pretty good go, member for Hinchinbrook. I know you are keen to talk, but I do not think there will be a time allocation for you.

Mr Cripps: There won't be.

Mr SPEAKER: No, I don't think there will be.

Mr Cripps: I know that for sure. I don't have to think about it, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: All right. I will let the minister finish without too much interjection and we will have a vote.

Dr MILES: The Wet Tropics really are that special. The Wet Tropics is an Indigenous cultural landscape which has been managed by the Rainforest Aboriginal people for thousands of years. To those people, their environment provides everything—spirituality, identity, shelter, food and medicine—and those opposite would be happy to flood it without any consultation.

The habitat that would be inundated also includes significant stands of wet tall eucalypt forest. Now I have called the member for Hinchinbrook the LNP's environmental vandal-in-chief before, but this one is extreme even for him. I have a better idea. Why doesn't he get behind the 16 renewable energy projects in his turf that will generate 720 megawatts without flooding the habitat of one single species?

Mr Cripps interjected.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Hinchinbrook, I have been very tolerant of everyone during this session in recognition of our earlier meeting this afternoon.

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

AYES, 42:

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

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

PHON, 1—Dickson.

NOES, 41:

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

INDEPENDENT, 1—Gordon.

Pairs: Furner, Crandon; Power, Simpson.

Resolved in the affirmative.


Sitting suspended from 6.37 pm to 7.45 pm.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND REHABILITATION (COAL WORKERS' PNEUMOCONIOSIS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 2412, on motion of Ms Grace—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (7.45 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. I thank the minister, the committee and all of the submitters for the hard work they have done in relation to this bill. One of the key issues considered by the select committee that I was a part of was that CWP presents several challenges that means existing workers compensation is not well suited to supporting those workers that are affected by CWP.

CWP is a progressive disease classified on a scale of severity based on the extent of damage to lung alveoli. This creates some challenges in terms of workers compensation perhaps best demonstrated by an example. Take a 45-year-old worker diagnosed with simple CWP. If this worker is removed from exposure to dust, they will be unlikely at any point in their life to have any further impacts of CWP, nor will they be likely to progress to more serious forms of CWP.

What does this mean for the worker? They are still fit for work, but they cannot do the work that they are trained for and are well compensated for, and often it is the only work that is available to them where they are. They are not actually physically injured in that they cannot work but they have a serious condition which means they cannot work any longer in the environment that they are in. They have very limited options to find new jobs that require their skills or provide the same level of compensation in the locations where they live and work, and this presents a challenge.

It was an issue that the select committee grappled with, and I know many members of the committee discussed it. These workers are technically fit for work in a non-dusty environment but it is clear they have been adversely affected by their employment. This bill addresses this issue by providing a sliding scale of compensation for workers affected by CWP based on where they fall on the CWP classification scale. That means there is support for workers affected to shift away from dusty workplaces. One of the things we heard during the committee hearings was that some workers in overseas jurisdictions would be diagnosed with simple CWP and would continue to take the risk of working in a dusty environment. We have to make sure we avoid any worker feeling like that is the option for them, because it is a catastrophic option. Once you know you have simple CWP, the best thing is to get out of the dust and you will have no more problems.

The bill also recognises the progressive nature of the disease—that is, that the person's condition can deteriorate. This creates another problem in that compensation is often there to deal with a specific injury or debilitation at a specific point in time. This bill has solved that problem and allows people to make additional claims for compensation if and when their disease progresses. The select committee was quite concerned for the welfare of retired coal workers. Given the failings and problems identified in the coal workers health scheme, there was a real concern that this group of workers—the people who had moved out of the industry—would not seek the medical assessment they would need to determine if they were affected by CWP.


I am extremely pleased with the measures in this bill that ensure this group of workers will have access to the assessment that they require. I cannot stress how important this assessment is. While a diagnosis of CWP is extremely concerning, if it is made early with the right treatment and management people with CWP can slow the progression of the disease and lead good quality lives.

I have not nursed anybody with CWP, but I have had a fair bit of experience with people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, COPD. It is another progressive lung disease and it is managed in a very similar manner to CWP. Regular GP visits, annual flu shots, maintaining your activity levels, maintaining a good diet and participating in respiratory rehabilitation programs will all help to minimise or slow the progression of CWP. I share this because I want people affected by this disease to know that there is hope, that there are treatment options available and that there is more research going on all the time. I want to thank all of those people with CWP and their families who gave evidence to the select committee.

Mr Costigan: Hear, hear!

Mr KELLY: I take that interjection. At times it was very difficult for those people involved due to their level of ill health and also the emotional impacts. It was really sad and extremely hard to listen to workers and their families who were not diagnosed early. I am sure they have the support of every member of this House as they deal with this very difficult disease.

As the select committee's report pointed out, our systems failed the workers in the coal industry and this has had devastating impacts on them and their families. I urge the government to fully implement the findings of the select committee. The recommendations do point a way towards ensuring that more workers will not have to go through what these workers affected by CWP are going through. While it is great to have the compensation sorted out, our real goal and our enduring and fundamental goal should be to ensure that no worker is ever diagnosed with CWP again. The recommendations in the report lay out a way for that to occur, and I urge the government to implement those fully. With those few remarks on that part of the bill I particularly wanted to speak to, I commend this bill to the House.

 **Hon. L SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (7.52 pm): In commencing my contribution, I acknowledge the work of the honourable member for Greenslopes in the time that he was on the select committee. He did great work in his time on the committee and he brought a level of professionalism and expertise that was very much appreciated.

It is fair to say that being involved in a parliamentary committee—whether it is a policy committee or a select committee—is sometimes not the rewarding experience we would like it to be. That is their nature. Sometimes that is due to the subject matter that is being investigated. In other circumstances, it is due to the overly hyper-partisan approach of those people who are a part of the committee. In this particular case, those who are currently on the committee and those who have previously served on the committee and have moved on to other roles have approached their obligations in an extremely compassionate, investigative and dedicated way. It has been very bipartisan, as we would expect it to be.

This is a case of a catastrophic failing of the system and it does not necessarily lay with one particular government over another. It is something that accumulated over a long period of time going back over 30 years to the point where it was decided for some unknown and really bizarre reason that black lung, or coal workers' pneumoconiosis, no longer existed. Therefore, if it no longer existed, it was not properly looked for and then when it was seen it was denied that it was coal workers' pneumoconiosis, or black lung. The whole system became so absolutely deskilled—from the clinicians who should have been assisting to those involved at a departmental level—that everyone let everyone else down. That is basically what happened with regard to this. It was a train wreck of administrative failings, but I think you can be very proud, Mr Deputy Speaker Elmes, that we have had a bipartisan approach to addressing this.

I would like to comment on and reinforce what the honourable member for Greenslopes said in relation to the 68 recommendations which were made by the select committee. Those recommendations were made in a bipartisan way through much due deliberation and consideration. We knew far more at the end of our investigations than we did at the start, and we came to the conclusion that they were essential to making sure that we protected coal workers and their interests in the future as well as this critically important part of the Queensland economy in the future. If anyone believes that coal has had its day, they need to look at the story in the *Courier-Mail* at the moment which is indicating that new job ads in the coal sector and the mining sector in particular are leading a resurgence in jobs in this state. In my view, there is no real post mining boom. There will be ups and downs, but this is a critically important part of our economy and we should view it as such. It is an important part of our economy and we need to make sure that we have the structures in place to protect the interests of our mine workers and guarantee their health and safety.

It is bizarre how this has happened, and I will go back to the failings. In 2004, a coal worker presented to a Queensland Health facility and was diagnosed with black lung disease. That was 13 years ago, but it was not a notifiable disease so no-one else knew. In 2006, I understand that same coal worker and one other were granted their WorkCover compensation claim in Queensland but no alarm bells whatsoever actually rang about that. It was not until nine years later that it was officially and formally brought to the attention of the minister and the government as a consequence of a whole range of serendipitous circumstances.

If we actually had structures in place which were not about denying the existence of coal workers' pneumoconiosis and if we had the clinical competence which was necessary and essential, then this would have been detected and dealt with much earlier. There could have then been an administrative structure within the coal workers health scheme which would have been about properly understanding what they were looking at, rather than just filing the documents. If that had happened, we may have

been ahead of the curve 11 or 12 years ago. It really does behove any common-sense understanding how on the one hand we had the WorkCover scheme in Queensland paying out for confirmed cases of coal workers' pneumoconiosis in 2006 but on the other hand we did not connect the dots.


I would like to indicate to the minister that, whilst we may have had a bit of a rocky understanding with her departmental officials to start with—and I think that was a little bit to do with the fact that we were all feeling our way and the desire to do something to fully look after those workers and the administrative compassion that was necessary was disconnected for some period of time—it is fair to say that, as we worked with her departmental officials, that was quite quickly corrected. Indeed, whilst we have been somewhat critical of the approach of departmental officers from a different department, it is fair to say that the departmental officers under this minister's jurisdiction have worked very, very diligently. They have ensured that what needed to be done—in terms of covering those workers where we have an identified deficiency in the system and considering our changing circumstances—has been addressed quite quickly and we have that legislation in the parliament. When the next tranche of legislation is ultimately introduced into this parliament by the chair of the select committee, I hope that will have the same degree of empathy and support right across the political divide because that is a significant piece of the puzzle. Providing WorkCover support is very, very important, but we have to make sure we do not get to that stage. We would prefer not to be at that stage.

Mr Harper interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: The point is that we are not seeing any resistance from the companies to look after workers in a WorkCover sense. It is an issue then as to whether we have the appropriate regulatory environment to deal with those sorts of things, and that will be the subject of other legislation that will come. If a company, a worker, a worker's representative or a minister has been told that CWP no longer exists, how do they go about dealing with this? Even when the workers have been certified as fit to return to work and there has been a diagnosis of black lung amongst them—and we saw cases of that—there is no requirement to inform the coal company. There has been monumental failure all the way through. Yes, we have to make sure that everything is necessarily fixed from departmental culture to culture within the industry. That is what this is all about.

As the honourable member for Greenslopes said, there were deficiencies in the system and there were concerns raised with us by coal workers themselves and their representatives. They wondered what would happen if someone is diagnosed with simple CWP—and I do not really like that term but that is it—and they are taken out of that environment and it may not then progress. That is the reality of it. However, then they would be taken away from the opportunity to earn a higher income. This legislation actually considers all of that. It also considers that there can be progression over a period of time. I think it is very noteworthy and very commendable that we put in place something that recognises that and can support a worker with changing circumstances further down the track. That gives them the comfort and the peace of mind that they need for their own future and also that of their family. That is essential and very important.

The other thing to consider is retired coal workers. Those who have worked in the industry for more than six months will now have the opportunity to have addressed any concerns they have with regard to coaldust lung disease. That will provide that opportunity for coal workers' pneumoconiosis, silicosis—which in many ways is probably just as bad or, if not, even worse because of the toxicity and the carcinogenic nature of crystalline airborne silica. Many things are being done here to properly address this issue and I think that we should recognise that. However, we also need to change our mindset. There are things that we can do to assist workers who do suffer from CWP such as pulmonary rehabilitation, and that is probably not known to many coal workers and their families in Queensland. That is the essential next stage after we get that broader legislative framework in place which is needed.

 **Mr CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (8.01 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Along with the speaker before me, I have been a representative of the CWP Select Committee from the beginning. All my colleagues, including the member for Greenslopes, and I have seen and heard firsthand the stories of coalminers, former coalminers, family members and current miners. We have heard the stories of their journey from one day being a healthy worker and the next day being told that they have CWP, or black lung.


I have been relatively impressed with the Office of Industrial Relations, which followed this process closely. They were there on day one of our hearings and heard some remarkable evidence that the member for Southern Downs covered in respect of the early notifications well before other departments were aware of it. They also followed us to a number of hearings across Queensland. I remember having a number of conversations with departmental reps. It was good to see that the Office

of Industrial Relations was involved in this process along the line. Many times they were just sitting quietly in the background taking notes but all the time they were soaking up the same evidence and emotion that we were also seeing and feeling. I think that was very important. Sometimes being there and seeing the tears and hearing the evidence from workers, from wives and from family members about the impacts on them is far more important than just reading *Hansard*.

While the select committee was still pulling apart CWP piece by piece and trying to determine where it all went wrong, I was pleased to see that the Office of Industrial Relations had already started working on new legislation, which we are obviously debating tonight, to fix the gap that was evident with current and former coalminers to access their medical examinations, payments for medical examinations, disease progression implications in later life, the ability to reopen their workers compensation claims and a new lump sum payment on a graduated scale using ILO guidelines for miners who have a CWP diagnosis and do not have any permanent impairment.

As I mentioned before, the CWP Select Committee felt the raw emotion from workers and families. Whilst this House is yet to determine the outcomes from the select committee, it is good to see that the Office of Industrial Relations and the Minister for Industrial Relations have taken the lead. They have established the community reference groups, consulted with our select committee and brought us up to speed with this in the early stages of the bill preparation. They have been following this process from the beginning. It is important that the decision is made to act early in the best interests of our coalminers, many of whom are awaiting news of X-rays and assessments, some of whom are yet to be X-rayed and assessed and, unfortunately, some of whom have CWP but do not know it yet. I think it is important we do this tonight for them.

In closing, I want to make reference to one thing—and the minister mentioned it earlier in his second reading speech—which is establishing a B reader program. I want to make it very clear that overwhelming evidence was presented to the select committee about a B reader program and making sure that it is robust, that it is in line with Dr Bob Cohen's team and the ILO standards and that it is in no way, shape or form watered down. There have been statements from different people throughout the process that, yes, we have B readers here and we have them there. However, we know that is certainly not the case. Any cheap, easy or half-attempt at a fix on this is doomed to fail. If they are not absolutely, categorically clear B readers to Bob Cohen's standard, we will end up going down the same road we have been on for the past 20 or so years. With that, I congratulate the department. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (8.06 pm): I follow on from my colleague the member for Barron River with what he just said about the importance of having well credentialed B readers here that Dr Bob Cohen can be proud of—that we can all be proud of—and have confidence in. That is what the miners to whom I speak across my electorate and across Central and North Queensland want: they want confidence in the system. I echo the sentiments of my colleagues on the select committee of which I am proud to be a member. I have served on the Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis Select Committee from the get-go. One of the things I want to touch on is the wonderful bipartisanship that has been displayed from the first time we got together to try to make the system better.

The Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 will fix those gaps in the system in relation to WorkCover. What we want is fewer WorkCover claims; we do not want to see more.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr COSTIGAN: I take the interjection from my colleague the member for Southern Downs and the deputy chair of our committee. On a night like tonight I reflect on one constituent in particular in Chris Byron, who fronted the public hearing. I see the member for Bundamba, our committee chair, nodding her head. I will always remember the day I turned up in my home town to hear Chris Byron's story. To say that anyone who was at the Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre that day in November last year was moved by his testimony and his evidence is an understatement. Chris is a constituent and he is battling away. Every day is a different day and it is not easy at all. We have to reflect on where our state would be without the workers. I know it is very dear to the heart of the member for Bundamba, because it is in the blood. I acknowledge the member for Mirani and his contribution to the industry. I am proud that my sister works in the industry as well as my brother-in-law. My uncle worked in the industry for many years in the northern part of the Bowen Basin in Collinsville, one of the many towns that our select committee visited during our information gathering.

It has been an evolving journey, because initially we suspected it was all about underground coalminers and of course it unravelled, didn't it, Mr Deputy Speaker, to include above-ground miners and concerns about railway workers and port workers, and on it goes. Almost 70 recommendations

have been handed down, which I am sure those who have been on the committee—either past or present—are proud of to try and make the system better. One of those is the establishment of the Mine Safety And Health Authority in the city that I represent. I know that the member for Mackay was also pleased to see that recommendation come through, and again that underlines the great bipartisanship that the community has seen. Miners and their families, union officials and mining executives—everyone has been quite amazed at how we have been able to sift through the evidence to try to make the system better after the catastrophic failure that the member for Southern Downs referred to a few minutes ago. What we are doing here tonight in relation to WorkCover and workers compensation is not going to send the state broke. We all have the explanatory notes, which state—

There will be minimal costs to Government associated with the amendments to the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003.

...


There are minimal costs to Government associated with establishing the Persons Affected by Work Related Fatalities and Serious Incidents Consultative Committee.

...

There are minimal costs to Government associated with amendments to improve the electrical licensing framework which will be met within existing resources of the department.

What we are doing here will give people heart and encouragement. There is no doubt that people have been following the endeavours of the select committee on coal workers' pneumoconiosis very closely, particularly people who are associated with the coalmining industry. When we talk about the resources industry, from memory and going off the top of my head, I think it is worth something like \$60 billion to the Queensland economy, and about 60 per cent of that is derived from what we call black gold. We have seen the development of Queensland on the back of the coal industry, particularly in the Bowen Basin—which is across the hill in my part of the world—with the establishment of towns like Moranbah in 1971, Dysart in 1973 and Glenden in 1983 and the development of our coal ports such as Hay Point in the early 1970s. Then, of course, there was the addition of the Dalrymple Bay coal-loading facility in the mid-1980s. In fact, I used to live just across the road from the coal port store. What a great story it is, and it would not have been possible without the workers: those who go down into a subterranean environment in places like Moura, which most people in this place would remember sadly for what happened in the past.

As I said a moment ago about our coalminers, those who work in the ports and across the rail network—whether it is the Newlands system, the Goonyella system or whatever system—I hope that they take some heart out of what is happening here in the parliament. Amid all the argy-bargy that happens in this place, tonight we are doing something good. All of us, when we go home tonight, will say 'That was a good thing we did.' I am not sure if Chris Byron is watching this tonight. Maybe he will see it later on, but if Chris is watching I hope he nods to say to those who have been, and still are, involved in this process, 'Keep going, because more needs to be done.' Tonight is certainly a step in the right direction.

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (8.14 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. I would like to acknowledge Anne Baker, the Mayor of the Isaac Regional Council who is here tonight as the guest of my good friend the member for Mirani. Thank you for coming in, Anne. Anne's community is in the heart of the Bowen Basin.

When workers go to work they deserve to come home safely and as healthy as when they set out. When an employer damages the health of their workers, they need to be held accountable and workers need to have support and recourse. The Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003 established the Queensland workers compensation scheme, which provides benefits for workers who sustain an injury in their employment and dependants if a worker's injury results in the worker's death. It also encourages employers to improve health and safety performance.

The amendments to this bill also support electrical workers by amending the Electrical Safety Act to improve the rigour of the electrical licensing framework in the interests of protecting workers and public safety.

As we all know, CWP is a lung disease which is contracted through workplace exposure to coaldust over a period of time. CWP is considered a latent onset injury under the workers compensation scheme. There is an unknown number of coalminers—both current and those who have retired from the industry—living with CWP whose CWP has not yet manifested itself to the point where they have sought a diagnosis.


My electorate of Mackay is a mining service centre. It is also a centre where miners on drive-in drive-out rosters live. To the north is the well-established mining town of Collinsville and to the west the mining towns of the Bowen Basin. There are many families in my community and the surrounding communities who have been mining families for generations. You could say that they have mining in their blood, so we should not be standing here tonight talking about having mining in their lungs. During the mining boom—as it was called—many tradies who lived in Mackay went out to the mines. These were family men and women.

The parliamentary select committee has raised concerns regarding how the workers compensation scheme operates in relation to CWP. The committee's stakeholder reference group included representatives of employers, unions, the legal profession, insurers and departments relating to mining. The recommendations of the committee are important for the thousands of Queenslanders who have left the industry and will provide for interim medical examinations of former coal workers who are concerned that they have CWP and who have left the industry or retired prior to January 2017; ensure that workers with simple CWP who experience disease progression can apply to reopen their claim to access further benefits under the workers compensation scheme; provide extra rehabilitation support to assist workers back into suitable alternative employment; and streamline workers compensation arrangements so they properly align with the Coal Mine Workers' Health Scheme.

Many coalminers are trained and experienced in the industrial nature of the mining industry. They have tickets and training which allow them to work in other industrialised workplaces, but some of those other industrialised workplaces also have high dust levels which will add to their injury, so it is very important that these workers are fully supported so that their earning capacity does not diminish and they have a chance to reshape their lives after a diagnosis of CWP.

Central Queensland is very decentralised and has a number of small towns. It is also a beautiful part of the world in which to live, so when workers come to work in the Bowen Basin some of them choose to stay but our small towns do not always have the medical expertise needed to manage this complex disease. It is proposed by this bill to clarify that all necessary and reasonable travel costs incurred to attend medical examinations are not borne by the coal worker. The intention is that the insurer should pay for the reasonable travel expenses for former coal workers to attend medical examinations consistent with their existing obligations under the act to pay for reasonable travel expenses related to obtaining medical treatment, undertaking rehabilitation, attending the Medical Assessment Tribunal or undertaking an examination.

This bill also introduces new lump sum compensation for any worker with CWP, including where a worker does not have any permanent impairment. This bill also makes it clear that the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission does not have the power to grant a stay of decision subject to the outcome of an appeal under the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act. Any serious injury or death must be avoided. The Central Queensland community has lost two young men in electrical accidents on work sites—in 2012 Jason Garrels, who was only 20 years old, and in 2015 William Peppin, a 26-year-old. These young men should be with their families today. This bill will seek to protect workers by giving effect to the Coroner's recommendations regarding the electrical safety regulator having the power to immediately suspend any electrical worker's licence if they are responsible for electrical work that has caused death or grievous bodily harm or they have otherwise carried out electrical work that poses an imminent or serious risk of safety to any person. This bill is about worker safety and ongoing support after an injury. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (8.22 pm): I rise to speak on this very important bill, Mr Deputy Speaker Elmes, and also congratulate you on your admirable chaperoning of the debate this evening, allowing appropriate latitude to the speaker who has the call yet controlling the interference and interjection where inappropriate. Very well done, Mr Deputy Speaker. It is a very important bill and it seeks to address a catastrophic failure of regulatory and health surveillance systems in identifying a terrible preventable disease we thought was eradicated—coal workers' pneumoconiosis, CWP, or more colloquially black lung disease. CWP is a debilitating latent onset injury contracted through workplace exposure to coaldust over a period of time. This bill will seek to address this by introducing measures to address medical examination requirements as well as further lump sum payment arrangements.

This is a fundamental health and safety issue which should be above politics, with the re-emergence of black lung in our coalmining industry affecting hardworking Queensland workers and their families. I am very pleased to hear the bipartisan support around the House tonight and I am sure there will be an appropriate outcome with this bill coming into legislation very shortly. That is a very important part of the job we do—that is, we come together on probably about 90 per cent of the better legislation that comes into this House. These are workers and their families whom we must recognise

as being a vital part of the economic growth we experienced in years past when it was Queensland miners who provided the jobs that industry needed to grow Queensland into the wonderful state we live in today.

In my mind there should be no doubt that, when safety issues come into mind, individual workers should not suffer or be compromised, particularly so a minister's dignity may not suffer. I refer of course to the slap-in-the-face comments made by the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines—comments which caused even the militant Labor supporting Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, the CFMEU, to call into question the actions of this slipshod Palaszczuk Labor government in relation to addressing the needs of this identified debilitating disease and particularly the training wheels Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. The CFMEU clearly stated—

Black lung victims ... have no time for a Minister to prevaricate and delay just because his department is nervous about their negligence.

Unfortunately, this was a minister that even the stalwarts of Labor called for to be sacked following his insensitive and head-in-the-sand comments questioning the scientific evidence given in the Queensland inquiry into black lung disease. At this point in time I want to make mention of the excellent work that the members for Bundamba and Southern Downs have done on their committee, which has done a lot of investigative work and supported all aspects of resolving the issues which arise out of this quite clear and dangerous neglect in terms of the avoidance, if you like, of appropriate measures of safety considering that black lung disease was a disease of yesterday. It is not—that has been identified—and it is very pleasing that this House is coming together tonight to address those issues.

At the time of the re-emergence of coal workers' pneumoconiosis, the LNP in August 2016 led the way and called for the establishment of a royal commission or commission of inquiry into the re-emergence of coal workers' pneumoconiosis. Unfortunately, that was a call that was summarily rejected by the Palaszczuk government which instead took another month to establish a parliamentary select committee. It was very successful in the end. The Finance and Administration Committee was very supportive and the chair, the member for Sunnybank, did a great job in terms of giving everybody the opportunity to have their say on this very important issue.

At the end of the process we have received yet another demonstration, unfortunately, of Labor's training wheel legislation creating more questions than answers, with the Finance and Administration Committee report No. 44 on the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill providing four out of the five recommendations requesting clarification and information from the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations. The minister must almost be used to being sent back with recommendations requiring amendments. Only recently in the House we had the wonderful experience of the Trading (Allowable Hours) Amendment Bill coming back to life after 32 amendments and a hiatus of several months while the minister got the legislation correct. It reads like a bad report card to me, with recommendations requesting that the minister update the House on progress to date in establishing and implementing an Australian B reader program which, for those who are not in the know, refers to the qualification and equipment needed by Australian radiologists to identify black lung disease using the International Labour Organization, ILO, system—a system recognised worldwide.


Further recommendations request the minister to provide—and using my favourite word in this debate—'clarity' around the application of the 'once and for all' rule in common law to dust disease sufferers whereas they have received compensation under common law and develop a new disease or see their current disease progress at a later stage; 'clarity' on who bears the responsibility for the medical examination costs for miners who demonstrate six months of exposure at more than one Queensland work site and the costs associated with travelling to those examinations; and, lastly, 'clarity' on the intent behind proposed section 727, including whether it is to exclude workers who have been assessed under section 179 of the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003 before the commencement of the act from accessing both the initial lump sum payment as proposed under chapter 3, part 3, division 5, subdivision 1—proposed sections 128F to 128H—and the additional lump sum payment under chapter 3, part 3, division 5, subdivision 2—proposed sections 128I to 128K. That sure is a lot of clarity that is needed!

The introduction of a medical examination process for retired and former coal workers who are concerned about CWP or coalmine dust lung disease, as well as the introduction of an additional lump sum compensation entitlement to workers with pneumoconiosis, is a cornerstone of this bill. Issues surrounding the clarity of who can access this support should be of great concern to the Palaszczuk Labor government following the findings of the Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis Select Committee in

May 2017 that the current workers compensation scheme in Queensland is not adequate and does not provide for the needs of retired coal workers, the needs of miners with no permanent impairment who may not otherwise be entitled to lump sum payments or the needs of miners whose disease has progressed following some form of lump sum payment.

To turn to another important part of the bill, we did identify amendments to the Electrical Safety Act. The committee heard from a very moving group of parents affected by matters in relation to electrical safety. Those good folk who appeared before the committee were very satisfied that we had made appropriate movements in direction on some of the issues relating to electrical contractors whose work was not of a safe standard. This legislation will provide opportunities in the future for an immediate closure, subject to a serious fault—an identified accident—in providing electrical safety across the workplace. I reiterate our support for any moves that protect worker safety now and in the future in terms of these life-threatening issues. With just one slip it can be all over for a person working in dangerous electrical places. As someone who many years ago lost their father to an electrical accident, I support 100 per cent any moves in that direction.

This bill before the House is an excellent bill which is being supported by all members, I hope. It was my pleasure to be part of the Finance and Administration Committee, which receives wonderful support from its administration team in facilitating everyone having a fair say. It is my pleasure to support this bill before the House.

 **Mrs JR MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (8.33 pm): First, I thank the minister and the representatives of WorkCover Queensland for bringing this bill before the House so quickly. My contribution tonight will be very personal as it relates to my family. All members will remember when the member for Mermaid Beach spoke about the motion to establish the royal commission. I got quite upset, because my grandfather died of black lung. I now wish to inform the House that my father has black lung. My dad, who is nearly 91 and who spent 46 years underground in the coalmines in Ipswich and Rosewood, was recently diagnosed with black lung. He is a man I love dearly. One of the hardest things I had to do was tell him that he has black lung. In fact, the good people at WorkCover rang me and told me about the diagnosis. They sent my dad's GP the diagnosis of black lung. I could not tell him for a couple of days, because I had to get my own head around his reaction, knowing that he may die like his dad died. Many other miners in Ipswich and many other miners across Queensland died or will die an awful death because of this disease.

My dad lives in a nursing home, in high care. When I told my dad that he has black lung he said, 'I always thought I had it but I didn't really want to know I had it.' As many people know, my dad is a very strong and brave underground coalminer. Over the years, he has been misdiagnosed. He has been misdiagnosed with pneumonia, asthma and scars on his lungs. Years ago the people at the TB clinics used to continuously recall him and say, 'There is something wrong with your lungs. There is something there.' There were always these scars across his lungs. Even though my sister and I had to beg him to get tested for black lung, still he did not want to do it because he so feared dying the same death that he witnessed his father suffer. I was only a little girl in primary school at the time and I certainly remember it.

No-one deserves to die of this horrible disease which occurred because of neglect, because people breathed in coaldust during their working lives. My dad spent most of his working life in the Southern Cross collieries at Ipswich. My dad was a mine deputy, which meant that he was a safety officer. He also was one of the men on the shift who did the stone dusting. My father lives in fear that he may also have silicosis. That has not been tested.

I want to mention to the minister and the people from WorkCover that there is a hiccup. Men my dad's age cannot prove where they worked. When he submitted his application he was told that he would have to sign other forms so that the long service leave authority could work out the truth as to where he worked. I can remember saying to the very kind officer, 'But if he has black lung he must have worked in the coal industry somewhere.' He did work at Southern Cross mines. We could list the mines where he had worked. Anyway, they worked that out. They went back through the computer records, which showed that he was on workers comp in the early 1980s, before he retired. I do not believe that any of these older men should have to prove they worked in the coalmines if they actually have black lung.

The hardest thing of all is to get these older miners in particular to have these tests done. In fact, recently I was at the anniversary of the Box Flat mine disaster and spoke to many of the retired miners. They said, 'Jo, it's too hard for us. We really don't want to know.' Then I spoke to their wives. It is really up to the coalminers' wives to encourage them to have these tests. It is very important that they do.

My dad still says, 'Thank God for the union.' If it was not for the union he would have been killed in a coalmine, probably in an industrial accident. My dad was trapped in the mines on a couple of occasions. On one occasion the roof came down on him and split him open right down his back. He was on workers comp for months and months. My mother used to have to pour some sort of medicine into his back. He actually has a black scar down his back where the coal dust got into the wound.

Mr Pearce: It never goes away.

Mrs MILLER: No, the black scars never go away, member for Mirani. On another occasion as a young underground miner he was injured when his leg was nearly taken off. He still has those scars on his leg today. He nearly lost his leg. In relation to the underground boys, it is their life, it is their love, it is their job. It is what they are and it is who they are. My dad is quite proud of the fact that at the moment, even though he is finding it very difficult to accept that he has black lung, he is one of the oldest workers on workers comp in Queensland. As I said, he says, 'Thank God for the union.'


Our younger miners, our men and women across the coalfields of Central Queensland, are absolutely frightened that they are going to get this terrible preventative disease. When members of our committee have gone around to the mining towns those miners have told us privately and publicly that every day they live in fear of having this disease. This is men and women, fathers and mothers, brothers, sisters, daughters and sons. They are living with this fear daily. It is up to us to make sure that they will always be tested and looked after.

I would like to thank the deputy chair of the committee, Lawrence Springborg, and all the members of the committee for working on what I believe is probably a landmark select committee. We have put our political differences aside. We have sat down and listened to all the evidence that has come before us with great respect. There has been many an occasion when the member for Southern Downs has sat next to me and I have had tears streaming down my face because I thought my dad had black lung, and he does.

Mr SPEAKER: Would you like some time to compose yourself, member for Bundamba? We can pause if you like.

Mrs MILLER: No, it is fine. We need to look after our workers. We need to look after them no matter what. I take my hat off to Dr Bob Cohen and his people from the United States. They are wonderful people. In my view, my colleagues on this committee will always be remembered in this parliament as doing some of the best work of any parliamentary committee ever. To those men of the deep, the men of the open-cut coalmines, to the union that looks after them, to people like Andrew Vickers, Stephen Smyth and Tony Maher, to all those people who have spent all their time, all their careers, looking after coalminers across Queensland and looking after people like my dad, Percy Verrall, Mr Byron, Mr Stoddard and all the others, I hope that one day you will not be noted by your number on the list. The coalminers who have been diagnosed with black lung do not necessarily call each other by their name, they call each other by the number that they have been diagnosed at. I think my dad is No. 24.

I implore everyone in this parliament to please get together and be united in this legislation and also in the legislation that we will bring in in relation to the Mine Safety and Health Authority. It is the least we can do for the miners of Queensland.

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (8.44 pm): That deeply moving and personal testimony from the member for Bundamba exactly sums up why this first legislative step is so necessary: so that the death of the member for Bundamba's grandfather's and her father's diagnosis are not in vain. This is merely the first legislative step, as the member for Southern Downs said earlier, to overcome the catastrophic failings over decades. I pay tribute to the member for Bundamba and her coalmining background.

As I have mentioned, this bill is the first step. There is much more to be done from the 412-page report of the select committee that the member for Bundamba chaired and which was deputy chaired by the member for Southern Downs. I look forward to seeing the minister's response and what additional legislative steps are taken arising from that report in the coming weeks and months.

As at the release of that report on 29 May 2017 there were 21 current and former coalmine workers in Queensland that had been diagnosed with black lung and there were 17 cases involving miners who were working in the industry at the time of their diagnosis. Before 2015 Queensland coalminers were generally advised that black lung disease had been eradicated, and it was true that there were no diagnosed cases in Queensland since 1984. This view was jointly held—it was not held in a singular fashion—by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Queensland Health, the

Department of Industrial Relations, the Queensland Resources Council, mine operators, trade unions and workers. State employees responsible for the monitoring and management of the safety of coal workers, including health and safety representatives, had not raised the issue with the department or the Mines Inspectorate about risks arising from coaldust until 2015. That view is now manifestly mistaken.

The evidence collected by the select committee is compelling and action must be taken—action that the LNP called for first. It was the LNP that led to the stepping up of the pace of this action. It is appropriate to reflect on the contribution the coal industry makes to the Queensland economy because such reflection emphasises why it is necessary that coalminers' pneumoconiosis is properly diagnosed, managed and, where possible, mitigated in the years ahead. Australia has been built on the coal industry and without it the nation and Queensland would look very different.

Initially the coal industry was small scale and dedicated to domestic heating, but from the early 1900s expanded into industrial development. There were steamships, railways and steam mills that were sawing logs or grinding wheat and during the century the scope of coal grew into base power generation and steel manufacturing. Post World War II coal became one of the drivers of the nation's wealth with export markets opening up across the world—Asia in particular. Today there are 51 operating coalmines in Queensland and Australia is the world's fourth largest producer. The coalmining industry in Queensland directly employs around 30,000 employees as at the end of 2016.

Our budget would look very different without coalmining—\$3.4 billion has been contributed to the bottom line of the state in taxation and royalty revenue. The importance of the industry to the Queensland economy highlights why the protection of the workers who work in that industry is so vitally important into the future.

The bill seeks to insert a new subdivision to chapter 1 of the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act. That act regulates statutory compensation and common law damages for injuries suffered by workers in the course of employment in Queensland.

The bill proposes a new scheme for responding to black lung and other dust lung diseases based on a new definition in the act of 'coalmine dust disease', being a respiratory disease caused by exposure to coaldust. The scheme is proposed to extend beyond workers who are directly engaged in coalmining and, therefore, may have significant effects on Queensland mining industry service providers. Notably, it seeks to address the inadequacies of the workers compensation scheme in Queensland. Those inadequacies are being addressed through various amendments.

The principle of a pneumoconiosis score has been introduced, which is a medically assessed score that grades pneumoconiosis disease based on changes shown on chest X-rays. To be eligible for assessment of a pneumoconiosis score, the worker must prove to the insurer that they were exposed to coaldust at their place of employment for a period of six months. The six-month period does not need to be continuous and the source of the coaldust need not be directly related to coalmining. Further provisions in the bill allow for a worker to receive up to \$120,000 in lump sum compensation on a scale and calculated on the basis of the pneumoconiosis score and the worker's age at the time of lodgement.


The bill allows for the reopening of a claim for compensation and, therefore, raises a number of technical legal issues, in particular, the 'once and for all' rule. Workers already in receipt of a settlement or judgement for damages will be able to reopen a claim for compensation. The reopening of compensation claims will also extend to settlements or judgements that do not include damages to compensate a worker for the future deterioration of the injury. If the relevant settlement or judgement did not expressly outline that it included damages to compensate the worker for future progression of the injury, it will be assumed that the award did not contemplate the injury's future progress and the worker will be entitled to pursue additional compensation. Compensation claims will also be able to be reopened in circumstances where the worker's pneumoconiosis score worsens after a settlement is agreed.

It is these changes that have resulted in the committee's recommendation that the minister consider the application of the common law 'once and for all' rule. It is a long established principle of tort law that states that for causes of action arising from the same material facts the damages awarded must compensate the plaintiff in respect of all losses that the plaintiff has suffered and will suffer in the future. Accordingly, once damages have been assessed, a plaintiff may not make further claim for damages should their injury result in greater loss than evidence suggested at the time of the original assessment. The rule also provides that the defendant may not seek recovery of the damages if the plaintiff's condition improves. Concerns were raised by submitters to the committee in this regard, including the QLS and Maurice Blackburn. The application of the changes require deeper analysis and a watching brief will need to be undertaken in the years ahead.

The bill introduces minor changes to the Electrical Safety Act to permit the Electrical Safety Regulator to immediately suspend a person's electrical work licence if the regulator believes that the person may be responsible for electrical work that has caused a death or grievous bodily harm or has otherwise carried out electrical work that poses an imminent serious risk to the health or safety of any person. The regulator will also permit the Electrical Licensing Committee to direct an electrical work licence holder to undertake a competency reassessment where there are reasonable grounds to believe the licence holder may not be competent. That power is similar to a power in the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 for directing the reassessment of competency for high-risk work licence holders in certain circumstances.

These amendments will add weight to existing licensing obligations and will influence a stronger compliance culture throughout the electrical services industry. Serious safety incidents will not just raise licensing issues for licence holders but also directly impact their earning potential should their status as a licence holder be threatened.

The amendments proposed in the bill tonight relate primarily to black lung, which is the appropriate place at which to finish my contribution. This is a necessary first step to address, as the member for Southern Downs said, catastrophic failures over decades. It is the first step in a long legislative process that I know will be undertaken by this parliament so that men such as the father of the member for Bundamba may not be known just as 'No. 24' but by their hard work in one of the defining industries of our great state.

 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (8.54 pm): It is my great pleasure to rise and speak briefly to the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. This is a very important bill. Even if we have not actually said the words, we have all certainly supported the sentiments behind the principle that no worker should expect to leave their home, go to work and not come back home again and no worker's family should expect to wave them goodbye and not have them walk back through the door at the end of the day in one piece. As was reflected in most of the submissions that came before the committee, the poignant thing about CWP disease is that everyone had thought it had gone away when clearly it had not. There is a real sense of pathos and tragedy in all of the statements that were made during the investigation into this bill.

What I hope is really heartening for family members in the gallery tonight and other people who may be watching this debate is that this is a truly bipartisan debate. The bill has support from both sides. I had some guests in the gallery tonight. I told them that they will be watching a debate that will be unlike the ones we normally have in the Queensland parliament, because we are in fierce agreement that this bill needs to be passed and that it is really important that it be passed.

I congratulate the members of the mighty Finance and Administration Committee. I seem to be a regular visitor to that committee. It is a great honour to be a member of the committee. I thank all of the members, including my good friend the member for Sunnybank, for the excellent work that they have done on the bill. It must have been quite confronting for them to hear some of the cases.

There are other elements that make this bill one of great interest and import to me. I am a very proud member of the Asbestos Related Disease Support Society of Queensland. The member for Bulimba has often been known as the asbestos member as we have a strong history of ship building and manufacturing in my seat. Unfortunately, there is an extremely high number of people with asbestos related disease arising from those early occupations. Over the years, I have worked very closely with that society. Through everybody working together, we have changed legislation and brought about a number of reforms. Given the experience of having a disease that was not recognised or one where we were struggling to find the root of the disease and to get support and recognition, there are many similarities with black lung.

I thank the Queensland Resources Council, which each year gives all of us a full breakdown of the number of people who live in our electorates and work in the resources sector and the economic impact of that. From the file that the Queensland Resources Council gave to me last year, I know that there are 435 full-time employees in the resources sector who live in the Bulimba electorate. I do not know how many of those work in the coal industry, but I feel I must reflect the fact that a number of people living in my electorate work in the industry.

As a human being, a unionist and a member of parliament, I have been proud to speak on every single workers compensation and workplace health and safety bill that we have brought into this parliament. I thank the submitters, particularly the Queensland Council of Unions, who spoke about how important it is that we stay vigilant. All of those workplace health and safety bills have been

absolutely critical in doing that. The QCU talked about the dangers of relaxing safety standards and making false assumptions when it comes to workplace health and safety. What we are now finding out about CWP demonstrates the need for that vigilance.

I have spoken on the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (National Injury Insurance Scheme) Amendment Bill that implemented the National Injury Insurance Scheme for workplace accidents within the Queensland workers compensation scheme. We passed the Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill to implement election commitments made by the Palaszczuk government as part of our policy to improve safety for Queensland workers.

We passed the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Protecting Firefighters) Amendment Bill. These bills established the ability to provide additional compensation to particular workers impacted by the operation of the common law threshold; provided greater certainty of entitlement and accessibility to compensation for firefighters; prohibited prospective employees from continuing to access an individual's claims history; and fulfilled our election promise to reinstate common law rights for injured workers who were affected by the changes made by the LNP government in 2013.

Those changes resulted in the introduction of a limitation on the entitlement to seek damages that requires a worker to have a degree of permanent impairment as a result of the injury greater than five per cent in order to access common law. Our bill removed that limitation. It is interesting to note that if the government had not introduced that bill then I understand that many of the people we are talking about with CWP would never have been able to claim, as many of them are under the five per cent threshold but nevertheless are significantly impacted by the disease itself. One can look back to that bill that we passed two years ago and see how critical it was in getting this bill through and achieving the outcomes we want to achieve with this bill.


As the Maurice Blackburn submission to the Finance and Administration Committee said, this bill ensures that the Queensland workers compensation scheme remains progressive and fit for purpose. This bill really goes to the heart of what government should be all about. Its objectives are to amend the Workers Compensation and Rehabilitation Act to: provide access for coal workers with any concerns about coal workers' pneumoconiosis or a coalmine dust lung disease to a medical examination through the workers compensation scheme; allow workers with pneumoconiosis, including CWP, to reopen their statutory claim to receive further lump sum compensation if their condition deteriorates; and introduce additional lump sum compensation for workers diagnosed with pneumoconiosis, including CWP, silicosis or asbestosis, from working in a dusty environment.

The bill will establish an affected person committee. The bill amends the Electrical Safety Act to: allow the Electrical Safety Regulator to obtain information about the competency of applicants for an electrical work licence; allow the Electrical Licensing Committee to direct an existing electrical work licence holder to undertake a competency reassessment where there are reasonable grounds to believe that the licensee may not be competent; and allow the Electrical Safety Regulator to immediately suspend an electrical workers licence in specific and extremely serious circumstances in the interests of protecting the safety of others.

I would like to acknowledge the work of the minister who I know has been absolutely passionate about this and has worked tirelessly on this. All of her working life she has been committed to workplace health and safety and to the rights of workers. I express my admiration for her passion and for the work she has put into this.

I say to the families in the gallery tonight: thank you. You have got us here. Your work is so important. It has been wonderful to hear everybody acknowledge those families in the gallery. I again thank the committee for its great work. I commend this bill to the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Before I call the member for Burdekin, I acknowledge visitors in the gallery tonight: Max and Bonnie McLeod, students of Chapel Hill State School in the Moggill electorate.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (9.03 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Workers' Compensation Rehabilitation (Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Can I say how refreshing it is to be speaking to a bill that has bipartisan support. There is so much passion and commitment from all members here tonight to see this legislation pass.

The re-emergence of coal workers' pneumoconiosis, CWP—or black lung, as it is commonly known—is a ticking time bomb with potentially devastating consequences for those individuals who contract this insidious medical condition. We have certainly heard just how real that is when we heard from the member for Bundamba earlier tonight.

This bill aims to establish the Queensland workers compensation scheme which provides benefits for workers who sustain injury in their employment and for dependants if a worker's injury results in the worker's death, as well as encouraging improved health and safety performance by employers. As we are all aware, coal workers' pneumoconiosis is a lung disease contracted through workplace exposure to coal dust over a period of time. CWP is considered a latent onset injury under the workers compensation scheme.

There is no question that the re-emergence of CWP in Queensland has sent shock waves through the mining sector. It is absolutely imperative that processes and procedures are put in place to address the risk of black lung disease, and this amendment bill will ensure that those who have contracted and, heaven forbid, those who may contract the disease in the future are compensated adequately and afforded the treatment they deserve.

With the advent of recent changes to electoral boundaries, the Burdekin electorate will now encompass the majority of the coalmines in Queensland and the associated communities that house the mine workers and provide the necessary support and services to the mining sector. Towns like Collinsville, Glenden, Moranbah, Middlemount, Dysart and Clermont have a rich coalmining history. In fact, the Burdekin electorate is now smack bang in the middle of some of the richest coal deposits in the country.

We are right to question the standard and level of care provided to those workers who contracted black lung disease in the past. Unfortunately, black lung disease has tragically claimed lives. There are a number of both current and former mine workers who are battling this debilitating illness. As MPs we have an onus to do everything we can to put in place the necessary legislation to prevent black lung disease—a disease which is totally preventable.

This amendment bill certainly is not about knocking coalmines because coalmining has given people in my electorate, and certainly people in a number of other electorates around Queensland, a plethora of job opportunities and employment throughout the years. This bill is about creating a safety net for those who have slipped through the cracks when it comes to contracting a workplace illness like coal workers' pneumoconiosis. Make no mistake: all mining companies will need to ensure that appropriate dust monitoring and dust treatment programs are in place at all mines in this state to ameliorate the conditions in which our miners work. I was talking to some miners in Moranbah recently. They expressed to me their concerns about the potential impact that their work environment could have on their health into the future.

Certainly the passing of this bill will allow coal workers, as well as former coalminers, the comfort of knowing that they are eligible for appropriate compensation for black lung disease. There has been a cloudy past when it comes to former coalminers being able to access compensation. This bill will ensure that companies have to go above and beyond to ensure the workplace health and safety of their employees. There will be no shadow of a doubt that if an employee has any concerns about having potentially contracted coal workers' pneumoconiosis or a coalmine dust related disease they will have access to a medical examination through the workers compensation scheme. This bill will achieve the objectives by amending the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003, the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and the Electrical Safety Act 2007.

The amendment bill introduces a medical examination for retired or former coal workers who are concerned that they may have black lung disease or a coalmine dust lung disease. This bill will go above and beyond the access that the compensation scheme through WorkCover can allow, having no limit on a worker's age or employment status.

The passing of this amendment bill will also allow for the payment of a lump sum compensation payment for workers who are diagnosed with pneumoconiosis, which includes CWP, silicosis or asbestosis, from working in a dusty environment. This lump sum will help to ease the burden that these workers and their families face upon diagnosis of a workplace related disease. These workers and their families throughout the state—and those in my own electorate—will be able to sleep a little easier at night knowing that they will not be left destitute.

One of the positive measures contained within this amendment bill is that it will not just look after the workers who contract dust borne diseases from this point on; it will also look after those who have already contracted black lung disease or other dust related diseases. The amendment will ensure that a worker with pneumoconiosis who experiences disease progression can reopen their claim and access further benefits under the workers compensation scheme if their condition deteriorates.


This compensation is about knowing that families will still be able to stand on their own two feet if worst comes to worst and a worker falls ill. We have all witnessed the devastating impact that black lung disease can have on an individual's health and the impact that it has on families and those tight-knit communities that characterise our coal towns. This is why it is important that this bill is passed here tonight so that these families who have suffered in the past feel that their voices have finally been heard.

It is vital that we look after our workforces in Queensland, whether that be in our mining industries, agriculture industries or even retail. If a worker is injured at their place of employment or contracts a disease directly related to their workplace then there needs to be the appropriate legislation in place to adequately ensure that the worker is correctly compensated.

The proposed amendments will allow former coal workers to undergo a one-off lung disease examination. The worker must have been employed in an industry involving mining, loading, transporting or otherwise dealing with coal and have permanently stopped working in the coal industry before 1 January 2017.

The mining sector provides employment for tens of thousands of employees throughout the state. It provides significant revenue to the state in the form of royalties, and there is no question that Queensland has a long and proud history of mining. Our responsibility here tonight is to ensure that our mineworkers are appropriately treated when it comes to workplace injury and compensation. We must ensure that the workers of our state feel that they are not left to pick up the pieces from a workplace incident or accident.

The Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill is about drawing a line to ensure that the past and future workers of this state are afforded the protection they deserve and that, heaven forbid, if they should contract black lung disease they are looked after and, if necessary, compensated. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PEARCE** (Mirani—ALP) (9.10 pm): I rise tonight to contribute to the debate on the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The parliament established, as all members know, the Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis Select Committee on 15 September 2016 to conduct an inquiry and report into CWP in coalmine workers in Queensland. I want to congratulate that select committee for the great work that they have done. As a former coalminer, I have a really good understanding of what happens in the coal industry. I understood from the very beginning that it was important that that committee work as one and be able to produce a document that had value, that most importantly was accurate and that was able to tell the story as it is with regard to the re-emergence, as they say, of pneumoconiosis, and to be able to come up with recommendations that would be workable and acceptable to government.

The member for Bundamba has certainly done an outstanding job as the chair. Personally I would like to commend the deputy chair of the committee, Lawrence Springborg. Lawrence has been in the parliament for as long as I have. I have always got on well with Lawrence. I have always respected him as a decent local member and a decent member of parliament. The work that he has done with this committee has shown that, as a parliament, we can work together, that we can have inquiries and come up with solutions that are in the best interest of the people of Queensland. I also want to thank the chair and other committee members for giving me the opportunity to at times sit on that committee and get involved in the process.

The bill before the House will deliver stronger workers compensation protections for workers with black lung and associated dust diseases. This is a necessary step forward in supporting Queensland coal workers current and retired. This is about workers suffering from black lung being able to access medical examinations and to be compensated as victims of what is a terrible, terrible disease.

While injured workers already have access to no-fault statutory compensation through WorkCover, along with the ability to sue for common law damages, this is not limited by the worker's employment status or age. That is a very important part of the whole process. I am certain that every member in this place wants a coal worker diagnosed with black lung to be able to access medical care and support and receive a compensation payout.

The Queensland Resources Council, I noticed, were really quick to back injured workers. They declared that workers who contract CWP at work should receive 'fair' compensation—not appropriate compensation, but fair compensation—in a timely fashion. That is the mining industry showing concern for the workforce. They advocated that coal employers should be able to provide the needed funding through the existing scheme. I am sorry but I have a bit of a problem with that. It is a means of making


sure that workers get their entitlements, but let us think a little bit more about how that should be done. If a worker is dying from black lung, what is fair compensation? That is my question. How much do you put on a life? What is fair compensation if you have been diagnosed with black lung? The QRC also advocated that coal employers should be able to provide the needed funding through the existing scheme. That says to me that they are not really interested in putting their hand in their pocket to make sure that the worker is properly compensated for the disease.

There is not a lot of time to talk in this debate, but I thought it might be appropriate that, as a former mine worker, I give the House some understanding of what it is like to work in an underground mine in a dusty environment. I was fortunate to become a miner operator. That was the job where you sat at the face driving the machine, cutting coal and moving it on to machines to take it to a belt which then took the coal out of the mine. I have to tell members that it is a really dusty place to work. Things have improved over the years. We have got better at doing what we do, but cutting coal in a confined space is a real challenge. I can remember plenty of times when I came out of the mine after a shift and I looked like one of the black and white minstrels. I probably danced and sung as good as they did, but that is how it was. We had to stand in the shower and actually scrub one another. You had to be very careful who you got to scrub your back, but that is how bad it was. You just got absolutely caked in black dust.

There was dust suppression using water. A lot of water was used and also stone dust, but the movement of air through the mine is what actually takes the dust away. A massive fan draws air from the mine. The air being drawn from the mine comes in through the front of the mine and travels down through all the drives and returns that are in the mine itself. It is a system that has to be managed and it is a system that we do put a lot of effort into making sure is working because it gets the dust away from where the workers are. Like I said, within weeks of starting in the mining industry I was a miner operator. I was able to move into that job pretty quickly simply because I came off the land and I had the ability to use hydraulics. I always thought that I could make a machine of any nature dance because, if you have the ability to work the handles and you can put the right pressure on, you can get those machines to do almost whatever you want them to do.

The re-emergence of black lung came as a major shock to industry and government agencies. There was a strong belief in the industry and across the community that black lung was no longer an issue and that it was no longer a threat to the health of coal industry workers. Those people who every day stepped up to the coalface to do their job producing coal and just simply moving around the mine were all in a position where coaldust could impact on their health if they did not take proper precautions or get themselves in a position in the mine where the dust was having less of an impact.

As we take a close look at what went wrong over the years when coal production in Queensland reached record tonnages and record numbers of employees, I believe that this happened: employers lost their way. Employers forgot that the most important part of their business was the workers. Employers started to think that the money that was put into banks from coal that came out of the mine and put onto trains was what they were all about. They very quickly forgot, and continue to forget, that people's lives are at risk in the coalmines. Coalmine workers depend on mining company management teams for a safe workplace, and it is time they got back to doing what they did instead of going down the road that they are at this time.

 **Mr DICKSON** (Buderim—PHON) (9.21 pm): I rise to speak to the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. To quote from the report titled *Black lung white lies*, which was tabled in this place in May—

The first priority and concern of all in the coal mining industry must be the health and safety of its most precious resource—the miner.

That is the way it should be here in Queensland. All coal workers deserve and should have a world-leading, safe working environment.

I would like to commend in particular the chair of the committee, the member for Bundamba, and the whole committee on the tireless efforts they put into their examination of this issue culminating in their report. I note that at the time of the report's publication 21 Queensland coalminers had been diagnosed with CWP.

In reading through the summary points, I noted two cases which were described as 'complex', presenting with multiple conditions; 17 cases which involved miners who were actively working in the Queensland coal industry at the time of their diagnosis; current ages ranging from 38 to 74 with an

average age of 56; and two cases which involved open-cut coalmine workers with no underground experience. Having read the summary, I am left with one question burning in my mind: how the hell can this happen in Queensland in the 21st century? Then we get to the issue of workers compensation. I was left dismayed reading about the case of a miner with early signs of CWP being advised that he would need to arrange a chest CT scan at a cost to himself of \$500. As the committee found, clearly such costs should be met by the worker's employer, workers compensation or the health scheme for retired and former miners.

I note that an entitlement to workers compensation arises when a doctor first diagnoses the condition. Whether they are employed by a self-insurer or a company which utilises WorkCover, they are entitled to lodge a claim. I also note that WorkCover covers approximately 63 per cent of all coal workers in Queensland. The other 37 per cent of miners are covered by two self-insurers—XtraCare and BHP Billiton Queensland Workers Compensation.

Regarding the two self-insurers, a worker has six months from the date of the entitlement to compensation arising—the date of diagnosis—within which to lodge the application. If not, then a reasonable cause for the delay must be provided by the worker or the application will be rejected. The Queensland workers compensation scheme is what is known as a short-tail scheme, which means that entitlements under the scheme stops when any of a number of things occur including if a worker has received weekly payments of compensation for five years. Are they serious? Five years is ridiculous.

As the committee found, some of these young men were only 38 years old. The average age was only 56. What is a victim who is now 38 supposed to do when the payments stop and he is just 43? When CWP is diagnosed in its early stages, a worker may not have respiratory symptoms and no impairment, yet the consequences of a diagnosis of simple CWP for the worker are immediate. According to the CFMEU, as there is no treatment that can reverse or cure the illness, all specialist advice to date in respect of CWP is to remove the worker from areas where they are exposed to respirable dust. However, the worker is not eligible for workers compensation benefits under the statutory scheme because a worker diagnosed with simple CWP does not have an incapacity for work, as the term in the legislation is interpreted under the law.

The Office of Industrial Relations informed the committee that these workers may be entitled to weekly compensation for lost wages until the employer is able to deploy the worker to a dust-free work environment. I suppose the term 'may be entitled to weekly compensation' means that the poor old miner has to jump through a million hoops to get it. But it gets worse: I note from the report that the CFMEU expressed fears that employers finding alternative roles in a dust-free environment might not continue once the focus on CWP and coalmine safety fades from public attention, as there is no statutory requirement for an employer to continue to employ afflicted workers. That is a salient point.

Once a worker has been on paid leave for 12 months and the statutory prohibition on termination has expired, the mine worker could be terminated for being unable to perform the duties required of their pre-injury position. I understand that in March the government confirmed that a stakeholder reference group had reported to the government with a number of recommendations and that the government would implement those recommendations in full. The group made a number of recommendations which I understand the committee supported to the current workers compensation scheme.

The objectives of the bill seem to address most of the stakeholder groups recommendations including to provide access for coal workers with any concerns about coal workers CWP or a coalmine dust lung disease to a medical examination through the workers compensation scheme, to allow workers with CWP to reopen their statutory claim to receive further lump sum compensation if their condition deteriorates and to introduce additional lump sum compensation for workers diagnosed with a CWP, silicosis or asbestosis from working in a dusty environment.

In regard to the proposed amendments to the Electrical Safety Act, I note the explanatory notes following an inquest into the death of a worker who was electrocuted at a construction site in 2012. The coroner raised the issue of whether it was in the interests of public safety to be able to suspend a licence immediately where a death or grievous bodily harm results from an electrical incident caused by the electrical work of an individual licence holder. This bill amends the Electrical Safety Act to allow the regulator to immediately suspend an existing electrical worker's licence in specific serious circumstances. It also establishes the process for the matter to be referred to the Electrical Licensing Committee, which has existing powers to take disciplinary action against licence holders.

I turn to the Finance and Administration Committee's report tabled on 11 August. In relation to the proposed amendments to the Electrical Safety Act, the Queensland Law Society raised a number of concerns regarding the reasonable belief test when determining whether to suspend a licence. The committee commented—


The concerns raised by the Queensland Law Society are outweighed by mitigating, through an immediate suspension, the risk of death, grievous bodily harm or imminent serious risk of harm from work performed by an electrical licence holder. The reasonable belief test is an appropriate mechanism to protect the public and electrical and other workers.

I would have to agree with the committee: an immediate suspension may seem extreme to some but not as extreme as having to attend a loved one's funeral.

Returning to the issue of CWP, I note that the bill would allow payment for an additional lump sum of up to \$120,000 for workers with CWP. That will be on a sliding scale and based on an assessment of the degree of CWP as set, where the degree of CWP is scored against the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Regulation. That is fine, as long as the sliding scale does not just become another tool for insurers to dud these sick miners. That will need very close monitoring.

It is a fundamental right that coalminers have a safe working environment. If mine owners are not prepared to meet these standards, they should not be operating in Queensland. If mine owners need to invest more money to minimise coaldust at their operations, they should do so immediately. I do not think there is one person in this House who will not continue to push these regulations and rules that have been put forward. We may even have to go further because we are yet to understand the full extent and impact on so many people who have worked throughout mines in this country.

There is probably nobody in this room who is not related to somebody who has worked in a coalmine, a goldmine, a copper minor or some sort of mine in this country. There are so many impacts that fall upon them, and I think the member for Bundamba made it very clear tonight. We should all follow her lead and understand exactly what she was saying. This has impacted on her family. Nobody understands this more than somebody who has been directly impacted. It is like when you need to go to hospital—that is when you worry about it; otherwise you just do not care. When that day comes when it impacts somebody you know or one of your relatives, that is when it makes such a difference. Let us vote together on this bill. I think it is very important for Queenslanders.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (9.31 pm): It gives me great pleasure to talk on the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The coal industry is a significant economic contributor in the seat of Gregory that I represent and the region. The coal workers and the people who work in the coal industry play a significant part in our community. They not only work in an industry which is a wealth creator for our region—a lot of GST and a lot of royalties go to the state government—but play a significant part in our community and our towns, such as Emerald, Tieri, Clermont, Capella, Blackwater, Middlemount, Dysart, Moranbah and the list goes on of towns in the Central Highlands.

It gives me great pleasure to talk on this piece of legislation. It gives me a sense of pride that in this House where we meet as lawmakers we are agreeing on something that is so important to many people across Queensland, especially the coal workers. All members in parliament can agree on this legislation in a bipartisan manner because it is so important. This is critical legislation. I say to the minister that this is probably one of the most important pieces of legislation she will have carriage of in this term because it means so much to so many people.

I would like to pay tribute tonight to the members for Burdekin, Mirani, Callide and Whitsunday. Like me, as the member for Gregory, they have a significant investment and a significant interest in coalmining. I acknowledge the member for Mirani as a coalminer. I listened to his speech and he mentioned working underground. I had the fortunate experience of being underground for only three hours down at the shaver. I can only imagine how hard and how confined that space is. This legislation is incredibly important.

Like many members in this House, I think we need to make sure we get this right. I would also like to pay tribute to the member for Bundamba and the member for Southern Downs who were on the committee that looked at pneumoconiosis in a more general sense. I had the privilege of being on that committee when I filled in for the member for Whitsunday when he was not available. I had the opportunity to be a part of that committee when they were on the Central Highlands. It opened my eyes to the significance of this legislation and other legislation that will deal with the disease.

I have had the fortunate opportunity, although it was sad, to meet someone with pneumoconiosis. This man who had been diagnosed with pneumoconiosis came into my office and he had no-one to reach out to, apart from his family, to know where to go, to know what to do, to know what opportunities

or assistance he could get. I thank the member for Mirani who assisted me when I rang him to ask him for advice on the best way to deal with this. We were able to point this person in the right direction and help him through something that he and his family were struggling with emotionally.

I wondered then what it would be like to know that you have a disease but you are not quite sure how it is going to end. Well, you probably do know how it is going to end, and it is going to end in pain and sadness not only for him but also for his wife, his children and his grandchildren. His wife would be there and be supportive for him, his children would be frustrated and hurt, and his grandchildren would probably be confused and not know what is happening to their grandad. I had the opportunity to meet with him and assist him to make sure he was on the right path to get the assistance he needed.

Many miners in the electorate of Gregory go to work in the mining industry and play a significant role in the economic contribution to our state and to our communities. We are talking about people who not only work in the mine but also coach the under 14 rugby league team and are involved in Rotary, the local tennis club and other local community groups that make our communities so great. When they do go to work, yes, they work in a high-risk industry but their high risk is more about moving machinery and more visible risks—not pneumoconiosis. This is a frightening disease that we have to deal with.

When I was first elected as the member for Gregory in 2015, pneumoconiosis was starting to become an issue in seats such as Gregory. I was dealing with this with not much depth of knowledge about the disease and what could be done, but, with the assistance of people from both sides of the House, we were able to find a resolution for some of these people to make sure they are on the right path. I thank everybody for that.

As I mentioned before, I have been underground myself and right down at the shaver. I can understand how this is an issue right now because of the amount of dust and the confined space they operate in. We need to make sure we have the right procedures and the right legislation in place so that these workers can go to work in a safe environment. We also need to make sure our open-cut miners work in a safe environment. I was on an open-cut mine only last week and I can see how that can be an issue too when you are dealing with such small particles in the coal industry.

It is important that we understand that this will affect people who have been in the industry for a long time as well as people who are new to the industry or have only been in the industry for the last decade and a half. I will always remember when I was on the committee with the member for Bundamba and the member for Southern Downs in Emerald and two young miners from Tieri, Lachlan and Mitch, addressed the committee. They were concerned about their future. They knew they needed to get X-rays so they could clear themselves and get back on site. Their fear was not so much for themselves; their fear was not being able to provide for their families. Lachlan and Mitch were young and newly married. I remember Lachlan as a young father who was worried about how he could take care of his wife and his kids if he got pneumoconiosis in the future. I certainly recognise that.

What concerns me too is that it has taken so long for this terrible disease to be picked up. It was not until 2004 that the first indications were there and then again in 2006. It was nine years after that when the department was able to at least start to recognise it. We certainly need to do better in Queensland to make sure we protect our coal workers. I am very pleased that the committee has agreed to pass the bill. One of the committee's recommendations is that the minister update the House on the progress to date in establishing and implementing an Australian B reader program. I think that is incredibly important. We need to make sure we have the diagnostic services and equipment here in Australia, here in Queensland. If we have that, we can read someone's diagnostic chart or X-ray and quickly make sure that, if they do have the disease, they are put on a program so they can continue to live a reasonable life.


I do note that the minister will provide clarity around the application of the common law 'once and for all' rule to sufferers of dust related diseases who have received compensation under common law where the disease progresses or the sufferer develops a new disease. The proposed amendments will provide clarity on who bears responsibility for the medical examination costs of miners who demonstrate six months of exposure to coal dust at more than one worksite in Queensland and will ensure reasonable travel costs incurred to attend medical examinations are not borne by the coal worker. I certainly agree with that.

The bill will provide access for coal workers with any concerns about coal workers' pneumoconiosis or a coalmine dust lung disease to a medical examination through the workers' compensation scheme. Finally, the bill will introduce a medical examination for retired or former coal workers who are concerned that they may have CWP or coalmine dust lung disease. It will introduce

an additional lump sum compensation entitlement for workers with pneumoconiosis who experience disease progression and will ensure that they can reopen their claim—this is important—and access further benefits under the workers compensation scheme.

This issue is dear to me, coming from the seat of Gregory and having friends and family in the coal industry. I trust this legislation does what it intends to do and that coal workers who, unfortunately, contract this disease are looked after both in terms of compensation arrangements and that the process is not too onerous on them.

(Time expired)

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (9.41 pm): I have been away sick today. I served on the committee that examined the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I wanted to come and make a contribution, firstly, because like others in the House, I have family members who spent a lifetime working in the coal industry and recognise—like the member for Mirani does—that the mines are not simply about a piece of black rock but they are about the workers and the communities that go to form them and the commitment that Queenslanders have to treat workers fairly at all levels.

I will not repeat much of the information about the bill because I think it has been well covered by the member for Sunnybank, whom I recognise as the chair, the member for Bulimba, the member for Mirani and, of course, the minister. What we should recognise, though, is that the bill is obviously an amendment to the workers compensation act and influences and trades upon the workers compensation act. I notice today that we had bipartisan support from both sides of parliament. All the LNP members spoke about their commitment to seeing that workers who have this disease have access to workers compensation and of course common law rights. That was not the case not so long ago. We know that many of these members, including the member for Buderim in his former role as LNP member—and he is yet to apologise for it—voted for the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013. That was a bill that cut off the rights of workers who had a permanent impairment.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr POWER: The member for Kawana, of course, was the one who led it. That bill cut off the rights of those who had permanent impairment of less than five per cent. We heard through the committee that many of the workers who have the first level of CWP would have less than five per cent permanent impairment. Every member on that side of the House bar the members for Dalrymple and Mount Isa have actually voted against this bill in a form. They voted against coalminers getting early diagnosis. They voted against coalmine workers getting the treatment and the access to common law.

Mr Pegg: And they voted against the amendment to repeal their legislation.

Mr POWER: As the member for Stretton reminds me, we brought up these very issues in this parliament. We spoke about workers who, although they would only face a five per cent impairment, would face significant loss of income through not being able to work in their chosen field. I spoke about a Logan worker who works for the council who damaged their back. They might be classified as having only a five per cent permanent impairment, but they could no longer work in the field that they chose. They would have no access to workers compensation and no access to common law rights. When we speak of these workers we want them to get the earliest diagnosis possible. We want them to have access to workers compensation at the earliest stage so they can get the diagnosis, so they can get the tests. However, those on the other side of the House have voted against that very principle. Do we in this place need to have special commissions of inquiry in every single workplace in order to find out that there are workers who are suffering through these things and who deserve to be protected? I would hope that the LNP, through looking at this process and through the other special inquiry process, would see that they are wrongheaded about the five per cent permanent impairment principle.

Mr Pegg: We haven't heard that yet.

Mr POWER: We certainly have not heard that yet; the member for Stretton is correct.

I noticed that the member for Mermaid Beach spoke about consultation. I noticed that the member for Mermaid Beach spoke about some of the things that could have happened beforehand. However, he did not mention that the Workers Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013 for which he voted was introduced into this place on 15 October 2013 and after a long period of consultation of—

A government member: How long?

Mr POWER:—two days it passed on 17—

Mr Pegg: It passed on Thursday.

Mr POWER: Tuesday to Thursday, that is how much they cared about this process.

Mr Bleijie: You weren't even here, mate. Don't talk to me about it.

Mr POWER: The member for Kawana says that I was not here and he is right. If I had been here I would have held him to account and my vote would have counted against it. Instead, we saw people like the member for Burdekin, who proudly claimed that he had the majority—

Mr BLEIJIE: I rise to a point of order. Could you please direct the member for Logan to the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017, not a 2013 bill? We are discussing the 2017 bill. This debate has gone on all day in a very polite and bipartisan way. Now the member for Logan is politicising it. I ask you, Madam Deputy Speaker, to draw his attention to the bill we are debating, not the 2013 one.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! The member for Logan has the call.

Mr MANDER: I rise to a point of order. If the member for Capalaba would like to interject, could you remind him to be in his seat, thank you?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Everton. The member for Logan has the call.

Mr POWER: I agree: I found the member for Capalaba most disturbing, but I will try to steer through it!

This bill interrelates with the workers compensation bill. If the 2013 bill was still in place, we would have failed the coalminers of Queensland in terms of them getting an early diagnosis, getting treatment and getting the scans they need for diagnosis.


The member for Burdekin spoke proudly about the fact that he represents the majority of coal workers. However, will he tell them that he voted in this parliament against the very principle that would allow them to be diagnosed at the earliest stages of CWP? Would he tell them that previously he shut off their access to common law rights? When we introduced the bill he voted against those workers getting their common law rights when we sought to restore them. We know that he will not talk to them about that, but I hope others will remind those workers.

It is also important that we speak about one of the other objectives which is to ensure that a safety regulator has the power to immediately suspend a person's electrical worker licence if after a death or incident of grievous bodily harm the regulator forms 'a reasonable belief the person may be responsible'. This is a very high burden, but it is very important after some of the issues we have seen.

The member for Mermaid Beach spoke about people being able to access the committee process through being able to be at the hearings. I want to particularly reach out to the affected families: Mr Michael Garrels, Mr Bill Martin, Mr Kevin Fuller, Ms Christine Fuller, Dan Kennedy and Mrs Debbie Kennedy. We also reach out to those who could not raise their voice—their children for whom they were speaking.

After the hearing I reached out to speak to them—I recommend that you go to the transcript—to thank them for coming and speaking to the committee. One of them, who I will not identify, said, 'I hope I just said it right. I didn't have the big words like the lawyers that spoke earlier or those that represented industry.' I said to him, 'You said it perfectly. You said it with passion and directness. That was what we need in this process.' For anyone who wants to be part of the committee process but is not a lawyer or a rep for big business, I recommend that you come forward and speak plainly from the heart about what you feel, because that is the best way to be part of this committee process.

I commend the bill to the House for those workers it protects. I also recommend that we protect others who have impairments which may degenerate and that we protect them early through the WorkCover process.

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (9.50 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I do so in my capacity as the shadow minister for mines, and my contribution will

pertain only to those amendments to the legislation which deal with those matters regarding coal workers' pneumoconiosis. While I acknowledge that the bill also has some electrical safety amendments, those matters will be dealt with by other members and not by myself. As the explanatory notes accompanying the bill outline—

The *Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003* establishes the Queensland workers' compensation scheme which provides benefits for workers who sustain injury in their employment and for dependants if a worker's injury results in the worker's death ...

That framing statement in the explanatory notes is particularly pertinent when you consider the evidence that has been put forward to the select committee, which is that both the employees potentially impacted by their employment and the families of those employees impacted by their employment are both supported by the provisions of the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act. The explanatory notes go on to say—

Following the re-identification of CWP in Queensland, Parliament established the Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis Select Committee on 15 September 2016 to conduct an inquiry and report into CWP in coal mine workers in Queensland. Evidence provided before the Select Committee raised concerns regarding how the workers' compensation scheme operates in relation to CWP. In response to these concerns, the Government established a CWP Stakeholder Reference Group consisting of representatives of employers, unions, the legal profession, insurers and departments relevant to coal mining in December 2016 to provide advice on any gaps in the workers' compensation scheme.

The bill that we have now before the House implements two recommendations that have come forward from that stakeholder reference group. It addresses the concerns about former or retired coal workers not undergoing medical testing for CWP due to the high costs involved. That can be a barrier to former workers employed in the coal sector who may be on low or fixed incomes, and it is important to make sure they are eligible and capable of accessing that testing if they believe it is required. The bill also ensures that workers with CWP and other types of pneumoconiosis, such as silicosis, who experience disease progression can reopen their workers compensation claim and access further entitlements. As part of implementing the recommendations, the bill also introduces an additional lump sum compensation for workers with pneumoconiosis. This additional lump sum compensation recognises the ongoing nature of pneumoconiosis injuries. We have heard extensive contributions from the minister about the progressive nature of this particular disease, which can be debilitating over time. This will ensure that workers with CWP or other pneumoconiosis will have access to compensation for their injury, even in circumstances where they are not suffering from any permanent impairment or incapacity for work.

While recognising that there are provisions in this bill that are retrospective in nature which will allow people who may have already claimed in initial circumstances for the impairment as a result of their employment in the coal sector to gain access once again to the workers compensation framework, I think it is fair to say that the provisions in this bill are somewhat preparatory. It is a preparatory bill in anticipation of significant and perhaps more wideranging reforms to mine safety and health legislation as a result of recommendations of the CWP Select Committee. Although we are preparing for those reforms to that mine safety legislation, this bill remains important because there is no point acknowledging and preparing for the need for continuous improvement in mine safety and health legislation if we do not have appropriate mechanisms in place to support those people who may fall victim to CWP or another type of pneumoconiosis from working in the resources sector.


The remaining recommendations of the CWP select committee are being considered by the government, and it is reasonable to anticipate that there will be substantial reforms to coalmine safety and health legislation and other resource sector workplace health and safety legislation. Given the evidence that the CWP select committee has heard, I think it is also quite reasonable to assume—as the member for Bundamba and the member for Southern Downs have outlined in their contributions—that the potential scope of CWP being identified in resource sector workers—coal sector workers in particular—could be quite significant. We must prepare the arrangements to accommodate the needs of those workers.

I have reflected before in this parliament about the burden of being the minister responsible for these pieces of resource sector safety and health legislation. The Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations carries the burden in this place of generally being responsible for workplace health and safety legislation across the rest of the workforce. So complicated and so nuanced is safety in the resources sector that they have their own sets of workplace health and safety legislation across the coal sector, the gas sector, the minerals sector and the explosives sector. Each has their own unique piece of legislation.

I have been in the circumstance that the Minister for State Development, Natural Resources and Mines, the member for Stafford, has found himself in in the past—and other members in this place have found themselves—where you do get those phone calls and you feel the burden of being responsible for the continuous improvement in those workplace health and safety regimes where people's lives are at stake, and they are important. This preparatory legislation is really quite significant because we are getting ready to overcome what the member for Bundamba—whose contribution was significant—and the member for Southern Downs have said could be a landmark situation, and we need to make sure that our workers compensation legislation is satisfactory to catch those people who are impacted.

In the time remaining I want to touch on the contribution of the member for Mirani. In the latter part of his contribution the member for Mirani made critical remarks about some coalmining companies who are the employers of coalmine workers. He made comments about the value of those workers to the companies who were employing them for the purposes of coalmining. Given that he made those comments in the context of his contribution to the debate on the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis) Bill, I hope he was not suggesting that there has been some systemic failure on the part of those companies which has resulted in the issues that have been clearly identified by the select committee into the re-emergence of coal workers' pneumoconiosis in Queensland.

If he was suggesting that—and it was difficult to make out whether or not he was or he was just making general comments, which he sometimes does in this parliament—that is actually not what the select committee has found and the contribution of the member for Southern Downs in particular made that abundantly clear—that is, there was no systemic failure on the part of companies employing individuals engaged in coalmining activities. I hope the member for Mirani was not laying a burden of blame on companies in this regard, because it would be inappropriate for him to do so given the clear evidence and the overwhelming burden of evidence that has been given to the select committee. I just wanted to clarify that matter because I think it would have been unfortunate for the member for Mirani to make that particular assertion during the course of this debate.

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.00 pm), in reply: I thank all members for their contributions this afternoon and this evening during debate on the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I am proud to be part of the formulation of this bill which improves the workers compensation scheme, strengthens the electrical licensing framework to protect workers and public health and safety, and acknowledges the concerns of people affected by work related fatalities and serious injuries and illnesses. I express to the member for Bundamba my acknowledgement for sharing her story with regard to her father and give my best wishes to him and his family. Queensland has a strong workers compensation scheme that provides no-fault statutory benefits in the form of lump sum compensation, lost time earnings, medical expenses and now full access to common law damages following changes introduced by this government.

However, when coal workers' pneumoconiosis, or black lung, was reidentified in Queensland, the government acted swiftly to address the concerns of workers who had been diagnosed or suspected they may have contracted coal workers' pneumoconiosis or other types of coalmine dust lung diseases. With regard to the contribution by the member for Southern Downs, when this came about as minister I got WorkCover officers in to talk about this. It was quite clear that we needed to look at this and talk to stakeholders to work out exactly what was happening, fill any gaps and identify what needed to be done. We acted very swiftly and I put that in place in December last year. The stakeholders represented a broad group of people. I think they did an excellent job. As soon as we received their recommendations we went about drafting legislation, and tonight we have bipartisan support in relation to that. This bill is all about improving the workers compensation scheme for people in this situation. We cannot undo their past exposure to coaldust—and remember it is exposure to coaldust that causes pneumoconiosis—but we can take steps to ensure that workers, including retired workers, are supported by the workers compensation scheme not only to get a diagnosis but in the ongoing management and monitoring of their disease. That is important—that is, that we continue to have the ongoing support that they require.

As I have previously said, the bill introduces mechanisms to improve the rigour of the electrical licensing framework. It will ensure that the electrical safety regulator can obtain information about the competency of applicants for an electrical work licence. It will also allow the Electrical Licensing Committee to direct an existing electrical work licence holder to undertake a competency reassessment where there are reasonable grounds to believe the licensee may not be competent. Finally, it will also

allow the regulator to immediately suspend an electrical worker's licence in specific extremely serious circumstances in the interests of protecting the safety of others. We know that electricity is a very dangerous area to work in and this is highly required.

At the Finance and Administration Committee hearing for this bill members of the current interim consultative committee for families affected by work related fatalities and serious injuries spoke of how it felt to receive a call about a workplace accident involving their son, only to find that their son had died at work. Any work related fatality is a tragedy, but losing a child through a workplace accident is something that no parent should have to experience. I again thank the members of the interim committee for their courage in sharing their stories with the wider community, bringing greater awareness to the importance of health and safety at work and letting government agencies know where the system can be improved. I once again acknowledge Kevin and Christine Fuller and Michael Garrels in the gallery. They have been here since this debate started. They are here after 10 o'clock at night to make sure that these measures pass through the parliament. I thank them for their support and their input into this piece of historic legislation which will go a long way to fulfilling their dreams of improving electrical safety in the workplace.

I will now take the opportunity to address some of the issues that have been raised by those opposite during the debate, and the member for Kawana mentioned a couple of things. As raised by the Queensland Law Society, the Electrical Licensing Committee is required to give a person one month's notice before they are required to undergo a competency assessment. As the licence holder can make representations to the licensing committee as part of this process, any concerns regarding availability of training or access to training in geographical locations will be considered as part of making a decision on the time frame. The licensing committee can decide on any time frame that is longer depending on the circumstances at hand. In relation to a person not being aware of the immediate suspension notice being served, like other notices served under the legislation by inspectors these notices are generally served in person. Further, in all cases the licence holder will be known to inspectors and will have provided assistance during the incident investigation and would generally be aware that consideration is being given to issuing an immediate suspension notice. In circumstances as serious as this, face-to-face contact is often the best approach.

The member for Kawana also referred to the Association of Self Insured Employers Queensland's concerns in relation to section 566, which provides that if the QIRC decides an insurer is not liable to make a payment for compensation the worker or, in the case of the death of a worker, the worker's dependents are not required to refund this payment. This provision ensures that injured workers are not denied timely access to weekly benefits and medical treatment pending the outcome of the review and appeal process. Generally these payments are not lump sum payments but the costs associated with the early stages of dealing with an injury. I am advised by my department after the member for Kawana raised the issue that out of 233 appeals last year two stays were granted to self-insured employers and only one of these involved a potential offer for a lump sum payment. This trend provides a basis for an increasing concern that this approach may become common practice for self-insured employers, and obviously we talked about changed unintended behaviours that could come from that.

Section 566 acknowledges that payments of compensation made to a worker during the review and appeals process are made in good faith—that is, at the time the payments are made, the worker has a legitimate entitlement to the compensation. This contrasts with the only circumstances under the act where a worker is required to refund payments under the legislation where there is found to have been fraud and in fraud cases they have to pay it back. Without this provision, workers would be denied much needed income support and medical treatment for a lengthy period of time and in this case it could deny dependents of a deceased worker with much needed support, including the payment of funeral expenses.

The workers compensation system in Queensland is always based upon the fact of early settlement of any outcomes that need to be settled rather than dragging them on. It is a very short-tail scheme with a common law part to it. In being granted a self-insurance licence, a self-insured employer has voluntarily taken on the obligations as well as the risks of an insurer under the act. This includes the risk that it may suffer a loss if an accepted claim is overturned on appeal and recovery is not able to be made from a worker due to section 566. This aligns with the risk accepted by WorkCover Queensland. It is not appropriate for a self-insured employer as an insurer to transfer this risk on to the injured worker and thus gain an unfair advantage over WorkCover. I can, however, assure the member for Kawana that the Office of Industrial Relations—and the officers are here this evening—will maintain a watching brief on the impact of this amendment.

In response to concerns about the appropriateness of removing the right for a stay in an appeal as raised by the Queensland Law Society, it is recognised that it was never the intention under the workers compensation legislation for the QIRC to grant a stay. It is acknowledged that this includes a consideration of both workers and employers. However, in each case where the stay was granted there was a significant impact on injured workers or the dependants of deceased workers. For example, in a recent case a worker lost access to much needed medical treatment, including surgery as well as rehabilitation and return-to-work opportunities.

I thank everyone for their contributions. I believe that these changes will go a long way towards assisting workers suffering coal workers' pneumoconiosis and improving electrical safety in workplaces. In conclusion, I thank the Finance and Administration Committee—I recognise the chair, the member for Sunnybank—and the staff of the committee for their detailed consideration of the bill. In particular I thank those who made submissions and attended the public hearings. I am very pleased that overall the feedback was positive. I encourage all members to support the bill. This is good legislation. This is a piece of legislation that will help workers suffering from coal workers' pneumoconiosis. 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 14, as read, agreed to.

Clause 15—

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (10.12 pm): Clauses 14, 15 and 16 deal with the matter the minister just addressed and which I raised in my contribution with respect to the amendment of section 566 'Stay of decision appealed against'. I thank the minister for speaking to me earlier and getting further advice from the department that it will keep a watching brief on this provision. I still hold concerns, as do the Law Society and ASIEG. I refer to the decisions with respect to the stay applications. We spoke about recent decisions. In the decision of Toll North Pty Ltd and Q-Comp in 2013, Deputy President O'Connor of the QIRC held—

In light of the above reasons, I make the following orders:


1. That the decision of Q-COMP dated 5 June 2013 in the matter of Fiona Lamb (Deceased William Lamb) be stayed until the appeal so initiated is disposed of or until the Commission otherwise orders ...

This particular provision for the QIRC to stay these decisions has been around since 2013. In a decision at the end of last year, Commissioner Black made a similar determination and used the reference of the deputy president's precedent. Also, Deputy President O'Connor's precedent deals with a precedent set out in the New South Wales Court of Appeal.

I take the minister's point that out of the 233 appeals two stays were applied for last year. One of those was Commissioner Black's decision. I still hold concerns regarding an application for employers that was able to be used since 2013. When there have been only three cases of stays in that five-year period, I do not see why we would have to change the legislation to remove that completely. Deputy President O'Connor of the QIRC made that determination. As far as the Law Society, industry and everybody else is concerned, the application of the applicable law is the precedent set by Deputy President O'Connor which seems to be being overturned. I want it on the record that I still have concerns. I note the minister's comments with respect to the watching brief on it, but I still hold concerns that we are changing a position made in July 2013 that has not really been raised as a major issue for workers since then.

Clause 15, as read, agreed to.

Clause 16—

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (10.15 pm): I anticipated that the minister would comment on my contribution to clause 15. I reassert what I said—

Ms Grace: I thought you were going to add to it.

Mr BLEIJIE: Of course. Well, I will not add to it anymore. I look forward to the minister's response.

Ms GRACE: As I reflected earlier in my response to the concerns raised, I understand the member for Kawana's situation but we will keep a watching brief. I have committed to doing that. I know that departmental officers are present and are taking notes in relation to that. When there was one it

was deemed unique, but it was obviously becoming a little more frequent. It is concerning that this is an advantage to the self-insurers. As I said, there is concern about unintended behaviours and unintended consequences. I understand what the member for Kawana has outlined and I once again commit that we will keep a watching brief. If at any time the member requires an update or a briefing, I will ensure that he is provided with that whenever he requests one.

Clause 16, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 17 to 27, as read, agreed to.

Clause 28—



Ms GRACE (10.16 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 28 (Insertion of new ch 6A)

Page 34, line 24, 'applicant.'—

omit, insert—

applicant; and

- (iv) any travel costs, that the insurer considers are necessary and reasonable, incurred by the applicant in attending the lung disease examination.

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper: Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017, explanatory notes to Hon. Grace Grace's amendments [1429].

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 28, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 29 to 41, as read, agreed to.

Schedule 1, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading



Hon. G GRACE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.17 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. G GRACE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.17 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.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.18 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Everton Park Post Office



Mr MANDER (Everton—LNP) (10.18 pm): I rise to outline an issue of grave concern in my electorate. A couple of months ago I was approached by a representative of Australia Post who advised me that the Everton Park post office was about to close down.


Mr Costigan: Not another one!

Mr MANDER: I take that interjection. Everton Park post office really is iconic for a suburban post office and has been around for nearly 100 years. To receive that news was quite a shock. Their excuse was that a redevelopment was happening at the shopping centre at which the post office was located. This is a redevelopment I welcome; it is a dated shopping centre that requires an update. It is a bit

difficult to work out who is telling the truth. Australia Post has said that it has been forced out by the developers, but when I spoke to the developers I was told that there is a space available for Australia Post and that in fact they want Australia Post to stay. Without getting into the politics of the situation locally, since that time I have sought the opinion of my constituents and I have discovered that they are as dismayed about this closure as I am.

Everton Park is a major business district for our electorate and for our region. The post office is very busy. It is used by many elderly residents who now have to somehow make their way over to the Brookside Shopping Centre to do their postal business. We went out with a petition and had over 1,500 people sign it. We submitted that to the federal government. That was tabled last week. We are waiting to see what sort of response we get. I want to advise my electorate that I am also writing directly to Australia Post. I find this situation totally unacceptable. We are asking Australia Post to come back to that same shopping centre or, if not to that shopping centre, to one very close by. There is a new development across the road where there are vacant shops. Australia Post would do well to listen to the community, to really think about service. The member for Beaudesert was right, I did work for Australia Post for 10 years. That organisation has gone downhill since I have left.

Operation Energise; Vietnam Veterans Day


 **Mr KING** (Kallangur—ALP) (10.20 pm): Those opposite always speak vitriol about the union movement. They never speak of the good the movement does for the workers, families and communities of this state. I rise tonight to tell you a little bit about Operation Energise, an initiative of the mighty Electrical Trades Union that mobilises every time our state suffers from a natural disaster or communities are impacted in a way where power is cut. They work for free to provide electrical work and testing to home owners and community groups who have copped nature's worst.

A few weeks ago I was honoured to be able to host a small thank-you barbecue on level 7 of this place to thank those electrical workers, apprentices and company representatives who participated in the latest operation after Tropical Cyclone Debbie lashed our shores and flooded areas throughout the state. The crew spent three weeks away from home and were better prepared than ever thanks in no small part to a trailer donated by Energy Super. Participating in these operations is a humbling experience. Helping someone whose home has been devastated by getting them even one working power point or safety testing an appliance so they can safely use it gives a real feeling of fulfilment.

There are also some real low points when one is doing this work and particular thanks must be given to Mates in Construction for providing help and advice on what to do when some conversations start to take a downward turn. I was able to participate in Operation Energise myself after the Bundaberg floods so I have firsthand experience in how lives can be changed with this work. I was able to present certificates of thanks to Brett Hanan, Bruce Humphreys, Cameron Humphreys, Andrew Humphreys, Garry Lloyd, Josh Rubia, Andrew Railey, Chris Bredhauer, Jake Goldsworthy, Sam Wright, Alex Alleman and Tri Tran. It is good to see some of the same tradesmen lining up to do it every time. Also thanked were the mighty Electrical Trades Union, in particular Keith McKenzie and Craig Thomas, Energy Queensland, Powerlink—it was particularly good to catch up with some of my old bosses, Dave Sinnamon and Gary Edwards—Energex, Ergon, Electrogroupp apprentices, Energy Super, Mates in Construction, Stowe Australia and Perigon Electrical. Also thanks to Minister de Brenni for attending and acknowledging the great work done by the union and its members and the companies who participated. I, like everyone in this place, hope we never need to mobilise Operation Energise again, but sadly when we live in this state we know that Mother Nature will always have her say.

Last week in Kallangur I also attended some Vietnam Veterans Day services. One in particular was memorable: the Patriots Motorcycle Club. Dave, the president, ran a great service. The theme this year was peacekeeping forces. There were some touching poems read by members and a great speech by Major Scott Revel about his experiences and enemy contact when he was on peacekeeping missions. Those guys really do get it, being vets themselves, and they put on a great service and it is a credit to them.

Gaven Electorate

 **Mr CRAMP** (Gaven—LNP) (10.24 pm): Over the past few weeks Gaven has been the community capital of the Gold Coast. This has not made for too much time off, especially over the weekends, but it has been fantastic to catch up with all of the local businesses, community and sporting groups that were also in attendance. I would like to acknowledge the hard work by those volunteers who put in the time and effort to hold these incredibly successful community events. I am incredibly proud to be involved in so many local community organisations within the electorate.

As a Nerang PCYC committee member, I have had the privilege of working alongside Sergeant Scott Muldoon and PCYC Manager Rebecca Morris, both of whom are not just outstanding at their jobs but also incredible human beings. They exemplify hard work and leadership. The recent success of the Nerang Family Funanza, organised by Bec, Scotty and the Nerang PCYC team, showed what an amazing community spirit we have here in Gaven. Over 7,000 people attended this year's event and just like the Gaven electorate the event continues to grow and become even more popular. I would also like to give a special shout out to the Lions Club of Carrara who manned the sausage sizzle all day at the Funanza doing an awesome job keeping up with the unrelenting demand for food and drink.


At the other end of the electorate we had the Jubilee Family Fun Day. The whole community came together, which was no small thanks to the Jubilee Primary School P&F President Tamika Smith and principal Matt Edwards. Without the effort and dedication of Tamika, Matt, the P&F and school staff, and of course the many parents in the Jubilee community, days such as this would never happen. The highlight of the day would have to be the member for Albert and me taking turns in the dunking machine to raise much needed funds for the school. I believe this was clear evidence of the extent we are willing to go to to support our shared local community. I can tell members we were popular!

I have had the privilege over the last 2½ years of being involved with the Guanaba Rural Fire Service. Brendan Gold, Eldon Boettcher and their fellow firies do an amazing job and play an incredibly vital role in the Gaven electorate. Their recent open day showed how much community support they have and rightfully so. It was a privilege to support the open day, along with my friend and colleague Mark Boothman, through supplying and cooking the food and soft drink for the sausage sizzle. The great news was that nobody went to hospital with food poisoning.

This year's Pacific Pines Winterfest organised by the Pacific Pines Residents Group was again a runaway success. Having a later start so there could be fireworks at the end of the night was a genius move. Winterfest is the biggest community gathering for the northern area of the Gaven electorate and it takes an amazing amount of effort to hold the event successfully. I want to give a huge congratulations to chief organisers Vicky Hocking and Stacey Schinner, who did an outstanding job working tirelessly throughout the event. Of course an event this size does take a team to run. Vicky and Stacey were very ably assisted by Anne Brimms, June Cantrell, Dot Brickle and all of their fellow members of the Pacific Pines Residents Group, making it such a great day.

The commitment and efforts of these volunteer groups to support our community is what makes the Gaven electorate the great place that it is and I look forward to many more years of involvement.

Borallon Training and Correctional Centre

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (10.27 pm): I have previously spoken about the great work being done at Borallon Training and Correctional Centre by the General Manager, Peter Henderson, and his staff under the direction of Acting Commissioner Kerrith McDermott and the Minister for Corrective Services, Mark Ryan. The staged recommissioning of Borallon from April 2016 is just another example of the Palaszczuk government delivering on its commitment to ease prisoner capacity pressure and invest in education, training and employment to prepare prisoners for release into the community and reduce recidivism.


Borallon is a unique partnership between Corrective Services, TAFE Queensland and private enterprise and offers an array of employment and education opportunities for prisoners. TAFE Queensland, whose onsite campus provides high levels of training consistent with the Palaszczuk government's vision, offers an accelerated learning environment. Prisoners are engaged in education and industry training in horticulture, engineering, welding skill sets, language, literacy and numeracy, kitchen operations, automotive and construction. Educational services provided to prisoners at Borallon also include vocational education and training, basic education—primary and secondary courses—and distance tertiary education courses. Not to mention that prisoners can also participate in university level studies offered through the University of Southern Queensland. The University of Southern Queensland has received national recognition for enabling prisoners to access higher education and improve their digital literacy.

What is more, Borallon Training and Correctional Centre offers real-life work experience opportunities thanks to Australian Framing Solutions, AFS. AFS is a Crestmead based company producing steel frames, trusses, roofing and floor systems. The company is led by an experienced, hands-on CEO, Jake Gundry. This company is taking part in the Corrective Services work restart initiative, a new prison industry program that enables firms to conduct their business inside the prison precinct, thereby giving prisoners access to real-life work experience opportunities.

The AFS workshop produces framing for various South-East Queensland construction projects, including four schools, seven residential developments and three aged-care facilities. Currently they employ 20 prisoners, with the company soon to expand its operation at Borallon. Also, AFS has offered post-release employment to two prisoners trained at the Borallon workshop.

All of those opportunities to improve educational skills and gain employment make Borallon Training and Correctional Centre the first of its kind in Queensland. The Palaszczuk government knows that addressing offending behaviour while providing meaningful opportunities for prisoners to improve themselves increases their chances of getting jobs outside and is one of the best ways to improve community safety.

Aspley Electorate, Seniors Week


 **Ms DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (10.30 pm): It would not be August without the Ekka and it would not be August without communities coming together to celebrate Queensland Seniors Week. I have said many times that in Aspley we are very fortunate to have some of the most giving, talented and exceptional seniors to be found anywhere in this state. I see firsthand not only the incredible work that they do but also the positive impact that they have on our local community. Whether it is the men at the Ridley Road Men's Shed helping students to construct birdhouses, Jeanie and her team at Geebung Meals on Wheels preparing and delivering hearty meals to many in our community or our wonderful Aspley National Seniors and local Probus clubs, the Aspley community is richer for the contribution that our seniors make.

Again this year I will be hosting my annual Seniors Week Aspley Achiever Awards ceremonies and morning teas across our local retirement villages. This year we will have something a little extra for our guests: we will have a visit from two outstanding Aspley seniors, John Gormly and Marion Keane. Those two local residents are typical of the amazing spirit of our Aspley seniors. John Gormly and his wife, Olwen, are travellers who have put together a valuable resource for people who wish to journey through Central Queensland's Coal Country Way. John and Olwen's resource is now online. At the click of a button, travellers can enjoy all of the information that they need to take this amazing journey through Central Queensland.

If the name Marion Keane sounds familiar, it should. Lately, Marion has featured in several news stories, including television appearances, to talk about her recently published book, *Chapel Bells to Barbells*. The book is about life growing up in Brisbane after World War II. It gives insights into Marion's life as a Catholic nun, the stress of being a carer and how to keep fit after 70. Marion is now a personal trainer who dedicates herself to helping people over 60 become more fit and healthy. At age 73, she is a true inspiration and role model for a healthy lifestyle through the senior years.

I cannot wait for Marion and John to join my Seniors Week celebrations and share their stories. We should always acknowledge the important role seniors play in our local communities. To have a whole week dedicated to them demonstrates how much we appreciate the invaluable contributions that they make.

Stretton Electorate


 **Mr PEGG** (Stretton—ALP) (10.32 pm): I want to update the House on some of the exciting things happening in my local community. As I have said before, it is always happening in Stretton and it all happens in Stretton. On Saturday we had the wonderful Warrigala, which takes place at the Warrigal Road State School. It was a fantastic event. I was lucky to have an information stand with the member for Sunnybank, Peter Russo, who has told me how much he too enjoyed the day. There were plenty of rides for kids, fantastic raffles and wonderful entertainment. For me, there were two highlights: firstly, I bought a very delicious rainbow cake; secondly, I met Chewbacca, which was also wonderful. I had never met Chewbacca before, so that was a first and it was fantastic. These big events do not just happen, so I want to recognise some of the organisers: Sonia Illic, Rebecca Fein, Kathryn Kolodko, Kerri Megans, Kristy Evans, Kirsty Allen, Sheetal Parmer and, of course, Principal Di Carter. Besides all the fun and entertainment, the great thing about Warrigala was that it raised funds for air conditioning in the classrooms at Warrigal Road State School, which is a very worthy cause.

The other fantastic event that happened in my local community on Saturday was the Family Fun Fair at Calamvale Central Shopping Centre. There were lots of rides and entertainment. There were even sideshow activities with lucky ducks, a ball-in-the-clown's-mouth game, face painting and even an animal farm. It was lots of fun for the whole family, particularly children.

One of the things that I really like about the Family Fun Fair in Calamvale, which is in its second year and has really established itself in Calamvale, is that it has affordable show bags that cost only \$3.00. Even better, all proceeds from the show bags go to the Salvation Army. The Calamvale Salvos are located just down the road from Calamvale Central and they do fantastic work. It is wonderful to see that such a fantastic community event raises money for such a good cause.

Finally, I want to let all members know about an exhibition that I think they should attend. Last month, I represented Minister Enoch and officially opened the *Windmill of your mind: stories inspired by Queensland's oldest building* exhibition at the Queensland State Archives, which is situated in my electorate at Runcorn. I encourage all members of this House and, in fact, all Queenslanders to visit the archives and see that wonderful exhibition, which was inspired by Queensland's oldest icon, the windmill on Wickham Terrace. The fantastic thing about the exhibition is that it is the first time the Queensland State Archives has worked with the Queensland College of Art. I think that is fantastic. As I said, it all happens in Stretton.

Redlands Electorate


 **Mr McEACHAN** (Redlands—LNP) (10.35 pm): Firstly, on behalf of the southern Moreton Bay islands community, I am deeply concerned that the Palaszczuk Labor government has withdrawn funding for the jetty replacement program. That program was to start at Russell Island, with concept drawings and initial public consultation already undertaken. However, there is no reference to the program in this year's budget or, in fact, the forward estimates. It appears that all work in progressing this vital project has come to a stop. The infrastructure is critical to all the island communities. If any jetties were to become unsafe or unserviceable due to budget delays, it would be devastating. There is no other option for those communities. On behalf of the Redlands community, I demand that the minister for transport immediately confirm for island locals that this critical program is funded and will go ahead as scheduled. We cannot risk any delay.

Secondly, on another serious issue, in recent weeks roaming groups of youths have been committing vandalism, tagging personal property and intimidating locals in the Victoria Point area. Since this Palaszczuk Labor government was elected, we know that they have not put any more police on the beat, yet the Redlands is one of the fastest growing electorates in the state. We also know that Labor is soft on crime. Even a cursory look at youth crime in Townsville should be a warning to the law-abiding individuals, families and seniors of the Redlands.

The Breaking Through drug rehabilitation facility has been described by senior police as little more than a halfway house for serious offenders on bail. This so-called facility is tying up already stretched police resources on an all-too-regular basis. The time has long passed since that place should have been shut down. The police minister says that it is not his problem; the Attorney-General says that it is not her problem. The community has no faith in Labor to deal with these law and order issues, but while they are in government and it is their sworn duty to do so we implore them to resource Redlands fairly.

Lastly, as this is Seniors Week, it is fitting I acknowledge the Redland Bay Senior Citizens Club and the great work they do in the community to provide companionship, social events and a truly awesome Australia Day feast. Recently I had the honour of chairing their annual general meeting. I pay tribute to Laurie and the incoming committee. I am sure they will have another terrific year bringing fun and friendship to seniors in the Redlands.

Townsville Cultural Festival

 **Hon. CJ O'ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland) (10.39 pm): Townsville's most attractive multicultural event was held in my electorate of Mundingburra recently. The cultural fest commenced on Wednesday, 9 August and continued right through to Sunday, 13 August. This amazing festival is managed by Dr Farvardin Daliri and his support committee, along with the staff at the Townsville Intercultural Centre. Farvardin's original vision for this event was to develop a sense of community and for welcoming multicultural families into our society, to help bring our community together as a whole and to share cultural experiences from all over the world.

Since its inception in 1995, the festival has grown immensely, with the event's humble beginnings being held over a weekend with just a few hundred people, to now being a five-day festival attracting tens of thousands of patrons each year from Townsville and the surrounding towns, along with the


numerous national and international visitors our beautiful city attracts. The festival provided the opportunity to experience over 150 different performances from groups and individuals, a stroll through the various market stalls and a taste of a variety of different cuisines from a number of food stalls.

The crowds were entertained over five days with everything from folk, blues, hip-hop and punk, to Indigenous Australian music and dance, drum circles, fire shows, cabaret, poetry, theatre and traditional dance groups from around the world. The amazing aroma drew in the crowds eager to taste the various cuisines from some of the most gifted people in our community and abroad. One of the entertainment highlights of the cultural fest offered this year was the talented Anne Kirkpatrick, the daughter of Australia's country music legend Slim Dusty. This was the most special to Farvardin, who sculpted a statue of Slim Dusty that is the height of a standard single-storey home and sits proudly outside the Intercultural Centre, which is just up the road from my electorate office. I have to say that all of his artwork is truly amazing.

I would like to acknowledge the enormous amount of work and the hours that he has put in to plan and prepare an event of this proportion. I also acknowledge the huge expenses involved. I am pleased that our state government is financially supportive of the Townsville Cultural Festival through the Gambling Community Benefit Fund and through Celebrating the Multicultural Queensland grants program for multicultural events and projects and classifies this magnificent festival as a signature event.

Dr Farvardin Daliri and his team at the Townsville Intercultural Centre continually strive for harmony in our diverse culture. I applaud him for his continued efforts and passion. I will continue to support the Townsville Intercultural Centre's mission, which demonstrates their undivided support towards bridging the gap in our growing multicultural society.

Willowbank, Cunningham Highway; Dart, Mr J

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (10.42 pm): I bring to the attention of parliament the need to make improvements to the Cunningham Highway around Willowbank. This highway, part of the National Highway network, is a major freight route with continually increasing traffic, added to by the rapid growth in defence personnel working at the Amberley airbase. The line of cars up Southern Amberley Road from the RAAF base at knock-off time, mainly turning left onto Rosewood-Amberley Road to then turn onto the Cunningham Highway, is getting out of control.

I know that the federal government is working, through Infrastructure Australia, on plans to upgrade a section of the highway from Yamanto to Ebenezer. The Queensland government needs to work quickly to get costings and plans completed to upgrade this highway. For residents of Willowbank, Mutdapilly, Ebenezer and Mount Forbes, the places closest to this intersection, and all of the places down the Cunningham Highway, it is clear that improvements are needed—two lanes each way and improved intersections—to deal with the pressure of the growth at Amberley airbase and the residential growth at Walloon, Thagoona and Rosewood in the electorate of Ipswich West.

The Labor government here in Queensland needs to do the costings and plans so that the federal government has a project to pay for. The progress seems to be painfully slow. I am happy to take up this fight on behalf of residents, just like the member for Lockyer, Ian Rickuss, has been doing while he has been representing these communities.

Following an inquiry from a resident, I recently asked TMR to install overhead lights on the Cunningham Highway near the Matilda at Willowbank. I am pleased to say that we have received word that this will be done—a move that will improve safety on this section of road.


The LNP has announced that in government we will review speed limits on many of our roads. I am keen to hear from residents about speed limits in the area so I can go into bat for their views. I know that some people think that the limits should be higher and some people think they should be lower. The key is to let us know which roads should be reviewed and whether the limit should go up or down. The LNP policy will provide an avenue for this review to take place. I urge all residents in this region to let me know which roads should be reviewed.

In news which has come to light in the last couple of hours in relation to the racing industry, I note that the chief steward at the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission, Jamie Dart, has been sacked from his position, finally, after he was stood down without pay over nine months ago. We saw a farcical, tumultuous process where he was stood down on full pay for nine months. We always had concerns about his appointment as the chief steward in Queensland because he was the director of integrity in the greyhound industry when the live baiting issues examined in 2015 came to light. It is an

appointment that should never have been made. There were serious concerns about it in the industry. I note the *Courier-Mail* article states that 'high ranking racing steward Jamie Dart was sacked after a 10-month investigation into complaints of sexual harassment made by a number of female co-workers'.

(Time expired)

Richardson, Ms F; Marsden State High School

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.45 pm): I did want to speak tonight about the success of the Marsden State High School football teams. I will get to that, but first I want to take a moment to acknowledge the sad passing of my friend, the nation's first ever minister for the prevention of domestic violence and member for Northcote in Victoria, Fiona Richardson. We have tonight heard the devastating news that Fiona lost her brave battle with the aggressive tumours she had been fighting for some months. Her strength and quiet determination meant she had survived cancer once before, but tonight her recent struggle became too great. She was just 50 years of age.

I have been privileged to work with Fiona through the women's safety ministers' meetings where I witnessed her relentless pursuit of better support and services for women and children escaping violence. A survivor of domestic violence herself, she was fierce in her determination to make all of us—other states, the federal government, and the community—do everything we can to curb this violence.

She was smart and one of those people who everyone listened to when she spoke. I certainly looked to her for direction when I first became minister. I was so relieved that there was someone at these meetings who directly linked gender inequality with violence against women. Her family are right when they say that the whole nation is trying to emulate the comprehensive gender equality strategy she championed. They are absolutely right when they say that she had unfinished business in the fight to end violence against women. It is incumbent on all of us to follow through on the path she set.

She was generous. Fiona was always willing to have a chat when we were in the same city or when there were important matters we needed to gang up on against the Commonwealth, as state ministers often do. I will miss her dearly. I know that I speak for everyone in the parliament when I say our thoughts are with her family, her many friends and colleagues and her staff at this very sad time.

I also want to talk about Marsden State High School's incredible football teams. While not successful against Keebra Park, I am told the Rugby League team put up a courageous fight in the Queensland GIO Schoolboy Cup Grand Final today, and the players should be proud. Nearly half the school was there with the community cheering on the boys, including my federal colleague Jim Chalmers. Congratulations to principal Andrew Peach and the head coach, Joe O'Callaghan.

Not only that, but the year 7 team won in golden point extra time 14 points to 12 against Wavell State High School. While not successful in their grand final, the year 10 team can be so proud of their hard work and effort. I also want to give a shout-out to the open girls Rugby team, which achieved incredible results in their debut season in the statewide competition. The achievements of Marsden State High School are a testimony not only to the talent and passion of the players but also to the great school that enriches the spirit that lies within the Marsden community and the Waterford electorate.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.48 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Bailey, Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Costigan, Cramp, Crawford, Cripps, D'Ath, Davis, de Brenni, Dick, Dickson, Donaldson, Elmes, Emerson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gilbert, Gordon, Grace, Harper, Hart, Hinchliffe, Howard, Janetzki, Jones, Katter, Kelly, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Lauga, Leahy, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, Miles, Millar, Miller, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Power, Pyne, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Seene, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Trad, Walker, Watts, Weir, Wellington, Whiting, Williams