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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT

Wednesday, 6 September 2017

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WEDNESDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 2017



The Legislative Assembly met at 2.00 pm.

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

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Security of Parliamentary Precinct



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, in a statement to this House on 16 June 2017 I made a very clear statement to members regarding the security of the parliamentary precinct and the security of all members and staff. At that time I emphasised that security on this precinct is a collective matter. All members and staff must ensure that procedures regarding security are followed.

I noted that at that time there had been a number of incidents where members and/or staff had not followed security procedures. One of the examples I cited was members signing in guests and not ensuring that those guests are accompanied by a parliamentary card holder at all times. I noted that in the world in which we live the failure to follow security procedures is not acceptable.

Yesterday another issue was brought to my attention. There were two aspects to yesterday's matter. The first related to a person who posed a risk to another member being given entry to the precinct, in particular being signed in as a guest of another member. I am currently following up with that member as to their state of knowledge regarding this person. The second aspect is that I have been informed that this person and another guest were left unattended by the member who had signed in these guests. I am currently following up with that member as to why guests were apparently left unattended.

I again make it very clear that breaches of our security procedures are a very grave matter because of the risk it poses to members and all staff. I am currently investigating the matters that arose yesterday in more depth. As I warned in my statement in June, I will consider forwarding any breaches to the Ethics Committee for its consideration. I may also stop particular members who are in breach from bringing in guests to parliament for a period of time.

SPEAKER'S RULINGS

Alleged Intimidation of a Member



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, on 21 August 2017 the member for Broadwater wrote to me complaining about the conduct of the member for Logan in the House on Thursday, 10 August 2017. The member for Broadwater has alleged that the member for Logan was acting in an intimidating manner, trying to compel the member for Broadwater to attend a committee meeting rather than attend duties in the House. Yesterday the member for Logan assured the House that it was not his intention to in any way intimidate or harass the member for Broadwater and sincerely apologised to the member.

I wish to make it clear that I consider any allegation of intimidation or harassment as serious and not technical or trivial. However, in accordance with standing order 269(4), I consider the member for Logan's apology to be an adequate response to this matter. I have, therefore, decided not to refer this matter to the Ethics Committee. I table the correspondence in relation to the matter. Finally, I would remind members that, should anything untoward occur in the House, it is important that those matters are brought to the attention of me or my delegates at the earliest practical opportunity.

Tabled paper: Correspondence from the member for Broadwater, Miss Verity Barton MP and the member for Logan, Mr Linus Power MP, to the Speaker, Hon. Peter Wellington, regarding an alleged intimidation [[1579](#)].

Answer to Question on Notice



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, on 4 September 2017 the member for Everton wrote to me drawing my attention to question on notice No. 1,010 asked on 16 June 2017 by the member for Chatsworth and complaining about the answer provided by the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services. The member has previously complained about the

answer to this question on notice and I have already provided a ruling on the matter. In a ruling on 9 August 2017 I ruled that, on the evidence available to me, the minister had made a reasonable and best effort to answer the question, and the question was answered. I will be taking no further action on the member's most recent complaint.

PETITION

The following honourable member has lodged a paper petition for presentation—

Banksia Beach State School, Drop-Off Zones

Mr Williams, from 610 petitioners, requesting the House to take urgent action to achieve a safe drop off zone and car park for Banksia Beach State School [[1578](#)].

Petition received.

TABLED PAPERS

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

MEMBERS' PAPERS

The following members' papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Member for Cairns (Mr Pyne)—

[1574](#) Bundle of documents relating to Ms Renee Eaves

[1575](#) Bundle of documents (with redactions) regarding the QPRIME database

Member for Capalaba (Mr Brown)—


[1576](#) Nonconforming petition regarding replacement of existing Russell Island Rocky Point boat launch site to current Australian marine standards

Member for Redlands (Mr McEachan)—

[1577](#) Nonconforming petition regarding replacement of existing Russell Island Rocky Point boat launch site to current Australian marine standards

NOTICE OF MOTION

Buy Queensland


 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Sport) (2.06 pm): I give notice that I will move—

That this House—

1. notes the failure of the opposition leader and the LNP to stand up for Queensland small business and Queensland jobs as he has intentionally avoided taking a position on the Buy Queensland policy;
2. notes federal LNP trade minister Steve Ciobo's baseless campaign to force Queensland taxpayer funds to be spent sending jobs interstate and overseas, which proves the LNP will barrack for anyone except Queensland; and
3. calls upon the Leader of the Opposition to finally show some leadership on Buy Queensland and condemn the federal LNP for failing to back Queensland jobs.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Front-Line Services

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.06 pm): My government is one that listens and delivers for all Queenslanders. When we came to office just over 2½ years ago I made a commitment to the people of Queensland that we would restore the former government's cuts to front-line services. Those cuts carried out by the member for Clayfield when he was treasurer had a devastating effect on Queensland's hospitals, Queensland's schools, Queensland's child safety system and our emergency services.

In Wide Bay, which is where my ministers and I will govern from next week, more than 100 nurses and 23 child safety staff lost their jobs. Across the state 14,000 government workers lost their jobs, including 4,400 health workers. When cuts like that happen Queenslanders miss out. They miss out on the health services they need and the quality education they need.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That interjection is from the man who closed the Barrett Adolescent Centre.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, I can hear you.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We can go through your list of achievements any time because there were not any—zero.

We have restored the cuts not just in Wide Bay but across the state. In every budget since we were elected we have set about the task of rebuilding the front line. We have done this because we believe that all Queenslanders should have access to quality health and education services no matter where they live in our great state.

Since coming to office we have delivered more than 3,000 nurses; more than 1,100 doctors; more than 3,000 extra teachers and teacher aides; 250 ambulance officers; 330 extra police; 205 new fire and emergency service workers; and more than 120 child safety officers, with another 292 committed over this financial year and the next.


Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They are not happy today.

Mr SPEAKER: You might be provoking them, Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I do not know why. Nine out of 10 government workers in this state are in front-line and front-line support roles. They are the men and women providing essential services to Queenslanders. I thank them for the very important role they play each and every day.

Electricity Prices

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.10 pm): There is no more powerful repudiation of the impact of privatisation on energy security and electricity prices than the Liddell coal-fired power station in New South Wales. Today the Prime Minister is trying to convince AGL to keep it open beyond 2022. AGL has owned this power station since the New South Wales LNP government sold it to them in 2014. The federal LNP government gave the New South Wales LNP government \$2.19 billion in infrastructure funding for selling their electricity assets. If the Prime Minister pays AGL to keep it open, he must immediately rule out passing on the costs to Queenslanders.

Queensland will not pay private power stations to stay open in other states. In Queensland we own our energy assets. We have kept our electricity generation, transmission and distribution assets in public ownership. By owning our assets we can keep electricity supplies secure and we can keep maximum downward pressure on electricity prices. Our electricity businesses—

Mr Bleijie: Seventy per cent increases.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Forty-three under you.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. We will wait.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Speaker—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am happy to wait.

Mrs Frecklington: No, answer.

Ms PALASZCZUK: No. I am happy to wait. I am more than happy to wait.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. I call the Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Speaker, our electricity—

Mr Langbroek: It's not a lecture theatre.

Mr SPEAKER: No, it is not a lecture theatre.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is called common decency and respect.

Mr SPEAKER: If you attempt to provoke either side, I will take action.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Speaker, our electricity businesses only remain in public ownership because my government was able to stop the asset sales. The LNP in Queensland, like their colleagues in Canberra and Sydney, were desperate to sell.

Mr Bleijie: You can't attack us and then not expect interjections. Come on. Who are you? Come on.

Mr SPEAKER: That is a valid comment, member for Kawana.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: No. I have not made any rulings. It is a valid comment.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Our predecessors even sold—

Mr Costigan interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Whitsunday.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Our predecessors even sold the gas fuelling the 385-megawatt Swanbank E Power Station. Today the Treasurer has announced we have secured the gas to restart Swanbank E and generate more electricity for Queensland homes and businesses.

I am prepared to keep sending Queensland electricity south to keep the Prime Minister's harbourside lights on so he can finish his national energy plan. I say to the Prime Minister in the words of his deputy—that famous dual New Zealander, Barnaby Joyce—get your paperwork right.

Opposition members interjected.


Mr SPEAKER: You have the call, Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They want to talk about Barnaby. We are happy to talk about Barnaby.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. We are in ministerial statements time.

Arts

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.13 pm): Queensland audiences continue to enjoy world-class events and performances that reinforce our state's position as a cultural tourism destination. My government is providing funding for our arts community throughout Queensland—from the Torres Strait to Townsville, Mackay to Bundaberg and the Gold Coast to Toowoomba.


My government promised all Queenslanders at the last election that we would embrace the arts community and that we would ensure that the arts community was never ignored. The member for Clayfield was part of a government that cut the Queensland Premier's Literary Awards—and this was just the start of their very first cuts. It was a move condemned not just by the literary community but across the country—and that was just the beginning. The government which the member for Clayfield was a member of cut and slashed funding for Art + Place, the Matilda Awards, the Fanfare Competition, the Queensland Art Gallery and Youth Arts Queensland.

Our commitment to the arts was evident in our recent budget, with \$30 million over four years for our commitment to attract large-scale film and television productions to Queensland; \$17.5 million for the Arts Infrastructure Investment Fund; \$9.4 million over two years to transform Queensland Museum's Sciencentre; \$6.5 million over four years for Indigenous and regional arts initiatives; and \$2 million for the Rockhampton Art Gallery.

One of the most talked about exhibitions in Queensland is the Marvel exhibition at QAGOMA. I am pleased to announce today that this exhibition has broken all previous attendance records with 269,000 visitors. This exceeds the previous record of 232,000 for Andy Warhol in 2007-08. While, I am speaking about records, I am also proud to announce that QAGOMA celebrated a record-breaking attendance in 2016-17, with 1.73 million visitors—almost half of those visiting from interstate and overseas.

I am proud to lead a government that cares about the arts, and the exciting arts initiatives delivered across the state are ensuring Queenslanders can access vibrant, diverse and accessible arts and cultural experiences.

Queensland Rail

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (2.16 pm): The Palaszczuk government is committed to fully implementing the Strachan inquiry recommendations. We are continuing to deliver on our plan to drive improvements at Queensland Rail and deliver better—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. I find the Deputy Premier is not being provocative. I will take the appropriate action if members interject.

Mr Walker interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: No. Thank you, member for Mansfield. The Deputy Premier has the call.

Ms TRAD: It seems every time I talk about public transport I am provoking those opposite because we know they do not like public transport.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: All right. Thank you, members. We have been going 15 minutes.

Ms TRAD: We are continuing to deliver on our plan to drive improvement at Queensland Rail and deliver better public transport for commuters across South-East Queensland.

Queensland Rail operates a large network and occasionally incidents occur which can cause delays, as we saw last night. Queensland Rail is working hard to improve performance and provide a more resilient network that can recover quickly from disruptions.

I can also inform the House that last week Queensland Rail opened recruitment to external applicants. Jobseekers interested in pursuing a career as a train driver or guard can now apply through Queensland Rail's website.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. I will start to make rulings if members persist. You have the call, Premier.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Hinchinbrook, I will give you the benefit of the doubt but no further.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Well, I have kicked him out before and he did not do it and he was very charitable at the time. Deputy Premier, you have the call.


Ms TRAD: Achieving this milestone is not the only progress we are making towards fixing the trains and getting back on track to delivering an efficient and reliable public transport network for Queenslanders. As at 31 August, 103 applicants have been offered trainee driver positions. Since October last year, 35 additional drivers are now driving trains on the South-East Queensland network. Currently, there are 77 trainee drivers in training, with all driver training schools for 2017 filled.

We have an additional 97 guards in service since October, and we have implemented a number of initiatives to fast-track the training process to get more train crew on the job faster. There is a range of measures being undertaken to accelerate training and these include recruiting an extra 10 tutor drivers and 10 tutor guards, and there are more than 80 drivers to mentor new trainees and streamline on-track training, freeing up driver trainers to work with more new recruits.

Since October last year driver training duration has averaged approximately 13 months. This is a significant reduction of nearly 30 per cent compared to the previous average of nearly 18 months. We have improved forecasting and modelling to enable Queensland Rail to better identify and manage stress periods, providing customers with advance notice of any timetable changes required to deliver reliable services during stress periods. Through more than 20 commuter catch-ups, customers have had the opportunity to provide feedback to Queensland Rail. This feedback has been instrumental in identifying and expanding initiatives to improve customer experience across the network.

We are committed to modernising Queensland Rail and delivering an integrated customer focused public transport network. The Palaszczuk government is committed to fixing the trains and transforming the public transport network to ensure we provide Queenslanders with a reliable, convenient and world-class public transport system.

State Finances

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.20 pm): I have good news for Queensland. The release of the June 2017—


Opposition members interjected.

Mr PITT: I have never heard people so animated about economic updates. That is fantastic! The release of the June 2017 quarter national accounts by the ABS shows that Queensland's state final demand has risen by 0.7 per cent for the June quarter. This is the sixth consecutive quarter of growth for Queensland's domestic economy after eight consecutive quarters of contraction.

Queensland state final demand for 2016-17 on a trend basis was recorded at 2.7 per cent higher than New South Wales at 2.4 per cent for the same period. The June quarter 2017 result marked the fourth consecutive quarterly increase in business investment. All three of the business investment components rose strongly in the quarter, with machinery and equipment recording the largest increase, up 2.4 per cent. Driven by a rise in general government investment in the quarter, up 5.7 per cent, public final demand rose 1.4 per cent in the June quarter 2017 to be 3.7 per cent higher over the year.

From the very beginning the Palaszczuk government has said that there is a better way for Queensland. We have ensured with our sound fiscal and economic management that debt is down, jobs are up and growth is up. Today is more evidence that a better way is being delivered for Queensland.

Energy Supply

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.22 pm): When it comes to the current energy debate sweeping the nation, Queensland is leading the way with the right mix of policies on renewables and on how best to use our publicly owned energy companies. When the national energy market need it, we are an exporter of energy, helping to stabilise volatility in the national energy market.

This morning, as the Premier mentioned, I was on site at Stanwell's Swanbank E Power Station. This was mothballed under the former LNP government in keeping with its mass privatisation agenda with the loss of 25 direct jobs. In contrast, the Palaszczuk government is bringing it back online, bringing more supply and reducing price volatility. Stanwell received a number of commercial offers for gas supply following our announcement in June that we would be firing up the 385-megawatt power plant again. The Swanbank E Power Station near Ipswich will start supplying power again on 1 January next year. This announcement will help ensure security of supply, drive down electricity costs and create jobs. This is helping not only in Queensland but also in other states, and I congratulate Stanwell and Shell Australia for closing this gas supply deal.

I would also like to provide the House with an update from the Australian Energy Market Operator, AEMO, which released the *Electricity Statement of Opportunities* yesterday. This report confirms what we have been saying all along: Queensland's electricity supply remains secure and reliable. Queensland's electricity generation, underpinned by coal- and gas-fired generators and an increasingly diverse mix of renewable energy, will be able to meet expected demand in all forecast scenarios for at least the next 10 years. In fact, Queensland's supply is so secure that we will continue to export electricity supply interstate. We will continue to help cover predicted shortfalls in southern states due to extreme weather conditions such as the heatwaves of last summer.

The Turnbull government should be working with Queensland, which has a strong energy position, instead of attacking us because we have kept ownership of our assets. AEMO's report said that Queensland is not at risk of large-scale blackouts during these peak periods, disproving misleading comments by the opposition earlier this year when they likened South Australia's situation to Queensland.

This report is more evidence that our transition to a 50 per cent renewable energy target is both sensible and ensures security of supply. While no immediate additional generation is needed in Queensland, we are doing more to put downward pressure on wholesale prices by increasing supply. We have more than 1,800 megawatts of renewable energy projects under construction or nearing construction that will soon add additional supply to the market.


The Queensland Energy Security Taskforce is also developing a demand management and energy efficiency strategy to better manage peak demand and improve the resilience of the electricity grid. The report shows that other states are not in the same secure position as Queensland because of the closure and predicted closure of privately owned coal-fired power stations in southern states. A lack of industry investment in new energy projects to replace the supply lost from these closures is entirely due to policy inaction by the federal government.

The Turnbull government announced that it will subsidise industry to keep NSW's Liddell coal-fired power station open past 2022. This is after they rewarded the NSW government for selling this very asset in 2014. The federal government gave the NSW government millions of dollars for privatising Liddell coal-fired power station but punished Queensland for not selling off our assets. Unlike the Turnbull government, which wants to buy back or subsidise this coal-fired power station, the Palaszczuk government is all about making sure we keep our electricity assets in public hands—unlike the previous government which simply wanted to sell them.

Because we have kept our energy infrastructure in public hands we have been able to use dividends to directly contribute to the funding of initiatives to stabilise prices. If those opposite want to contribute to Queensland's energy future, they should lobby the Turnbull government to make a decision on the most important Finkel recommendation, and that is to back a clean energy target which modelling has shown will bring down power prices.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Hinchinbrook, you are warned under standing order 253A. You were attempting to talk over the top of the minister. If you persist, I will take the appropriate action.

Marriage

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (2.26 pm): On 29 August 2017 I was pleased to announce the Palaszczuk government would provide \$338,000 in funding to four non-government organisations to support the mental health of LGBTIQ Queenslanders ahead of the Turnbull government's expensive and shambolic marriage equality survey. Many individuals and community organisations told the Turnbull government that this vote presents a very real potential to expose harmful and homophobic comments at a personal and community wide level.

While the Prime Minister has ignored those concerns, the Palaszczuk government has responded, providing these funds to boost NGO services. We are providing a funding boost to Lifeline, Kids Helpline, the Queensland AIDS Council and the Open Doors Youth Service to help deal with any extra demand that may occur between now and the end of November, when the marriage equality survey is due to be completed. This is the Queensland government's no-harm campaign. We want any person struggling with the debate to know they can reach out and seek support.

On the continuum of mental health services, these community organisations play an important role as a first point of contact for many people who are struggling. They are accessible and non-judgemental services and often anonymous. For many Queenslanders, all they need is a sympathetic ear at the other end of the phone. For others, these services can play a life-saving entry point into a structured psychological and/or mental health environment.

The Palaszczuk government recognises the important role that non-government organisations provide in the wellbeing of not just the LGBTIQ community but all Queenslanders. This is a point of difference—a great point of difference—between our government and the Newman LNP government in which the Leader of the Opposition served as treasurer. The Newman government stripped funding from LGBTIQ organisations overnight and they slapped gag orders on organisations they continued to fund. The Leader of the Opposition as the then treasurer oversaw an \$8 million cut in annual grants to community organisations to help support preventative health programs—programs that supported alcohol and drug intervention activities, community nutritionists and improved Indigenous child health. No organisation was safe from the cuts inflicted by the member for Clayfield when he was treasurer.

Those opposite are fond of criticising government reviews, but I have not heard them criticise the biggest review of them all—the federal government's shambolic \$122 million non-compulsory, non-binding postal survey which may lead to a conscience vote. Next week the annual Brisbane Pride Festival commences. In the words of Peter Black, the director for the Queensland equality campaign, 'LGBTIQ Australians are incredibly resilient and it is important during this time, especially, to look out for one another.' The community can look out for one another in the knowledge that they will be supported by the Palaszczuk Labor government. I call on all in this parliament to support the government in that aim.

Child Protection Week

 **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) (2.29 pm): This morning I attended with the Premier the annual Child Protection Week remembrance ceremony

organised by Micah Projects, which acknowledges adult survivors of childhood abuse in institutional settings. It is a time to reflect on past injustices of child abuse, the personal lifelong costs and the commitment we have to see justice restored, healing journeys continue and abuse never repeated.

This is the 31st Queensland Child Protection Week, reminding Queenslanders of our responsibilities and the role we all play in keeping children and young people safe. Many Child Protection Week events not only raise awareness but also educate and inform us on what to look for or how to respond when we think a child or young person may be in harm's way. I am pleased to say that the Palaszczuk government is providing \$150,000 to this year's Queensland Child Protection Week and \$750,000 over the next five years to Act for Kids to support this important week.

I would like to again acknowledge the efforts of the vital work that child safety staff do to keep Queensland children safe. These workers literally save children's lives every day and they deserve every support from their government and the community. The Palaszczuk government is investing in our child safety workforce with more child safety officers and essential support staff, improved career pathways and better management and supervision. We are directing our investment toward areas under pressure and we are restoring front-line services. We are also ensuring that we have the right infrastructure and supporting services that help keep children and families safe.

Our \$200 million child safety package rolled out from 2016-17 has delivered more than 400 new staff and created senior positions so that experienced staff stay on the front line. It was an investment in improved quality and connection across the system. New teams have been created to review and monitor performance at child safety service centres across the state. Soon nurses will work in our family support services and child safety officers will work with hospitals to ensure that the best possible care is provided for vulnerable children.

We also know that domestic and family violence is a significant cause of harm to children and young people, and the impacts can be severe and long lasting. This is why we have provided child safety staff and community based domestic violence practitioners with the David Mandel 'safe and together' training. We have placed domestic and family violence specialists in our family support services. Protecting children and young people is everybody's business. I am proud that in Child Protection Week, and every other week, the Palaszczuk government is playing our part.

Digital Strategy



Hon. LM ENOCH (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (2.32 pm): Today I am pleased to announce the Palaszczuk government's new Queensland digital strategy, which continues to put the people at the heart of our services. *DIGITAL1ST: advancing our digital future*, which I launched this morning, builds on the work this government is doing to rebuild front-line services after the former LNP government's cuts. This strategy will further position Queensland as a leader in digital government.

Queenslanders want digital by default. They want their government to give them a similar customer experience to what they get from their financial institutions or when they shop online. The Palaszczuk government is making good inroads, and the cost efficiencies to government driven by digital technology are really starting to make an impact, which means we can invest more in improving services for our communities. By replacing paper based transactions with over 400 new online services, the government can save an estimated \$13 per transaction. This means around \$400 million per year can be redirected into other services, and there is so much more to come.


Our Digital1st strategy is about government services being personalised so we can be there for Queenslanders when they need us most. Around 300 government services still require people to stand in queues and present ID each time before their requests can be processed. I am pleased to say that we have developed a better way forward for our people and businesses. We have introduced a new digital service that means in future Queenslanders only need to prove their online identity once. Less time spent in queues means more time for people to do the important things that matter in their life. It also means savings that can be reinvested into better services.

The new digital ID is currently being trialled with 30 government services. Over 300,000 customers have used it so far and have provided great feedback on how it is making a positive difference in their lives. Digital1st is a realistic strategy—one that aims to build on some outstanding examples of how digital technology has already improved government service delivery in Queensland. Digital technology is helping us preserve the natural environment for future generations to enjoy by giving us much more effective ways to monitor habitat impacts. It is increasing the effectiveness of our

front-line medical professionals by giving them access to patient records in real time anywhere in the state. We are also making it simpler and faster for people to start their own food service business, and we are making it easier for the ICT industry to work with government to deliver new digital services.

Considering how rapidly technology is changing, we need to continue to partner across government to provide the best possible services to Queenslanders. We are building a Digital1st government that enables a vibrant and thriving Queensland.


China, Tourism

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events and the Commonwealth Games) (2.35 pm): Ni hao, Mr Speaker. The latest Tourism Australia research data released overnight confirms China remains our largest and most lucrative international tourism market. On current forecasts, Chinese tourism to Queensland is expected to triple to \$3 billion by 2025 and we are laser focused in our determination to capitalise on this Chinese tourism boom.

Last week I travelled to Beijing for the Australian tourism ministers meeting and to pursue opportunities to grow Chinese tourism to Queensland. The meeting was held in China in recognition of the 2017 China-Australia Year of Tourism. I announced that Cairns will host the annual Amway leadership summit in 2019—an event that is expected to bring more than 8,000 Amway employees from China to Cairns. This will be the first time Cairns has hosted the event that is expected to inject more than \$50 million into the tropical North Queensland economy. I would like to thank Tourism and Events Queensland for securing this event for Cairns, alongside our partners Tourism Australia, Tourism Tropical North Queensland, Cairns Regional Council and Cairns Airport.

I am also very pleased to announce yet another major aviation win for North Queensland, with Hainan Airlines set to fly twice a week between Shenzhen and Cairns. I met with Hainan Airlines in Beijing to sign off on this major deal, and the Premier announced it in Cairns last week. It is expected to attract more than 30,000 more Chinese visitors over the next two years. We are determined to secure more international flights for Cairns as well as other parts of Queensland to deliver more visitors, more investment and more jobs. Xie xie.

Justice System, Funding

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (2.37 pm): The Palaszczuk government has a record of investing in people and supporting the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community. Our government has provided vital support to community legal centres and increased funding to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and Legal Aid Queensland. Our government supported CLCs to ensure they are able to continue to support the most vulnerable in our society. It was this government that stood up to the cuts that the Turnbull government was going to make to these CLCs. We took up that fight.

It is everyday Queenslanders who access these legal services—mums and dads, grandparents, young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people with a disability and people with mental health issues. They are the ones who are in most need of these services. Some of them are amongst the most vulnerable in Queensland and we need to support them.


The Palaszczuk government has continued its contribution in funding to the community legal centres and has provided \$33 million over four years and approximately \$555,000 in additional funds to ensure these services continued when the Commonwealth government threatened to remove their funding. By providing this funding, we ensured the services provided by the CLCs and the jobs of those employed were secure. We were the first Queensland government to also fund the LGBTI Legal Services and we removed the gag clauses on our CLCs.

The Palaszczuk government knows how vital legal assistance services are, and that is why we provided \$70.5 million to Legal Aid Queensland this financial year and will increase this to \$76.6 million next financial year, meeting our commitment to bring Legal Aid Queensland funding up to the national average. It is vital for the ongoing safety of Queenslanders that those who commit serious crimes are not just apprehended and charged but also prosecuted and convicted.

The Palaszczuk government is also responding to the growing complexity and demands placed on the criminal justice system by providing extra funding to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. The ODPP plays a vital role in this process. We have increased funding to the DPP by providing an additional 26 permanent positions. This represents an allocation of \$12.1 million in base funding for over four years commencing 1 July 2016.

The majority of these positions were allocated to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions' regional locations around the state with the remainder in Brisbane. It is the Palaszczuk government that is investing in front-line services and supporting important legal services in our communities and strengthening our justice system.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Threatened Species

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (2.39 pm): Tomorrow is National Threatened Species Day and this year in Queensland—

Honourable members interjected.

Dr MILES: There are a few threatened species in this House, but I am focused on some others. We have much to celebrate: the recent arrival of a rare wombat joey in St George, we have removed all the feral cats from the bilby enclosure in Currawinya and we have made huge strides in growing the population of bridled nail-tail wallabies. Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service rangers play a vital front-line role protecting threatened species. Their work has been critical in the protection of the golden shouldered parrot in Cape York, the spotted tail quolls in North Queensland, the green turtles on Raine Island and brown parrots on Fraser Island just to name a few. The Palaszczuk government is committed to protecting and expanding habitat for our native species.

Of course, the best way to create more ambassadors for our native wildlife is to get more people into our national parks. That is why we are investing \$40 million in world-class infrastructure for our parks that will make them rival Tasmania's, but none of this would be possible without our rangers. Our park rangers do an amazing job right across our incredibly diverse national parks. They manage the risks of fire and pests, they maintain our boardwalks and walking tracks and they help the public who visit our parks and campgrounds. In an emergency in a remote area they can often be the first people on the scene and when severe weather strikes like Cyclone Debbie they are left with a mammoth clean-up job. We saw how quickly our rangers got the Whitsundays back up and running in time for Easter after that cyclone, minimising the impact on the local tourist industry.


I am proud to say that the Palaszczuk government has rebuilt our ranger workforce after the Newman-Nicholls sacking spree, because we acknowledge what a vital service they provide to our state. When the member for Clayfield was treasurer he cut \$10 million from the salaries budget for the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. That meant that when permanent rangers left, their positions were left vacant. It meant fewer rangers working on our parks, fewer rangers to do controlled burns and stop fire hazards, fewer rangers to manage pests and weeds that affect our farmers, and fewer rangers to protect our native wildlife. Just today the RSPCA released a report that shows rescues of forest dependent wildlife in Queensland more than tripled as a result of the policies of the member for Clayfield.

The Palaszczuk government protects vital habitat; the LNP just cuts it down. We rebuild front-line services; Tim Nicholls cuts front-line services. We have invested in more front-line staff to protect this state's natural and cultural treasures. Today, ahead of National Threatened Species Day, I want to thank our park rangers for the wonderful work they do.

Mr SPEAKER: I remind members of the importance of referring to other members by their appropriate title.

MOTION

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (2.43 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, notwithstanding anything contained in standing and sessional orders, the Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning be permitted to move at 5.30 pm today the motion of which she gave notice yesterday, with time limits for speeches and debate as follows—


- five minutes for each member; and
- total debate time before question put, 30 minutes.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

REPORT

Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee


 **Hon. L SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (2.44 pm): Under section 4.7(4) of the Police Service Administration Act 1990 I table a copy of the *Register of reports and recommendations to the police minister, ministerial directions and tabled ministerial reasons of 2016*. The register records that no reports, recommendations, ministerial directions or tabled reasons qualified for inclusion in the register.

Tabled paper: Crime and Corruption Commission: Certified copy of the Register of Reports and Recommendations to the Police Minister, Ministerial Directions and Tabled Ministerial Reasons 2016 and related material, pursuant to section 4.7 of the Police Service Administration Act 1990 [[1580](#)].

The committee noted that the register was provided to the Crime and Corruption Commission by the Queensland Police Service outside the specified time frame for its provision under section 4.7(2) of the act. The CCC advised that the QPS have implemented certain administrative procedures to ensure the timely provision of this report to the CCC on future occasions.

NOTICE OF MOTION


Youth Offenders, Order for Production of Documents

 **Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (2.45 pm): I give notice that I will move—

That, in accordance with standing order 27, this House orders the Attorney-General to produce to the House a list of proposed locations for the Palaszczuk government's supervised bail accommodation options for youth offenders by noon Thursday, 7 September 2017.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (2.45 pm): This is a government that is squarely focused on blame and blame only. Instead of taking responsibility—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Thank you, members.

Mr EMERSON: Instead of taking responsibility for their own ineptitude, they blame everyone and anything. In July we heard the Deputy Premier even blame a possum for the rail fail—a harmless loveable marsupial. That is who she blamed. I wonder what animal she had on standby last night to cop the blame for yet another rail fail. At one stage the Deputy Premier even straight out blamed one of her own—none other than the transport minister's predecessor—for Queensland's worst ever rail fail. Yesterday we saw the Minister for Corrective Services actually blame a domestic violence victim for not being aware—

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. One moment, members.

Mr EMERSON: As I said, yesterday the Minister for Corrective Services actually blamed a domestic violence victim for not being aware of when her ex-partner was being released from jail, a domestic violence victim—

Mr RYAN: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. I take offence. The member is misleading the House. I personally take offence at the reference he is making to me and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Will you withdraw?

Mr EMERSON: I withdraw. As I said yesterday, a domestic violence victim—he would not apologise. All he kept detailing is what the victim did not do. That was a disgraceful performance by that minister.

Honourable members interjected.

Ms Palaszczuk: And how about you sit down when the Speaker is on his feet?


Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, everyone.

Mr EMERSON: The Premier does not like it because she knows what the truth is. She leads a rabble of ministers who are happy to blame victims but who do not take responsibility for their actions. That is what this is—the weak leadership of this Premier who will not look after the victims. We saw again yesterday a minister who was quite happy to detail over and over again what a victim did not do rather than take responsibility or apologise.

This is a minister who got the Pullen family up for that disgraceful media stunt, and what did this minister do? What did this Premier do? This weak leader of a Premier cannot run her own ministers and is too weak to bring them into line. We saw that again yesterday—another disgraceful performance by this Premier, a Premier and a government that will not take responsibility for their actions. Once again, we saw a Premier who is running scared of her own deputy, who is fearful of her own cabinet, who cannot run her own backbench and will not bring her own ministers into line. Yesterday we again saw another disgraceful performance by this Premier, by this government and by another minister.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Premier. I can hear you, Premier. I can hear you, member for Mount Ommaney. I can hear you too, Deputy Premier. I can hear you too, Minister for Education. Now we will listen to the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection.

Road Infrastructure

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (2.50 pm): Yesterday I spoke about the devastating cuts that the member for Clayfield made when Treasurer to Queensland's roads. What we know after three years of the LNP government, and now after nearly three years of the Palaszczuk government, is that only Labor builds roads: Tim Nicholls and the LNP only know how to cut roads.


RoadTek is instrumental to the delivery and maintenance of Queensland's extensive road and bridge network. RoadTek employees are vital front-line road workers who deliver better, safer roads across the state. RoadTek are at the front line every day and they are the first point of call when disaster strikes. They are out there rain, hail or shine in some of the most remote parts of the state helping to keep Queenslanders moving, but that did not save them from the cruel, heartless cuts of the Leader of the Opposition. The Newman-Nicholls LNP government slashed 700 RoadTek jobs and thousands of jobs in Transport and Main Roads, reducing their overall staff by a shocking 22.4 per cent. They wanted to get rid of RoadTek altogether, and even while in opposition they continue to question its value. They have not learned.

In 2013 the member for Indooroopilly claimed that his contracting out would 'deliver more bang for our buck' but he was very, very wrong. His private contractor was terminated in 2015 because levels of service were not met. Under the Palaszczuk government those works are once again being done by RoadTek. The Palaszczuk government has rebuilt the RoadTek workforce: it now numbers about 1,160 employees across Queensland. They are out there delivering essential road and transport infrastructure and maintenance works across our vast road network. Our investment paid off during Cyclone Debbie and we were able to repair roads more quickly.

Not only did the Leader of the Opposition gut RoadTek but he also cut 14,000 other front-line public servants. That is more than 4,000 health workers, 500 teachers and 225 child safety officers. Now he says 'trust me.' He asks Queenslanders to ignore what he did and just believe that he has learned some kind of lesson. If he really has learned a lesson, he should apologise. He is good at coming in here and calling on ministers to apologise. It is about time he apologised to the RoadTek workers, apologised to all of the Queenslanders he sacked and apologised to all of the Queenslanders who would have benefitted from the roads he cut, because if he will not apologise Queenslanders will know that he has not learned—

(Time expired)

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (2.53 pm): It is a pleasure to follow the contribution from the 'member from we are not really sure where', because he is certainly not ready to stand on his record in Mount Coot-tha. I am proud of the record of the LNP government because we delivered roads: we delivered the Gateway Upgrade North; we delivered the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing; we delivered \$10 billion worth of works on the Bruce Highway, including Cooroy to Curra; and we delivered record funding on the Warrego Highway. Under the LNP government trains turned up at railway stations.


Dr Miles: Trains did not turn up from India.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. We will wait.

Mr POWELL: I take that interjection from the member for Mount Coot-tha. Those words will come back to bite him. We have seen it all from this government of cons, costs and crises. Last night South-East Queenslanders suffered yet another rail fail under this bumbling Labor government. We are fast approaching the first anniversary of Labor's rail fail. It all started nearly 12 months ago when a conga line of Labor MPs jumped all over themselves to claim credit for the LNP funded Redcliffe peninsula line at its opening. They were all there: the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the member for Sandgate. We all know that Labor are great at selfies but they are rubbish at running trains. No-one stopped to think, 'Gee, we've just opened a new line. Maybe we should make sure we have the train drivers to run the trains on that new line.'

That was nearly 11 months ago, and those 11 months have seen them lurch from crisis to crisis which culminated last month with communication at stations, on websites and on trains themselves remaining woefully inadequate. Commuters are being treated with contempt. Commuters were stuck for an agonising three hours on a train on the Ferny Grove line. A door was left open as a train hurtled along at 100 kilometres an hour on the Gold Coast line. Commuters were evacuated from another service which was stuck halfway from the Sunshine Coast. The Fair Work Commission has had to do what this government cannot: stand up to the unions and finally—finally—open recruitment to external drivers. At the end of the day it is the commuters of Queensland who lose out under this union controlled sham of a government. This government of cons, costs and crises needs to go.

LNP Government, Performance

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Economic Development) (2.56 pm): I only have two words to say to the member for Indooroopilly: Terry Hill. Those who were here in the last parliament know exactly what I am referring to. He has no credibility whatsoever to lecture us on ethics or approaches. I want to bring to the attention of the House 28 October 1977. Next month is the 40th anniversary of the release by Richard Branson's Virgin Records of the Sex Pistols album *Never Mind the*—starts with B and ends with S. I have been listening to that with great joy, but it is an album title that comes to my attention whenever I hear the Liberal National Party stand in this House to try and reconstruct their economic record since they have been in this place as opposition.


I come from a region that suffered abysmally under the tiller of the Liberal National Party. At a time when the drought was taking great heavy hands to the beef sector and the entire beef industry, at a time when the coal industry had suffered 10,000 job losses in and around the Bowen Basin in Central Queensland and at a time when the capital investment at Gladstone was coming off, what did we get from the Liberal National Party? We got 475 full-time-equivalent jobs cut from the Fitzroy region in Central Queensland. That is what we got. When we were down they kicked us. What did they do for us? Absolutely not a thing. The legacy of the Leader of the Opposition when he was treasurer of this state during that period cannot be reconciled with his evasion and mantras today. He had fingerprints all over that. What did they offer us as a supposed reply to that? The Royalties for the Regions program—the much vaunted program they are going to bring back. It was a complete and utter rort program, as revealed by the Audit Office and anyone else who observed it.

Let us take Rockhampton as an example. The Rockhampton Regional Council put forward 28 proposals under Royalties for the Regions during the LNP government, and do you know how many of those 28 proposals were successful? One proposal in three years of 'rorts for the regions' from the much vaunted Liberal National Party with a treasurer—now Leader of the Opposition—who was the equivalent of a goat with a blindfold juggling chainsaws in terms of the state's economy. He has absolutely no credibility. In terms of Royalties for the Regions, 0.3 per cent went to the Rockhampton Regional Council area. That is the legacy of the member for Callide; that is the legacy of the Leader of the Opposition. When they come into this House I do mind. I do mind that we talk about the facts of what they did and the facts of what the opposition did when they were in government. The five of us who were here in opposition know the truth, and so does the rest of Queensland.

Mr Costigan interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I can hear you, too, member for Whitsunday.

Electricity Prices

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.59 pm): In trying to make sense of what the member for Rockhampton said, the word 'rant' rather than 'rat' came to my mind. Absolutely nothing of any form of enlightenment or understanding was displayed, except that the member for

Rockhampton viciously likes to eat rats and the member for Rockhampton just likes to shoot them. That was about the only thing that came out of that speech. Meanwhile, businesses and families in Rockhampton continue to pay more under this government's failed electricity prices.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

Mr NICHOLLS: We on this side are not anywhere near as precious, Mr Speaker. This is a government of cons, costs and crisis. Just ask the families and small businesses who are paying more every year because this Premier presides over the highest power prices this state has ever seen.

Today I visited a small, family run business at Carina in the electorate of Chatsworth. Blue Line Dry Cleaners has operated since 1957 and has thrived for most of those 70 years. In the past two years its power bill has gone up by 20 per cent. According to the owner, Wayne Wilson, in the past two years the bill has gone up and he is worried about keeping on his staff and about paying the rent. Power is now his second highest bill, after staff.


Labor members might spin around like ballerinas, blaming everyone but themselves, but Queenslanders will not be fooled. Queenslanders know who to blame for the record high power prices. The rot started with Anna Bligh and Andrew Fraser, when they wrote to the federal government and said, 'We want to charge more because the finances in the state are kaput.' They wanted to charge more for five years to prop up their failing budget. Now those opposite are at it again. Wholesale power prices are up by 70 per cent under this government, because this government uses power bills as a secret tax on businesses. While the taxes and prices rise, the trains do not run and the services are not delivered.

(Time expired)

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Question time will finish at three minutes past four.

CFMEU

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (3.03 pm): My first question without notice is to the Premier. Given the latest condemnation from a Federal Court judge that 'it seems that the CFMEU feel that they can usurp parliament and that they can set the law in this country', will the Premier finally do the right thing and stand up to the lawlessness, standovers, bullying and intimidation of construction workers and condemn the unlawful actions of the CFMEU in Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question. We had a meeting this morning and we thought unions might come up today. It used to be a Thursday question or a Thursday motion, but it has come back to Wednesday!

As I have said in this House before and I say again: I expect everyone to abide by the law, whether they are a business, a community organisation or a union.

A government member: Or the LNP.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Or the LNP, for that matter. It is now six or seven days since this House passed a motion—

Ms Trad: Fifteen days.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is 15 days since this House passed a motion for the LNP to declare the \$100,000 worth of secret donations. Will the Leader of the Opposition comply with that law? Will the LNP reveal its secret donors? The Labor Party declares all of its donors.

Whilst we are speaking about courts, we are looking forward to the decision of the High Court. There seem to be a number of Queenslanders caught up in all of those shenanigans. Should they be representing the people of this state—or the other states—in the House of Representatives or the Senate?

As I have said in this House before and I say again: everybody should obey the law of this land—everybody, including the Leader of the Opposition—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I cannot hear the Premier, and if I cannot then Hansard cannot.

Ms PALASZCZUK:—and including the state LNP. They are not above the law. I am more than happy to remind Queenslanders of that each and every day until the election. Not only are the opposition still arrogant and out of touch; today they are also incredibly nasty. They are very, very nasty. They are nasty, arrogant and out of touch.

Queensland Rail

Mr NICHOLLS: My second question without notice is also for the Premier. Once again last night, in the middle of peak hour and after 320 days of Labor's 'rail fail', South-East Queensland commuters were left stranded and in the dark with virtually no communication from Queensland Rail. How long do commuters have to put up with the hand-wringing and the apologies from the Deputy Premier before we finally see real action and the trains running on time?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question. Last night I saw the Deputy Premier on Channel 9. She apologised to commuters for the delay. I, too, would apologise to commuters for that delay.

Mr Bleijie: Did she tell you she was doing it first?

Ms PALASZCZUK: We are more than happy for you to go on TV any night of the week!

Mr Bleijie: Name the place and the time and the TV and I'll be there.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I take that interjection as well. You can take your little pet rat with you, too.

Honourable members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: You are the person who did it!

Mrs Frecklington: Seriously.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I take the interjection from the member for Nanango. Since speaking in the House yesterday, yet another minister wants to come to Kingaroy with me. It is increasing.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We are all looking forward to it.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, can you come back to the question that was asked, please?

Ms PALASZCZUK: We are delivering for Kingaroy and we are delivering for all of Queensland. We are a government that delivers because we are a government that listens.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right: continue to carry on like that because you are the same as you were when you were in government—

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, one moment please. You are provoking the opposition. I do not think you are answering the question that was asked. Have you anything further to—

Ms PALASZCZUK: I have been provoked, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: No. There is provocation on both sides. Do you want to resume your seat or do you have anything relevant?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes. I am advised that Queensland Rail experienced a points issue at platform 8 at Roma Street Station last night and that trains—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, I know we have all been a bit excited this afternoon, but we will come to order. The Premier has the call and her answer is relevant.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Trains continued to run through the CBD throughout the afternoon peak. However, some customers did experience delays of between 10 to 30 minutes as Queensland Rail worked to rectify the issue and reroute the trains. As we know, this issue was a points issue and it is a safety issue. At the end of the day, I will not compromise safety and nor will Queensland Rail.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, the Premier's answer is relevant to the question that was asked.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I also want to acknowledge that Queensland Rail crews did work extensively around that time to rectify the problem as quickly as they could to return trains to their normal schedule. While speaking about trains, it is this government that is committed to building Cross River Rail in the south-east of our state. Mr Speaker, we want to ease congestion. We want to continue to employ people to build this No. 1 infrastructure project for the south-east of our state. It is about time that those opposite got on board.

Health Services

Mr BROWN: My question without notice is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier please outline the government's efforts to restore front-line health services and are there any other approaches the Premier is aware of?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Capalaba very much for that question. We know how important front-line services are, especially when it comes to health services, right across our state. For three years under the Leader of the Opposition when he was treasurer and when the member for Southern Downs was the health minister of this state we saw a huge impact on communities everywhere because of the savage cuts that were made to health care across our state.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Those opposite do not like to hear it, but we have been repairing the damage inflicted on Queenslanders but still no apology—not one single apology. It is about time that the Leader of the Opposition apologised to Queenslanders about what happened. Between the March 2015 and March 2017 quarters our efforts to rebuild front-line services included more than 3,000 extra nurses across the state and more than 1,100 extra doctors. Let us look at what the LNP slashed. It sacked 4,400 Health staff, including 1,800 nurses and midwives. It attacked doctors' pay and conditions. Let us never forget the picking of the fights that those opposite did when they were last in government. On this side of the House we work in a consensus form. We work with stakeholders. We work to improve the capacity of services right across this state. Those opposite spent over \$500,000 a fortnight paying high-priced contractors and consultants. Not only that, they cut non-government organisations as well. They cut 177 full-time-equivalent Queensland Health staff working in preventative health in public health units across the state. They cut \$3.8 million in funding from 18 non-government organisations providing vital health promotion and preventative projects, including the Australian Red Cross. When it comes to mental health, they cut \$45 million from mental health in their very first year in office. They reduced staffing in mental health services to the lowest per capita level in Australia, as reported independently by the Productivity Commission, and we know the devastating impacts of the closure of the Barrett Adolescent Centre and the devastation that happened there.

We will continue to rebuild and we will continue to build the capacity of our health services, because it is my fundamental premise that people have the right to good-quality health services no matter where they live in our state. It is about time the Leader of the Opposition apologised to Queenslanders.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: I would urge the member for Southern Downs not to try to speak over the top of the Premier or you will join the list.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Transport

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My question without notice is directed to the Premier. Last night, exactly 209 days after the Deputy Premier took responsibility for the trains, she said—

If there are people who experience significant delays I'll talk to my agency ...

Premier, what happened to the person you called 'tough as steel' and 'no-one will get in her way'? Why after 209 days of the Deputy Premier's reign does it seem like Labor's rail fail has simply got worse?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I will back the Deputy Premier against the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Now that would be a debate I would like to see! Let us bring that one on!

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. Premier, please move on to your answer.

Honourable members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, she would love to come.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Speaker, it seems everyone is excited about me going to Kingaroy. Everybody in this House is excited about it. In fact, I might even produce a Palaszczuk plan for Kingaroy. We might distribute that at the same time. We are putting so much money there. I think there are schools—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, Premier. I am trying to remember what the question was.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: All right. I am aware of what the question was. Premier, can you make your answer relevant to the question please?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am just conveying to the member for Nanango how I am looking forward to going to Kingaroy.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: All right, members. Members, no.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I have been to those places. I actually travel a lot around Queensland. In fact, I do not see the Leader of the Opposition travelling much around Queensland.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, can we come back to the question? Premier, an answer please.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you, Mr Speaker. In conclusion—

Mrs Frecklington: You haven't started!

Ms PALASZCZUK: Well, let me recap: the Deputy Premier is happy to have a debate with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Yes, I am going to Kingaroy; I am taking ministers.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, have you answered the question?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes.

Mr SPEAKER: All right. Resume your seat please.

Ms PALASZCZUK: No, I am still going. We are having so much fun I want to keep going.

Mr SPEAKER: No. Premier, if you have nothing that is relevant to the question—

Ms PALASZCZUK: I will finally finish by saying that the Deputy Premier is in charge of fixing the trains. She is getting on with the job of implementing the Strachan recommendations. A new CEO has been appointed.

Honourable members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: So you do not want to hear the answer?

Mr SPEAKER: Members, you may not like the answer. I find the Premier's answer is relevant. We will hear the Premier.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, you are warned under standing order 253A as well as the other members I have in line if they persist. If you continue, member for Kawana, I will take the appropriate action, bearing in mind that for any members who are warned that remains in place until after the six o'clock debate. Premier, do you have anything further to add?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Finally, she is implementing the Strachan recommendations and is getting on with the job, the job that I asked her to do on behalf of the government.

Queensland Community Alliance

Mr MADDEN: Will the Premier update the House on the founding assembly of the apolitical Queensland Community Alliance and on her attendance at this historic function?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Ipswich West for that question about the founding assembly. I had the great honour of attending that last week. The co-chairs of the founding assembly of the Queensland Community Alliance are Reverend David Baker from the Uniting Church, Sam Pidgeon from the Queensland Teachers' Union and Kerrin Benson from the Multicultural Development Association.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Everton is warned under standing order 253A. You have had a pretty good go all morning and if you persist I will take the appropriate action.

Ms PALASZCZUK: When I attended this event last week, well in excess of 1,000 people attended. It was held at Brisbane City Hall and it was completely packed. They sought the attendance of the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. This group talks about a number of issues that are

relevant to everyday families across our state. I understand that it started in Logan and has expanded into South-East Queensland. Some of the issues raised that night included people with a disability and access to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. They raised issues about families entering retirement villages, the amount of paperwork that goes with that and ensuring that when families go into those nursing homes they have adequate care.

I was also pleased to recognise at that founding assembly the fact that people were there because they wanted to bring about change to improve the lives of their family members. I found that it was built on a mutual understanding of community issues but also, too, it was the coming together of a wide range of church organisations. Yes, members of the union movement were there as well and also members of our multicultural sector across South-East Queensland.

If one seeks to be the Premier of this state, one needs to engage with all sectors of the community. I was proud to go there as Premier and acknowledge the work of the founding assembly. Unfortunately there was a vacant chair, because not only did the Leader of the Opposition fail to attend but he failed to send one single member from the LNP to attend an event attended by over 1,000 Queenslanders wanting one thing—to improve the lives of their loved ones. I do not know why they were hiding nor why one member of the LNP could not have turned up to this very important event to listen to the views of Queensland families.

Queensland Rail

Mr POWELL: My question is to the Premier. In the last three weeks alone, rail commuters were stuck for an agonising three hours on a train on the Ferny Grove line and left to urinate in the carriage, a door was left open as a train hurtled along at 100 kilometres per hour on the Gold Coast line and Sunshine Coast commuters had to evacuate a train stuck near Narangba. Does the Premier really believe the Deputy Premier's comments last night and repeated today that these are isolated incidents and not a system in crisis?

Ms PALASZCZUK: As I said, the Deputy Premier is implementing the Strachan recommendations, but let us start from the very basic premise that those opposite cut the tutors and froze recruitment. It caused a huge stress on the system.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: If those opposite want to talk about trains, I would really like to see it table in this House either (a) its business case for the new rolling stock or (b) its cabinet submission, because it was all approved under the former government. The fact that there are issues that need to be—

Honourable members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am happy for the member to table the cabinet submission. That is what we want to see. We are more than happy to see those documents if the Leader of the Opposition will release them. He has the power today to release the business case and the cabinet submission; otherwise he is hiding. Who signed the contracts? We want to see them very clearly.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Let us use a contrast: when I was opposition leader I tabled those cabinet documents in this House. I had the guts to do it. I had the leadership to do it. Now I challenge the Leader of the Opposition to do exactly the same. Where is the cabinet submission and where is the business case? That is the challenge for the Leader of the Opposition today. We want to see it and we want him to table it today.

Public Transport

Mr PEGG: Will the Deputy Premier update the House on the Turnbull government's push to outsource and privatise public transport?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Stretton for the question. I know that he is a strong advocate for the provision of public services, be they health, education or transport. I know that on this side of the House we are acutely aware that services delivered by government, by the public, put the public consumer front and centre.

The Turnbull government has made its position on privatisation of state assets very clear. We heard the Premier advise the House yesterday about Turnbull Minister Paul Fletcher visiting Queensland last week. What did he say? He was bemoaning the fact that the wonderful plan by

Campbell Newman and Tim Nicholls to divest the Queensland people of electricity assets had been scrapped by the Palaszczuk Labor government. In return, because we had not done that, we could not rely upon any fair funding for infrastructure in Queensland. That is what he told Queenslanders last week.

We also saw Infrastructure Australia jump on the privatisation and outsourcing bandwagon with its recent report into franchising of public transport services. We know, do we not, that Queenslanders had a conversation about that before? We know that under the previous LNP government that was a conversation that was had in this state. I know that privatisation is in its DNA. I am wondering whether outsourcing is also in its DNA. I am unsure whether it is an ideological position or just a capacity position, because we know that the Leader of the Opposition has been outsourcing quite a bit since becoming leader.

We know that when it comes to attacking the Buy Queensland policy he has outsourced that to Turnbull Minister Ciobo. We know that when it comes to spruiking privatisation he has outsourced that to Turnbull Minister Fletcher. We know that when it comes even to campaigning for an LNP state government he has outsourced that to Turnbull minister and New Zealand citizen Barnaby Joyce, but we also know that in terms of his moral positioning he has outsourced that to One Nation. He does not know what position he will take on any issue unless Pauline Hanson tells him. We know that, when it comes to covering up political donations, he has outsourced that to the Supreme Court and the Queensland taxpayer, which is an absolute shame. We know he also outsourced the framing of his budget to former LNP federal treasurer Peter Costello. We know what that Commission of Audit said. It said, 'Cut, sack, sell.' We know it is sitting in the top drawer of the member for Clayfield's desk ready to come out after the next election.

(Time expired)

Queensland Rail

Mr EMERSON: My question is to the Premier. Last night, and 182 days since the government accepted all 36 recommendations in the Strachan report, commuters were again stranded with bugged all information provided by QR about the long delays—

Mr SPEAKER: I find those words totally inappropriate and unparliamentary.

Mr EMERSON: I will withdraw and I will rephrase.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I am in two minds if I will even allow the question. Member for Ferny Grove, Minister for Local Government, I think you are going to be warned. 253A. Member for Indooroopilly?

Mr EMERSON: My question is to the Premier. Last night, and 182 days since the government accepted all 36 recommendations in the Strachan report, commuters were again stranded with limited information provided by QR about the long delays on their way home. Despite the Strachan report recommending better communications about faults and delays, why are commuters still being left in the dark by Queensland Rail and the Deputy Premier?

Ms PALASZCZUK: We did address this issue, but the member is now talking about communication. My understanding from the reports that I have heard, and I am happy to stand corrected, is that there were people out on the platforms and at the stations conveying as much information as they possibly could at the time. Let me also make the second point very clearly: we will not compromise safety on our rail network.

Mr Powell interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Glass House! The Premier's answer is relevant. You have had a pretty good go, member for Glass House. I call the Premier.

Mr Watts interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: You are also warned under 253A, member for Toowoomba North. If you persist I will take the appropriate action.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Nor will we compromise safety in our hospitals. In an earlier answer I asked the Leader of the Opposition to produce the contracts or the business case or the cabinet submission for the new rolling stock. Since the member for Indooroopilly asked me that question, let me remind the House of what the member for Indooroopilly told parliament, and I quote, 'The New Generation Rollingstock, a project that we began—'

Mr NICHOLLS: I rise to a point of order. I am always in favour of a good debate at the right time, everyone knows that, but the question was about the faults and delays with the event that occurred last night that left commuters stranded. I ask you to rule on relevance because none of the matters that the Premier is raising were raised in any aspect of the question.

Mr SPEAKER: My ruling is that the answer needs to be relevant. Premier, do you have anything further that is relevant to the specific question?

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is relevant. I just want to finish the quote made by the member for Indooroopilly. He asked me the question. He said, 'We are the ones who signed the contract.'

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, no.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I think we will move on. That applies to everyone. It applies to the member for Gaven.

National Electricity Market

Mr RUSSO: My question is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment. I refer to the statements by the Prime Minister on the national electricity market, and I ask: will the minister please outline to the House the government's reaction to those statements?

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Can I remind the member for Hinchinbrook he is under a first warning.

Mr PITT: I thank the honourable member for the question. It is always good to hear from the member for Hinchinbrook. We know that he is a very strong advocate for the Tully-Millstream hydro project which we know has leapt straight from doing a business case to final funding of \$4.2 billion. I do not know how he is going to explain that to the shadow Treasurer, but we will figure that out later apparently.

We are very pleased when it comes to our plan. Our \$1.16 billion Powering Queensland Plan is the best plan in the nation when it comes to driving energy reform in Australia. We do have a plan compared to those opposite and compared to the federal coalition. The actions we have taken, including directions we have given to our gencos, are putting real downward pressure on wholesale electricity prices. At the same time we are building a renewable future and that is all about ensuring we inject more supply into the market which is about taking peak demand off and, of course, making sure we put further downward pressure on electricity prices.

We have overnight heard some interesting things. If it is possible to have thought bubbles held together by band-aids, that is exactly what we have seen from the Prime Minister. What we have is the spectacle of Malcolm Turnbull reading a tweet and then getting on the phone to plead with a private operator to keep their power plant open. One can just imagine how that phone call went. We were not privy to the conversation but it would have been something like, 'Hello? AGL? It's Malcolm. It's Malcolm here. Yeah. Point Piper Malcolm. That's right. I know you want to get out of the coal-fired power business, but can you do me a favour and not close it for, say, maybe another 10 years? We are in a bit of a pickle because we actually don't have a policy and it is just a little bit embarrassing.' Of course, we go from thought bubbles to more policy on the run. Then the Prime Minister says we are going to ask private operators and we are going to fund them to keep these power plants open. What he would like to see is those costs passed on to taxpayers. We are not going to accept that Queensland taxpayers will be footing the bill because Malcolm Turnbull and Josh Frydenberg have not done their homework—in fact, they have not done a policy for more than five years. This is an absolutely poor outcome again for consumers because we have inaction by the federal government.

We know the real reason he is asking these things. He was asked at a press conference, 'Will the federal government consider buying this power plant? Will they actually buy Liddell?' The answer very quickly was, 'No, no, we won't do that. The private sector's best owning these.' The reason he wants to do that is because he knows he can deflect all the attention and continue to blame private sector power companies and, of course, also the Queensland government because he hates government owned generators. Hang on, he is a one-third owner of Snowy Hydro! Let me get it right. It is okay to be a government owned generator when it is not Queensland. Apparently all others can do no wrong. My message to Frydenberg and Turnbull is simple: please, we will throw you a life preserver. Come and talk to Queensland. We will talk about energy policy to get some real outcomes for households.

Domestic and Family Violence

Mr MANDER: My question without notice is to the Minister for Corrective Services. I table a screenshot taken yesterday of the Department of Corrective Services website that should have contained advice for victims of domestic violence to register for the Victims Register. I also table a screenshot taken from the same page today. That has miraculously changed overnight. Why was there no action taken to inform domestic violence victims of their rights for six months and then only done after media inquiries prompted by the opposition?

Tabled paper: Screenshot from Queensland Corrective Service's Victims Register web page, dated 10 November 2016 [1581].

Tabled paper: Screenshot from Queensland Corrective Service's Victims Register web page, dated 6 September 2017 [1582].

Mr RYAN: I appreciate the opportunity to add some more information to this topic in addition to what I said yesterday. What I said yesterday is that I spoke with the Acting Commissioner for Corrections and I directed the Acting Commissioner for Corrections to provide more promotional material around the Victims Register and victims rights. Part of that is updating the website. I make no apologies for that.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, the minister's answer is relevant to the question.

Mr RYAN: I make no apologies for making sure that that material is updated and continues to be updated. However, it is a fallacy to say that no work has been done, because Corrective Services and our other agencies have been working with stakeholders to ensure that people are aware of their rights under the Victims Register. We all need to do more work when it comes to making sure that victims are aware of their rights, particularly following the legislative change. That is not just a responsibility of our agencies; it is the responsibility of members of parliament and community organisations that work alongside victims to ensure that they are aware of their rights.

Mr Hart interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Burleigh, you are now warned under standing order 253A. The minister's answer is relevant. You have had more than a good go today. If you persist, I will take the appropriate action under standing order 253A.

Mr RYAN: Yesterday I directed the Acting Commissioner for Corrective Services to do more work, because it is not good enough that some people in our community are not aware of their rights as victims to be listed on the Victims Register. As a result, Corrective Services are doing more work in that space. However, I also encourage all members of this House, including myself, to get out and about in the community and do more work to make sure that people are aware of their rights.

I am pleased to report to the House that Corrective Services has been doing a number of additional activities in respect of informing people of their rights to be on the Victims Register. I am also pleased to report that the Queensland Police Service, particularly our Queensland Police Service DV team on the Gold Coast, have been working alongside domestic violence victims and informing them of their rights to be listed on the Victims Register following the legislative changes. They have been doing so since the legislation was changed.

In addition to updating the information on the website, Corrective Services is also providing promotional material across Queensland to police stations, child safety service centres, courthouses, prisons and probation and parole offices to ensure that the community is aware of their rights. They are also engaging regularly with stakeholder groups. I know that the 20 community organisations that form part of the Victims Services Interagency Organisation Network have been contacted and provided with information around the Victims Register. That is the responsibility of all of us.

This particular subject should be above politics and we should all work together. I encourage all members of this House to provide information to their communities around the Victims Register. I take this opportunity to acknowledge that if anyone feels like they have fallen through the cracks, if any person—

(Time expired)

Ms Bates interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Mudgeeraba, I have been listening to you all afternoon. If you persist, I will take the action that you know I will take.

Maryborough Hospital, Pathology Unit

Mr SAUNDERS: My question is to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Will the minister update the House on Queensland Health's plans to restore health services to Maryborough and is he aware of any alternative plans?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Maryborough for his tireless advocacy for improved public health services in his electorate. The member for Maryborough knows that the Palaszczuk Labor government is restoring front-line services not just in Maryborough but also across Queensland, following three years of devastating cuts implemented by the Leader of the Opposition when he was treasurer. In 2015, I announced that pathology services would be returned to Maryborough Hospital after the decision to cut and close that service made in 2012 by the member for Clayfield when he was treasurer. The Queensland government provided \$60,000 to restore pathology services at Maryborough Hospital. The facility is now operational and is providing services that were cut by the LNP.

However, the residents of Maryborough need to understand that it is only a Labor government—it is only the Palaszczuk Labor government—that will guarantee that that service will continue in the electorate of the member for Maryborough. Why is that so? It is because the 2013 commission of audit, the panel handpicked by the member for Clayfield when treasurer, reported as follows—

... the Government should progressively expand contestable markets ... for the private provision of: clinical services ... such as pathology ...

I table that extract from the commission of inquiry in relation to the audit.

Tabled paper: Extract from Queensland Commission of Audit Final Report, Part D Front Line Services, February 2013, page 3-32 [1583].

The LNP was going to sell off Pathology Queensland and there is no question about that. It is all part of their 'cut, sack, sell' ideology. The Leader of the Opposition wants to be in government, but he does not believe in government. We believe in the people who work in Pathology Queensland. I give this guarantee, through the member for Maryborough, that those services will stay in Maryborough and that we will back our staff in Pathology Queensland 100 per cent.

When you want to sell an asset, you want to get a value. How do you get a value? You compare it with the private sector. That is why I was not surprised to receive a question on notice from the member for Caloundra on 9 August. He asked how the cost of pathology services at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, the home of Pathology Queensland, is compared to private service providers to 'ensure efficient allocation of taxpayer funds'. I table the question.

Tabled paper: Question on Notice No. 1099 of 2017 regarding pathology services at RBWH [1584].

We all know the questions for the backbench are written by the leader's office. He wanted to sell Pathology Queensland when he was treasurer and he wants to sell it if he becomes premier.

I give this assurance to the member for Maryborough and his electorate: we will not shut down services. I give this assurance to Queensland Health staff in Pathology Queensland: unlike the Leader of the Opposition, we will not privatise your service and we will keep your jobs secure. I call on the Leader of the Opposition to apologise to the Maryborough community. Ninety-five per cent of pathology tests now occur in that community hospital. I call on the Leader of the Opposition to apologise for his cuts and rule out privatising Pathology Queensland, once and for all.

Domestic and Family Violence

Mrs SMITH: My question without notice is to the Minister for Corrective Services. In light of the six months of inaction in terms of alerting domestic violence victims of their new rights to be able to be included on the Victims Register for critical parole alerts, as evidenced by the shocking report in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* yesterday, did the minister's inaction in fact breach Labor's own Charter of Victims' Rights?

Mr RYAN: I am very pleased to have the opportunity to continue to provide some information about this very important matter. From the outset, I say that, if any person feels they have fallen through the cracks because they have not been aware of their rights under the Victims Register, of course, on behalf of myself and Corrective Services, I apologise to those people who feel they have fallen through the cracks. As I have mentioned to the House already, it is not good enough that there are victims who are not aware of their rights to register on the Victims Register. As a result, I have directed the Acting Commissioner of Corrective Services to do more work around promoting the Victims Register. However, it is not right to say that Corrective Services has not done anything. They have been working hard with stakeholders and—

Mrs Smith interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Mount Ommaney, you have asked the question and the minister's answer is relevant. I urge you to allow the minister to answer.

Mr RYAN: As I said, they are providing promotional materials across Queensland to courthouses, police stations, probation and parole offices, prisons and child safety centres to ensure that people are aware of their rights. In addition, there is the example that I have just given of our Queensland police officers in the DV team on the Gold Coast who have been working with DV victims and have been informing them of their rights to be listed on the Victims Register.

As I reported to the House yesterday, since the changes to the legislation there have been 99 registrations on the Victims Register for people who fall into that expanded category of being able to be listed on the Victims Register. I have also been informed by Queensland Corrective Services that they have been attending community stakeholder days to promote the changes in the legislation, including, of course, the Homicide Victims Awareness Day. In addition, staff from the Victims Register have been attending the Queensland Corrective Services Academy to deliver new training to recruits to Queensland Corrective Services.

As I have mentioned briefly, they have updated the website to provide additional information. They have also been working with key stakeholders and the 20 community organisations from the victims' support network have been contacted. In addition, we are working closely with the Queensland Police Service to ensure that the members of the Queensland Police Service who are being trained at our academy are aware of the Victims Register and of victims' rights to be listed. In addition, we will be working more closely with other government agencies to ensure that they also assist in the work to be done.

There is a lot of work being done in this space. There has been a legislative change and Queensland Corrective Services has been working closely with stakeholders and other agencies to ensure that we get the message out. As I said, we all have an opportunity to promote the Victims Register and people's rights to be listed.

(Time expired)

State Schools

Mr WILLIAMS: My question is to the Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events and the Commonwealth Games. Can the minister outline the impact that the previous LNP government's cuts have had on the department of education and our state schools?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for his question. As I have said before, I have had the great privilege to be in the honourable member's electorate and see some of the great work that is happening in the local schools in his community. One of the things I love most about being the education minister in Queensland is meeting the amazing people who work on the front line in education—our wonderful teachers, teacher aides, principals, cleaners and tuckshop workers; all those who make our schools the great places they are and who provide excellence in education.

We know that under the heartless cuts of the member for Clayfield when he was the treasurer in Queensland our schools were not immune. They were not protected. They were on the chopping block just like everything else—whether it be our hospitals or our main roads.

I have spoken in this parliament a lot about the changes that those opposite made when they were in government and the choices the member for Clayfield made when he was the treasurer of Queensland. We saw 500 teachers cut from Queensland state schools. In addition, the LNP cut 270 people from the IT department. They also cut 70 staff from the department's infrastructure division. They stand up one after another and call for more infrastructure in their electorates and yet they cut 70 people from the infrastructure division. They cut 100 front-line staff from regional offices across Queensland—the offices that provide valuable support to the teachers in our classrooms teaching our children. Under the member for Clayfield's watch they took more than 1,100 staff from the Department of Education and Training. That is his record.

He can also claim credit for leaving a \$260 million backlog in maintenance. That was a decision made by the member for Clayfield. Add to that the decision the member for Clayfield made to close six schools in Queensland without consultation with the local communities. We know the LNP have form. We know what they stand for. I can assure those opposite—the ones who are—

An opposition member interjected.

Ms JONES: Whatever she is saying over there. We know that Queenslanders do not forget. Queenslanders will not forget. The teachers in our schools know that there is only one side of politics that will stand up for their jobs in our schools—this side of politics, the Palaszczuk Labor government. They know that the member for Clayfield will do anything to become Premier. He is happy to get into bed with Pauline Hanson and One Nation because he has no scruples and he has no backbone. We know that if he were to ever get onto this side of the House again he would cut front-line teachers and staff in our schools.

Atherton Tablelands, Navua Sedge

Mr KNUTH: My question without notice is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment. After the Treasurer's visit to the Atherton Tablelands and understanding the problems navua sedge is having in terms of impacting prime dairy and grazing land in the region, can the Treasurer advise what he is doing to help control this problem?

Mr PITT: I thank the honourable member for the question. The first thing I would point out is that, whilst the budget funds a number of initiatives, including those in the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, I am not responsible, on a day-to-day basis, for the matters that he is speaking about. The question may be better directed to the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, Bill Byrne. I am happy to respond to the question if I am given some latitude. I take an active interest in this as a local member.

The question is an important one. I am certainly aware of the member's passion for this. I did visit the Atherton Tablelands to talk about this issue. It was at the request of the member for Dalrymple that I made that visit. We have been working with members of the Tablelands Regional Council, including Mayor Joe Paronella and Councillor Anthony Ball. We visited a site to inspect navua sedge and the impact it is having on a waterway around Tinaroo Dam. I have mentioned this in an answer in the House before.

There was an allocation for this in the budget of some \$250,000. This is about trying to get co-investment with local government in terms of improving outcomes regarding the control of navua sedge. I understand the member for Dalrymple has a big concern about what the government is doing overall in this regard, and particularly in relation to R&D. That is something that I am particularly interested in talking about further.

It is an important issue. As we know, the Atherton Tablelands, as part of the overall food bowl of Far North Queensland, plays an important role in producing for our increasingly popular export markets. We know that if navua sedge is impacting cattle it will have a flow-on effect to our exports.

One of the great announcements made recently by the Minister for Tourism and the Premier was to bring additional flights into Cairns. These flights are different. These flights operated by Hainan Airlines use wide-bodied planes. These wide-bodied planes are important because they will be able to freight our exports out of Cairns. We take the member's question very seriously. We value the trading relationships we have. We certainly recognise the ever-increasing importance of agriculture as an export for Queensland. I am happy to continue to engage with the member.

The Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries is already very much aware of this issue as well. I will certainly have a meeting with the minister to get an update from him and his department. Once we actually know how much further we can make the money go—and in particular as the member pointed out in terms of R&D—I would be keen to report back to the member and report back to the House. I thank the member for the question. It is an area of great interest to him. I applaud him for his advocacy on this matter.

Multicultural Affairs, Funding

Ms LINARD: My question is to the Minister for Multicultural Affairs. Can the minister update the House on the Palaszczuk government's efforts to improve services for Queenslanders from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and how current funding levels compare to previous years?

Ms GRACE: I thank the member for Nudgee for her question. I know she has a passion for the multicultural community in her area. We have attended many events. I know everyone on this side of the House has a similar passion.

Ms Jones interjected.

Ms GRACE: I take that interjection. Last month Queenslanders celebrated more than 40 community events and activities as part of Queensland's Multicultural Month. The 2017-18 state budget allocated \$200,000 to support these celebrations. I attended them together with the Premier. I know the

Leader of the Opposition and many other members in the House attended many such events, including the India Day Fair and the Brisbane Thai Festival on Sunday. In Toowoomba we attended the multicultural festival. That was attended by thousands.

We value the contribution of Queensland's multicultural communities, with funding for Multicultural Affairs Queensland up five per cent to \$8.2 million in the state budget. The budget includes \$1 million for the Celebrating Multicultural Queensland grants program and \$2.2 million for the Community Action for a Multicultural Society program, which is working with the community which is under attack from the federal government and One Nation.

We have set about building multicultural front-line services. This is in contrast to what the member for Clayfield did when he was Newman's treasurer. He put the chainsaw through funding to all of these organisations. As treasurer in the Newman government, the member for Clayfield in 2012 inherited an \$8 million Multicultural Affairs budget from the previous government. They immediately set about cutting MAQ's funding by around 40 per cent. We restored it. They made cuts to community organisations and cuts to multicultural affairs events. There was less support for translator and interpreter services. That is the LNP's multicultural legacy.

There was not a multicultural service they did not want to cut. There was not a community worker they did not want to sack. There was not an organisation they did not want to gag. If the LNP had their way, they would have cut the CAMS program altogether in 2015, meaning sacking those working in this area around the state. We have CAMS officers right around the state—in Cairns, Mackay, Maryborough, Rockhampton, Gladstone, Townsville, Mount Isa and Toowoomba.

Does the member for Clayfield apologise to the multicultural community for all of those cuts? At this point in time he should think about how the multicultural community is suffering under the attacks of the federal government and One Nation. He should rule out any preference deal or any deal whatsoever with One Nation because the multicultural community are concerned. He should rule it out and rule it out now.

(Time expired)

Parole System

Mr WALKER: My question is to the Premier. As Minister Ryan has completely failed to take any action to notify victims of domestic violence of their right to be protected by notification of their abusers receiving parole, will the Premier now agree to divert some of the government's multimillion dollar advertising budget towards immediately notifying all Queenslanders of their rights to register for critical parole alerts?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member's preamble clearly contained an imputation. Under standing order 115, I ask you to rule the question out of order or at least ask the member to rephrase his question.

Mr SPEAKER: The minister has not taken offence to the question, as I understand it. The question was to the Premier, but it was a reflection on the minister.

Mr RYAN: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. To assist you with your ruling, I find the imputation personally offensive and I ask for it to be withdrawn.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, we have two minutes left. Member for Mansfield, will you withdraw and rephrase your question please?

Mr WALKER: I will rephrase it, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Withdraw first please. Withdraw the words the member finds offensive.

Mr WALKER: I withdraw. In view of Minister Ryan's pathetic explanations to the House today with respect to notification—

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members.

Mr RYAN: Mr Speaker, to assist you again with your ruling, I find the inference personally offensive and ask for the remarks to be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Mansfield, will you withdraw?

Mr WALKER: I withdraw.

Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order

Mr SPEAKER: You have had your chance. I now call the member for Greenslopes for his question.

Mr KELLY: My question is to the Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. I have the call. We are not going to have an argument.

Mr WALKER: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I withdrew, as you requested, and I seek your permission to ask the question again.

Mr SPEAKER: No.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I made a point of order earlier in relation to the member for Mansfield.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I can hear you, member for Callide. I will listen to the Leader of the House.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I do not need assistance. Members, the clock is ticking. What is your point of order, Leader of the House?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: The member for Mansfield clearly made an imputation in his first attempt at the question. You gave him guidance. He then made an imputation about the conduct of the minister in his second attempt at the question. It is completely understandable considering that he could not get it right the second time that you have sat him down.

Mr SPEAKER: I have made my ruling, member for Mansfield. I now call the member for Greenslopes for his question.


Mr KELLY: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Question time has expired.

**HEALTH PRACTITIONER REGULATION NATIONAL LAW AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

Resumed from 13 June (see p. 1546).

Second Reading

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (4.04 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I would like to thank the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee for its consideration of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 and for its report tabled on 11 August 2017. I note that the committee made a single recommendation—namely, that the bill be passed. I would like to thank all stakeholders who made written submissions to the committee, attended the public hearings on 17 July 2017 and participated in the consultation processes during the development of the bill. The contributions of a wide range of stakeholders to the national process ensure the development of well-considered and balanced legislation.

The most significant reform in the bill is the introduction of national registration for paramedics. Paramedics perform a critical healthcare role for the community, providing a very high standard of prehospital emergency medical care. The importance of paramedics in Queensland is highlighted by the fact that in the last financial year the Queensland Ambulance Service responded to over one million incidents. Every day they attend serious traffic accidents, near drownings, patients suffering serious conditions such as cardiac arrest or stroke, mothers delivering babies at home or on the side of the road, and patients with mental health issues. Through it all, they provide the highest standard of care to all Queenslanders—from Cape York to Coolangatta, Charleville to Cloncurry and everywhere in between. We can clearly see why paramedics are so highly respected in our community.

There would not be a member of this House whose families have not been touched by the work of paramedics. To our paramedics in Queensland, to those who are in the gallery today to witness this debate and to those who are on the road, who are in our communications centre or who are working as patient transport officers: I say thank you for the work you do through the Queensland Ambulance Service.

As I travel around the state, I often talk to paramedics who have been in the Ambulance Service for many years about the evolution of the role of a paramedic to the increasingly complex and specialised role it is today. The role has changed markedly from a time when paramedics were not seen as part of the health workforce to today, when they are very much a part of the clinical care that patients receive.

These days paramedics are trusted to sedate patients, use anaesthetics to relieve pain and treat displaced fractures. Our high-acuity paramedics are now performing procedures that were traditionally only ever carried out in hospital settings, such as administering blood or diagnostic ultrasounds, as well as a range of other invasive and often life-saving or life-changing procedures. In short, the training, knowledge, skill levels and responsibilities of our paramedics—and the risks they bear—have advanced in leaps and bounds. That is why this bill is so important, because with the increasing responsibilities of our paramedics it has become imperative that we have a national registration and accreditation scheme for paramedics.

The bill will prevent people who are not qualified, registered or fit to practice from using the title 'paramedic'. It also provides powers to deal with professional misconduct by paramedics. Once established through the bill, the Paramedicine Board will establish minimum qualifications and national standards to ensure that paramedics across the country are delivering the highest standards of care to patients. This will give the community further confidence that the services they receive from paramedics are delivered by people who have the right training and experience.

During the parliamentary committee process, a number of key stakeholders supported the regulation of paramedics under the national law including United Voice, Health Consumers Queensland and Ambulance Employees Australia (Victoria). The registration of paramedics also received strong support from key paramedic stakeholder groups throughout the process of developing the bill. In particular, I want to acknowledge and thank United Voice, the union representing paramedics in Queensland, and Paramedics Australasia for their advocacy for this important reform. This reflects that representative bodies and unions were closely consulted during the process leading up to and during the development of the bill.

A number of stakeholders submitted that members of the Paramedicine Board should be reflective of the profession, with appropriate clinical and operational experience. Subject to the passage of the bill, the members of the Paramedicine Board will be appointed by the Council of Australian Governments Health Council, or the COAG Health Council. The members appointed to all national boards, including the Paramedicine Board, are subject to a rigorous selection process. For the first appointments to the Paramedicine Board, there was a public call for paramedics and members of the community with an interest in paramedic regulation to express their interest or be nominated for appointment.

This approach has been used for the establishment of other inaugural national boards. It ensures that interested people can apply or third parties such as key representative bodies can nominate people with their agreement. The public call for nominations was advertised in national and major metropolitan press and on the paramedic regulation web page of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, or AHPRA. AHPRA also actively used social media to reach paramedics and the public. As a result, a large number of highly qualified practitioner and community member candidates from diverse backgrounds responded.

Under existing provisions of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, all national boards must have an appropriate mix of representation across states and territories, regional and rural areas, and practitioner and community members. In reaching agreement on appointments to the inaugural Paramedicine Board, health ministers are required to have regard to the skills and experience of candidates relevant to the board's functions.

As with all national board appointments, health ministers will give careful consideration to ensuring membership of the board reflects the diversity of the profession, our communities and the range of skills and experience necessary to discharge the board's important functions. As a member of the ministerial council that will decide these first appointments, I am confident the Paramedicine Board will have the ability, leadership and experience to manage the transition of the profession to national registration in partnership with AHPRA.

I will now turn to the provisions of the bill which allow the structure of national boards to be varied by regulation. Some stakeholders expressed a preference for the structure of national boards to remain in the act and were concerned that a regulation may be made without adequate consultation. I want to again emphasise the requirement of the bill that ministers comprising the ministerial council must undertake public consultation before a regulation is made to consolidate or dissolve national boards. I can assure stakeholders and this House that, if the ministerial council is considering making changes to the structure of national boards in future, there will be an appropriate public consultation process and stakeholders will have an opportunity to put forward their views.

The Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee has noted the concerns of a number of stakeholders about national boards and the Queensland Health Ombudsman being able to take immediate action if the national board or Health Ombudsman reasonably believes the action is in the public interest.

The committee has brought the fundamental legislative principle issues raised by these amendments to the attention of parliament. The use of a public interest test is quite common in legislation which relates to the licensing and registration of individuals, especially where the protection of the public is paramount. For example, in Queensland the practising certificate of a legal practitioner can be immediately suspended or conditions imposed on their registration on the basis of public interest under the Legal Profession Act 2007. Similar provisions exist in the legislation of other states and territories. As a public interest test already applies to lawyers, it is appropriate that a similar test should also apply to health practitioners who hold a position of significant trust in the community, with people often feeling vulnerable or uncertain when faced with illness, injury or surgery.

It is important to ensure that immediate action can be taken against health practitioners where public interest considerations require it. An example of where the public interest test may be used to take immediate action is if a serious criminal charge is laid but the charges may not be directly related to the person's conduct as a health practitioner. In cases like these it can be difficult to show that the threshold of 'serious risk to persons' in the national law is reached. However, it may be appropriate to impose conditions on the person's registration for public protection and confidence in the health profession.


The public interest test may also be used to take immediate action if historical issues about a practitioner or patterns of behaviour are uncovered, especially where the pattern or repeated behaviour indicates an underlying issue that requires addressing through conditions of registration.

The provisions of the bill about immediate action in the public interest are consistent with similar provisions in New South Wales. Decisions to take immediate action on the basis of the public interest are also subject to a number of safeguards including show cause processes and appeals to tribunals. On balance, these provisions are needed to provide greater protection for the public.

The committee report acknowledged the concerns raised by the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union that, in cases of domestic and family violence, information about a person's place of practice should be able to be withheld from the public register of practitioners kept by AHPRA. It is important to note that the national law already allows a national board to decide that information about a practitioner not be recorded on the national register if the inclusion of the information would present a serious risk to the health and safety of the practitioner.

I am assured that AHPRA has appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure that, in cases of domestic and family violence, information is not published on the register that would put a victim of domestic or family violence at further risk of harm. However, I take on board the suggestion of the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union that it may be appropriate to require national boards to withhold this information from the public register rather than merely giving them discretion to do so. As such, I propose to refer this issue for further consideration by health ministers as part of the second stage of reforms to the national law.

In conclusion, this bill achieves a significant milestone by providing for the national registration of paramedics. The regulation of paramedics reflects the need for the community to have confidence that paramedics are appropriately trained and qualified to practise. The bill will also ensure the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and the Health Ombudsman Act continue to meet their objectives and guiding principles; namely, the protection of the public. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (4.15 pm): I rise to speak to the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. The primary objective of the bill is to amend the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law as agreed by the Council of Australian

Governments Health Council, sitting as the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (COAG Health Council) on 29 May 2017. The bill proposes the following key reforms for the national law, and I quote from the explanatory notes—

- national regulation of paramedics, including the establishment of a Paramedicine Board of Australia
- enabling the COAG Health Council to make changes to the structure of National Boards by regulation following consultation
- recognition of nursing and midwifery as two separate professions, rather than a single profession, with the professions continuing to be regulated by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia
- improvements to the complaints (notifications) management, disciplinary and enforcement powers of National Boards to strengthen public protection and ensure fairness for complainants (notifiers) and practitioners, and
- technical amendments to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the National Law.

The bill also makes consequential amendments to the Health Ombudsman Act 2013 and other Queensland legislation. In addition, the bill amends the Health Ombudsman Act as requested by the Health Ombudsman as part of the inquiry into the performance of the Queensland Health Ombudsman's function pursuant to section 179 of the Health Ombudsman Act 2013 by the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee.

I want to thank, as the minister did, the work of the committee in preparing its report on this bill. I think once again it is a great example of how our committee system is working productively on analysing bills to improve them. It is a significant change from when I first came into this place. It is nice to note that the minister has also been considering those recommendations of the committee.

Fourteen professions are currently regulated under the national law including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice, Chinese medicine, chiropractic, dental, medical, medical radiation practice, nursing and midwifery, occupational therapy, optometry, osteopathy, pharmacy, physiotherapy, podiatry and psychology. For each of the 14 nationally registered health professions there is a national board. The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, or AHPRA, was established as a result to provide regulatory services for the 14 national boards in addition to providing advice to the COAG Health Council.

The national scheme and national law carry out the important function of ensuring that only health practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise in a competent and ethical manner are registered. Health practitioners have a single registration that is recognised in any state or territory in Australia, and the national law works to monitor and take action on any health, conduct and/or performance issues that may arise.

The explanatory notes describe the scheme as a protected title model with 'powers to prosecute persons who falsely hold out to be registered or use a restricted professional title'. It also enables the continuous development of a flexible, responsive and sustainable health workforce and innovation in the education of health practitioners and service delivery by health practitioners.

Mr Kim Snowball, the former director-general of the Department of Health in Western Australia, was engaged by the COAG Health Council in 2014 to conduct an independent review of the national scheme. The independent review involved a consultation process which included forums in each capital city. Over 230 written submissions were also received.

The implementation of the COAG Health Council's response to the independent review is occurring in two stages. The first stage consists of the amendments to the national law that we are seeing in this bill. The minister has just referred to potential amendments that will be considered potentially in the second stage of amendments. I note that a number of written submissions were made by various stakeholders. Whilst they were generally supportive of the amendments to the Health Ombudsman Act, some raised concerns about specific amendments.

Prior to the introduction of the bill, one of the key issues that many stakeholders contacted me about—and I am sure many other members in this place—was the proposal to allow nonprofessionals to sit as a chair of a national board. I wrote to Minister Hunt, the federal health minister, raising concerns of the various bodies that are governed by the national framework, and this proposal was subsequently dropped from this round of amendments. It is great to have a federal health minister who listens to the concerns of Queenslanders.

As a registered non-practising dental surgeon, I must highlight the submission made by the Australian Dental Association Queensland, or ADAQ, regarding provisions at (4)(a) and (4)(b) regarding 'shared premises'. The ADAQ has suggested that the term 'shared premises' is ambiguous and could

lead to issues surrounding its interpretation. As the ADAQ explained, 'shared premises' could be interpreted to mean a number of arrangements, including contributing to the rent of a facility or working in a facility with other health practitioners. As such, the ADAQ submitted that this section could be clarified by providing that the—

practitioner ought to be under an obligation to supply practice information at all sites at which he or she practices their profession, including the address of each of the premises and the business names.

The ADAQ also noted that the obligation to provide the names of other health practitioners with whom the practitioner shares the premises could be an issue in the instance that these arrangements are tenuous. The department reasoned that practice information would be sought from practitioners when they are subject to concerns relating to the health, conduct, or performance of the practitioner. Further, the department states that the information on practice arrangements and such sought by a national board would depend on the circumstances of the case and the nature of the concerns.

The bill establishes the Paramedicine Board of Australia which will be responsible for regulating paramedics with administrative and other support provided by AHPRA as per clause 52 section 307. All paramedic stakeholders expressed strong support for national registration of paramedics and welcomed the decision of New South Wales to participate in the registration of paramedics under the national scheme. Currently, there are approximately 14,000 paramedics in Australia who, according to the department, perform higher level clinical roles than they have done in the past.

This is obvious, as members here have had ambulance and paramedics staff come into parliament to show us the changes that have happened through it becoming a profession. They are very highly trained. The minister has acknowledged that and I certainly acknowledge that too, having recently visited, with the minister's consent, ambulance services in Toowoomba, most recently in Beaudesert and also in Cairns. We certainly do appreciate the rapid response that patients are able to get from paramedics who are able to do triage prior to getting them to hospital. In the case of stroke or cardiac arrest, they can really be lifesavers.

Given their increasingly complex role, the regulation of paramedics is expected to, and I quote from the paper—

Provide public protection by enforcing nationally consistent registration standards and minimum qualifications for registration, as well as powers to manage poor performance and misconduct

Ensure high-quality training and education

Transparency and accountability

Provide a regulatory framework.

Another benefit to the registration of paramedics is to allow mobility of paramedics. Nationally consistent and recognised registration will allow a paramedic to work in any state or territory in Australia. Minor consequential amendments will also be made to the Queensland Ambulance Service Act 1991 as a result of this bill.

As I have mentioned, the LNP team values our hardworking paramedics who, as outlined in the committee report, are undertaking more complex roles than in the past. We know that emergency service workers have it tough enough protecting the community without the added worry of being physically attacked on the job. According to Paramedics Australia, physical attacks on members across Queensland have increased by almost 20 per cent compared to five years ago. In the first four months of this year alone, 176 ambulance officers were assaulted statewide. That really is not good enough and that is why we have a zero tolerance approach on this side of the House for attacks on ambulance workers and paramedics.

Whilst strong penalties are not the only deterrent, they are important in reinforcing the message that it is not acceptable to assault our hardworking emergency service workers. I am proud to be part of an LNP team that has made it an election commitment to follow the lead of other states and territories and introduce minimum penalties for serious assaults on our front-line emergency service workers. We think it is important to roll up our sleeves and stand up for our ambos.

On the issue of new powers to enable the COAG Health Council to make changes to the structure of national boards by regulation, a number of stakeholders raised concerns about whether there would be adequate consultation with stakeholders prior to the COAG Health Council exercising powers to change the structure of national boards by regulation. I acknowledge that clause 5 of the bill includes new section 31(4) to enshrine the requirement to consult on changes to the structure of national boards in the national law. I note that, while the independent review recommended the national law be changed

to provide COAG with the ability to consolidate nine 'low regulatory workload' national boards, this was not accepted by the COAG Health Council. The COAG Health Council instead suggested that the national law should be amended to allow for the structure and membership of the board to be provided for in regulations. This was in an effort to achieve flexibility and to make sure that the governance of the scheme continues to be fit for purpose. The regulations may—

- continue existing National Boards
- establish a Board for one health profession, or two or more health professions—

In this instance, the bill ensures that where a board oversees two or more professions at least one member of each profession must be a member. The regulations also may—

- dissolve a Board, if another Board is established for that profession.

There is no current plan to change the structure of the national boards.

An issue that was raised by a number of stakeholders centred around the amendments to allow the Health Ombudsman to take immediate registration action or issue an interim prohibition order if the Health Ombudsman reasonably believes the action is in the public interest as per clauses 65 and 69, amendments to sections 58 and 68. According to the department, currently the national board may be constrained from taking swift action. A national board may take immediate action, as in suspend or impose conditions against a registered health practitioner, if they reasonably believe that—


- the practitioner's conduct, performance or health poses a serious risk to persons, and
- it is necessary to take immediate action to protect public health or safety.

The department reasoned that, for example, if a serious crime had been carried out by a health practitioner but the relationship of the crime had not yet been established with the practice, it would be in the public interest to constrain the practitioner's practice until the matter is finalised. While the proposed amendment received mixed views, the AMAQ from the outset suggested that the term 'public interest' was too subjective. The ADAQ, the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union, Avant and Together union did not support this amendment. The department has advised that the term 'public interest' had a legal definition under common law. The department also advised that taking immediate action on the basis of the public interest test would entail safeguards. These safeguards include a show cause and an appeals process.

The committee found that the amendments once implemented will align the Health Ombudsman Act with the changes made to section 156 of the national law, ensuring consistency between the powers of the national boards and the Health Ombudsman. This is important for registered health practitioners who may be dealt with under either the national law or the Health Ombudsman Act. In its report, the committee found that, if changes were not made to the Health Ombudsman Act, it would mean a different test would apply in Queensland than the rest of the country in relation to the threshold for taking immediate action.

The recognition of nurses and midwives as separate professions is another aspect of the bill I would like to highlight. Nationally, most midwives—around 30,000—hold dual registrations as both nurses and midwives. Due to a rise in the number of direct entry training programs as well as the use of alternative maternity choices, we have seen an increase in the number of midwives who do not also hold registration as a nurse. There are currently approximately 3,000 midwives who do not have a coexisting nursing registration. As such, the independent review recommended that midwifery and nursing be recognised as two separate professions whilst regulated by one national board. In light of this, the definition of health profession is split into separate entries for midwifery and nursing within the bill. Consequential amendments are made to the Health Ombudsman Act as well as other Queensland legislation.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all health professionals across Queensland, who work tirelessly to keep our population healthy. Each of the professions represented by the national board and those who currently fall outside the scope of AHPRA are an important part of the fabric of our health system that is held to a high standard due in part to our national regulations. The LNP will not be opposing this bill.

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (4.30 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. The Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee made one recommendation: that the bill be passed. The bill's objectives are to amend the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009, as agreed by the COAG Health Council on 29 May 2017 in response

to the final report of the independent review of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for Health Professions commissioned in 2014. I will not go into detail with regard to each of the amendments contained in the bill as the minister has already done so in detail for the benefit of the House.

The proposed amendments implement the first stage of the COAG Health Council's two-stage response to the independent review agreed to in May of this year by the council and the cabinet of each state and territory. As we are the host jurisdiction of the national law, if the bill is passed by the Queensland parliament, the amendments to the national law will apply automatically in other jurisdictions except for South Australia, which must make regulations to adopt the changes, and Western Australia, which would need to enact its own separate legislation.

The committee was advised that consultation at a national level undertaken as part of the independent review was extensive, including consultation forums in each capital city, national local forums and briefings with over 200 attendees in total and the receipt of over 230 written submissions. The committee heard that most submitters were supportive of the proposed amendments during this consultation phase with some submitters' concerns resulting in changes to the draft bill.


During our examination of the bill the committee received 37 submissions and held a public briefing and a public hearing to hear from interested stakeholders. The feedback received during our committee consultation largely mirrored that of the independent review consultation process with most submitters being broadly supportive of the bill. Some submitters, however, raised concerns with regard to, or opposed changes to, national boards by regulation and a number sought clarification about amendments broadening the requirements to provide health practitioner practice information.

Queensland Health advised in response to the 37 submissions received and accepted by the committee in respect of the bill that a number of issues in submissions had not been raised previously and will be referred to the COAG Health Council for consideration during the second stage of the reform process. These issues included the use of alternative dispute resolution to resolve notifications, issues concerning notifications made in relation to medico-legal assessments and reserving the practice of acupuncture for certain registered health professionals.

Separate to the national law reform, the bill also contains a number of proposed amendments to the Health Ombudsman Act 2013 requested by the Health Ombudsman during our earlier committee inquiry into the performance of his functions tabled in December of last year. As part of the inquiry, the Queensland Health Ombudsman submitted a list of suggested amendments to the Health Ombudsman Act. While the majority of those amendments are undergoing further detailed consideration, a number have been progressed in this bill including providing the Health Ombudsman with powers to vary an immediate registration action or an interim prohibition order on the Health Ombudsman's own initiative or an application by a health practitioner. These powers will be used if there has been a material change in circumstances such as if the risks associated with a practitioner had changed since the Health Ombudsman's original decision, better protecting public health and safety.

I am particularly pleased to see this long awaited and very worthy amendment to the national law to introduce national registration for paramedics. The increasing scope of practice and complexity of paramedicine experienced by some 14,000 paramedics across Australia warrants this important step. Paramedicine will become a health profession regulated by the national law and therefore subject to the same regulatory arrangements as all other health professions including doctors, nurses and dentists. This means national standards for entry to practice, accreditation of training programs and protection of the title 'paramedic'. Importantly, it will also mean that, once established, the paramedicine board will be able to take action to deal with a paramedic who engages in unprofessional conduct or professional misconduct, is poorly performing or has an impairment that affects their practice.

I believe this is a positive step in both the continued professionalisation of the paramedicine workforce and the management of health complaints and public safety overall. They make a huge contribution to our community. I know they are very excited and supportive of this amendment, and I thank the minister for bringing it forward. I thank the department, those who submitted, the committee secretariat and my committee colleagues for their input and assistance during the bill's inquiry. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (4.35 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the bill before the House. In common with the chair of the committee, I would like to start by thanking all members of the committee for the great work they did with regard to this bill. I also want to thank the secretariat. We who are on a committee understand that their role can be very daunting and very onerous at times. We

have a very hardworking secretariat, led by Karl Holden, who does a great job not just with regard to this bill but all bills that come before the committee. He certainly gets the work to us in a timely manner and also provides us with relevant information when requested.

With regard to the bill before the House there were 39 submissions and two public hearings, on 27 June and 17 July. The committee made only one recommendation: that the bill be passed. The explanatory notes state that the bill amends the national law to provide for the national regulation of paramedics as part of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, including establishing a paramedicine board; to enable the COAG Health Council to make changes to the structure of national boards by way of regulation; to recognise nursing and midwifery as two separate professions but regulated by the one national board; to make improvements to the complaints system between notifiers and practitioners to ensure public protection and fairness; and, to make minor changes to improve the national law's effectiveness. I suspect we all agree that the major amendment in the bill is the national regulation of paramedics as part of the national scheme. We have heard there are some 14,000 paramedics in Australia working in various settings.

Along with nurses and other like-minded occupations, paramedics are one of the most respected professions in this state and, indeed, across the nation. I want to pay particular recognition of paramedics across the Sunshine Coast and, indeed, right across the state. They are called upon at all times of the day and night. They are out for long periods of time. They deal with the worst possible situations we could imagine, either at home or at a road accident site. They deal with people who are violent to them and people who need their assistance. More importantly, they deal with the worst of humanity and also the best of humanity. Without them, many people right across the state would not be alive today. Their quick action and their training have saved many lives and will do so in the future. One of my colleagues will speak in greater depth about the work they perform from his own personal knowledge and understanding much better than I can.

The amendments also mean that registration of a paramedic in one jurisdiction will flow through to all other jurisdictions—a wonderful outcome. That means not having to reregister over and over again across the nation. Registration in Queensland will apply to all jurisdictions across the country and enable these men and women to travel to various jobs without having to go through the onerous task of registration and perhaps even retraining.

The bill brings paramedics under the national law including for the purposes of registration processes, training, national standards and various matters relating to the performance and conduct of paramedics. Importantly, the bill amends the national law to establish the Paramedicine Board of Australia, which is set to regulate paramedics. The board will be appointed by the COAG Health Council, which will set the size of the board, the membership of which will consist of a practitioner from New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia; one practitioner from either of the territories or Tasmania; at least two community groups; and at least one member from a regional area. The national law and the bill provide for three main pathways in order to qualify for registration as a paramedic.

The first pathway involves holding an approved qualification under section 53 of the national law; the second pathway is under the grandparenting arrangements under clause 52, which apply for a period of three years; and the third pathway involves those holding a Diploma of Paramedic Science from the Ambulance Service of New South Wales. Importantly, a person cannot use the title 'paramedic' unless they are registered under the national scheme, which is a good thing because it encapsulates the importance of the term 'paramedic' and the tasks they do to those who are qualified and registered to be called a paramedic. The process will be beneficial to paramedics and the public.

I note the explanatory notes state that the purpose of this is to protect the public. How can we provide a better system for paramedics outside of what we are doing here today? I think one of the situations facing this state again is ramping across the state at our hospitals. I will use as a prime example the ramping that is occurring now at the Sunshine Coast Public Hospital at Kawana. Figures released by the government show that in March and April 2017, 78 and 79 per cent of patients were off stretcher within 30 minutes, which is way below the standard which has been set. It also shows that in May 2017, 79 per cent were off stretcher within 30 minutes and in June 2017, 75 per cent were off stretcher within 30 minutes. That means that in May, 21 per cent of patients were not off stretcher within 30 minutes and in June, 25 per cent were not off stretcher within 30 minutes. It is important that we recognise the ability of these amendments to improve the lot of paramedics. It is also absolutely critical that the ramping issues that are being faced at the public hospital at Kawana are sorted out as a matter of urgency.

Mr DICK: I rise to a point of order. The member for Caloundra has had a good go. I have been listening and I have not interrupted, but this bill is about the registration of paramedics under the national law; it is not about the operation of the Queensland Ambulance Service. I would ask you to bring the member for Caloundra back to the objective of the bill and ensure that his address to the parliament is relevant.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Member for Caloundra, I remind you to stay within the long title of the bill during your contribution.

Mr McARDLE: I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, I take you to page 4 of the explanatory notes. It is quite clear that page 4 involves the registration scheme to protect the public. There are certain dot points contained therein. It is my contention that—

Mr Dick: You have had a good go.

Mr McARDLE: With all due respect, Mr Deputy Speaker, I would ask the minister not to interrupt. If he does, then he should rise to take a point of order—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Caloundra, I will counsel the minister. I do not need your assistance to do so. You are rising on a point of order. I will listen to your point of order, but please do not counsel me about managing the minister.

Mr McARDLE: As I said, page 4 of the explanatory notes refers to the protection of the public in relation to the registration of paramedics under the national scheme. What I am saying is that that phrase also encompasses actions outside of this bill. If we are going to protect the public, it is also critically important that issues which directly affect the health of the public be dealt with and that is the ramping issue.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Caloundra, I will give you that latitude but please remain within the long title of the bill.

Mr McARDLE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank you for your guidance in this matter. The issue of ramping goes directly to the protection of the public because it means that if paramedics are waiting outside or just inside the ED with patients, they are not back out on the road where they are vitally required to assist men and women who have been injured by way of a motor vehicle or work accident. My point is that not only should the bill be looked at in the context of assisting the public with regard to better trained paramedics but also those paramedics getting back out onto the road and not being tied up at EDs in ramping situations.

The other point I want to raise is that the issue of bed block or access block at hospitals right across the state is also critical, because that can have a direct impact on paramedics being able to get back out on the road. For example, in the month of April this year alone, as I recall only one half of patients who are category 1 patients were in a bed within four hours of being admitted to hospital.

Mr DICK: I rise to a point of order. The operation of public hospitals in Queensland—and that is what the honourable member is talking about on a point of relevance—has nothing to do with the training and registration of paramedics under the bill. Through you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I would ask that the member return to the objects of the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Caloundra, I think the minister makes a good point. You need to come back to the long title of the bill, not the operation of hospitals. Can you please address the long title of the bill.

Mr McARDLE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank you for your guidance. If I may rise to a point of order. Again I return to the protection of the public as referred to on page 4 of the explanatory notes, which is part of the inherent process put in train by this bill. I made the point very clearly—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Caloundra. If you could resume your seat. We have paused the clock. I will have a quick look at the explanatory notes and see if it remains within the long title of the bill before I make my ruling.

Member for Caloundra, I have taken counsel. I remind you that you need to stay within the long title of the bill, which is around the ambulance and not hospital operating matters.

Mr McARDLE: Mr Deputy Speaker, again I thank you for your guidance. If I may advance the point that the training of these men and women is of such a standard—under the terms of this bill and proposed under the terms of the new act—that to impede their protection of the public in relation to access block and bed block is equally important with regard to their advancement and the treatment of patients. I will conclude that point by saying it is important we understand that the protection of the public encompasses many, many facets. Yes, the training of paramedics is critical. No-one questions

that. We have some of the best paramedics in the world. With your indulgence can I add, Mr Deputy Speaker, it is only when those men and women are back out on the road providing assistance to the public that the public gets the benefit of this particular bill.

The shadow spokesperson made it clear that the LNP acknowledges the work of paramedics and also understands the threats they are under. I endorse the comments that he made with regard to ensuring paramedics are safe when they do their job. The LNP has a policy in place to introduce minimum penalties for serious assaults on paramedics, not just put in a mere review. That is real action by the LNP to deal with issues that paramedics face every day of the year right across this great state.


The other issue I want to touch upon is the recognition of nurses and midwives as two separate professions. There are about 30,000 midwives who are also registered as nurses and midwives, though there is a growing number of midwives who are now qualified in that position alone. As such, the independent review recommended that the national law be amended so that nursing and midwifery are two professions regulated by one board. I made the earlier comment that paramedics and nurses—and midwives, I should add—are some of the most respected professions in this state, and I suspect that many in this House wish we had that standing in the eyes of the public as well.

Nurses, midwives and paramedics save lives, treat patients, put people back together again and provide an enormous service. I have met many paramedics, midwives and nurses over the past 30½ years. One thing that they stand up for and stand out for is their dedication to service and dedication to humanity. It is an amazing profession and its members are rightly held in enormously high regard by people right throughout Queensland. The high regard in which they are held is a result of dedication, hard work and a love and understanding of health—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Order! Members will not debate across the House. Your interjections are not being taken, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations.

Mr McARDLE: I join with the shadow minister in saying that of course we will support this bill because it supports some of the most important professions in this state whose members can save the lives of members of this House, our family members and loved ones right across Queensland.

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (4.50 pm): It is wonderful to hear bipartisanship from the member for Caloundra in support of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. I fundamentally support this bill. I will take members on a journey to explain why.

The bill amends the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law as agreed by the Council of Australian Governments Health Council in response to the final report of the independent review of the national registration and accreditation scheme for health professionals commissioned in 2014. The bill amends the national law in a number of areas, including something I am very passionate about, interested in and supportive of, and have been for many years—that is, the national registration of paramedics.

Ambulance has come a very long way. There will be people in this House who remember the yellow ambulances of the QATB, the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade. In 1990 I joined the QATB or, as I fondly refer to it, 'quick at tying bandages'. Back then, all you needed in order to become an ambulance officer—not a paramedic—was a driver's licence, care and compassion, and a first-aid certificate. Over the next 25 years we grew to the point that we now have critical care paramedics going out to scenes; managing people with skills like intubation, cardioversion, external pacing and chest decompression; and stabilising people in varying situations. I would like to take a moment to acknowledge every single paramedic who dons the uniform, whether they are in the communications rooms or whether they are patient transporters, managers or on the front line. They all make up a wonderful service. As the minister said, in the last financial year there were over a million interactions by paramedics across the state. They do a wonderful job.

The bill includes the establishment of the Paramedicine Board of Australia. Queensland is leading the way in terms of the national registration of paramedics, being the first cab—or, if you take my pun, the first ambulance—off the rank. It is not before time. Finally, paramedics will not be seen as the poor cousins of health. I say that with the greatest of respect to all nursing and midwifery colleagues, who of course have been registered professionals for many years.

It is with a great sense of pride that I speak to this particular bill, with my own previous history of working in the prehospital area for over 25 years. The role of paramedics is something I have been passionate about. As an honorary officer in Kirwan station, I give a shout-out to anyone who might be listening there. I am sure that Queensland Ambulance Service staff will be watching this particular

debate. While I cannot practise or credentialise the critical care skill set as an honorary officer, in just the past couple of months I joined some staff out at Kirwan. It was a great day. We still see the evolution of professional skills in the Ambulance Service.

I acknowledge all ambulance services across the nation, although I might be a little biased towards Queensland because there are so many dedicated individuals in the Queensland Ambulance Service, which this year celebrates 125 years of delivering care to Queenslanders. In fact, next week is Ambulance Week, so there will be celebrations throughout the state. All Ambulance Service members have been a dedicated and passionate part of this journey towards paramedic registration.

The National Council of Ambulance Unions is to be commended and acknowledged for its continued professional work in this space, particularly Mr Steve McGhie. I mention other professional bodies such as Paramedics Australasia. Some 20 years ago I was a board member of the Institute of Ambulance Officers (Australia). Guess what we were talking about at that time? We were talking about paramedic registration. It has been quite a journey—along with the advancement in skill sets—to get here. That organisation is the peak professional association for paramedics and it does an excellent job in professional development. I also acknowledge Ambulance Employees Australia—Victoria and United Voice, my union—the only union and registered industrial body that has represented ambulance professionals for many years and has also been a significant part of this journey from the beginning.


The bill will see nearly 14,000 paramedics across the nation finally become registered professionals, with over 3,500 in Queensland finally to be seen in the same light as other health professionals. It will indeed be a great day when this comes into effect.

In regard to registration fees for paramedics, the national scheme is self-funded from fees paid by registrants. The fees are set down by the national board and AHPRA, with fees varying between professions and dependent on factors such as the size of the profession and the risks associated with practice. During the consultation period Maurice Blackburn Lawyers supported the national registration of paramedics—

... because they will improve the quality of service and increase patient safety. It will also increase public confidence in the profession.

Similarly, Health Consumers Queensland supported the bill ‘as a way to increase consistency of the safety and quality of service delivered by paramedics across Australia’. Importantly, registration protects the title ‘paramedic’. There will be no more of these overnight, one- or two-day courses after which people can be deemed a paramedic. People undertake a significant program in a university to become qualified paramedics. Protection of title is absolutely paramount.

I acknowledge the minister, my fellow committee members and the secretariat for their support on this particular bill. Other clauses of the bill make amendments to the OHO Act. These proposed amendments were widely distributed to stakeholders in Queensland, including professional associations. Importantly, the bill also amends the national law to recognise nursing and midwifery as two separate professions, rather than as a single profession. Both will continue to be regulated by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr CRAMP** (Gaven—LNP) (4.58 pm): I rise to speak to the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. This bill makes amendments as agreed by the Council of Australian Governments Health Council, sitting as the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council, COAG Health Council, on 29 May 2017.

Key reforms to the national law include: national regulation of paramedics, including the establishment of the Paramedicine Board of Australia; enabling the COAG Health Council to make changes to the structure of national boards by regulation following consultation; recognition of nursing and midwifery as two separate professions; improvements to the complaints management, disciplinary and enforcement powers of national boards to strengthen public protection and ensure fairness for complainants and practitioners; and technical amendments to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the national law.


This bill also makes consequential amendments to the Queensland Health Ombudsman Act 2013 and other Queensland legislation. Further amendments are being made to the Health Ombudsman Act as requested by the Health Ombudsman as part of the inquiry into the performance of the Queensland Health Ombudsman’s functions, pursuant to section 179 of the Health Ombudsman Act 2013, by the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee, of which I am a part.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my fellow members on the committee for their continued bipartisan efforts and goodwill throughout this bill and all of the work we do. I also want to thank our hardworking secretariat, who have again done a fantastic job in assisting, in guiding and in informing

the committee. There were 39 submissions made to the committee. Of these, of note the Australian Medical Association Queensland supports the amendment enabling the Health Ombudsman to review his or her own decision to take immediate action under part 7 of the Health Ombudsman Act on application by the practitioner or on the Health Ombudsman's own initiative. The AMAQ stated, however, that the need for this amendment confirms why the legitimacy of a complaint needs to be more thoroughly determined before the OHO takes serious action. The AMAQ does not, however, support the expansion of the powers of the Health Ombudsman to allow it to take immediate action in the public interest. The AMAQ claims that the notion of public interest is far too broad. The Australian Dental Association Queensland also felt that the amendment of section 156, 'Power to take immediate action', was unnecessary and that the existing legislative requirements are sufficient.


As I have mentioned, one of the key issues raised centred around the amendments to the Health Ombudsman to take immediate action. The committee found that these amendments, once implemented, will align the Health Ombudsman Act with the changes made to section 156 of the national law, ensuring consistency. This is particularly important for registered health practitioners who may be dealt with under either national law or the Health Ombudsman Act. Very importantly, and as has already been said, the bill establishes the Paramedicine Board of Australia which will be responsible for regulating paramedics with administrative support and other support provided by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency contained in clause 52 at proposed section 307.

All paramedic stakeholders expressed strong support for national registration of paramedics and welcomed the decision of New South Wales to participate in the registration of paramedics under the national scheme. The professional standing of paramedics in this manner has been achieved in many other countries throughout the world, so to finally see this level of professionalism attained in Australia will be heartening to many of my former colleagues in the Queensland Ambulance Service and right around Australia. Having been an ambulance officer for over 14 years, I can attest to the incredible work that all ambulance officers do, including my area of communications and emergency medical dispatch, but very importantly to see our paramedic colleagues being provided the respect that they deserve is a great outcome. These changes create consistency in health practitioner regulation across Australia and, with our ever-increasing connectivity as a country, it is important that our legislation does as well.

 **Ms DONALDSON** (Bundaberg—ALP) (5.02 pm): I rise speak to the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. At the outset I want to thank my fellow members of the committee and the secretariat as well as departmental staff for all of their hard work. The bill does a number of things to amend the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 as agreed by the COAG Health Council on 29 May 2017. Rather than go into them all in the time I have, I will outline a couple of points because other speakers in this debate have covered the balance very well.

The bill amends the national law to provide for national registration of paramedics as part of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, including the establishment of the Paramedicine Board of Australia. During the consultation it was identified that the role of paramedics has become more complex and that they are performing higher than ever clinical roles and, as advised during the briefing also, that paramedicine is becoming increasingly specialised. The bill requires people who use the term 'paramedic' to be registered to ensure that there is no confusion and that only a registered paramedic can use the title. This provides protections for the public so they know that when they require care in a stressful time they have the protection of someone who has the qualifications required to be registered as a paramedic and that they are subject to nationally agreed standards. It also includes transparency and accountability that the training programs undertaken to be a paramedic are accredited to ensure that they meet the requirements for registration.

The bill also recognises nursing and midwifery as separate professions. Currently the majority of midwives in Australia hold dual registration as nurses and midwives. There has been an increase in direct entry training programs for midwifery at universities and alternative choices in maternity care currently have led to an increase in the number of midwives who do not hold concurrent registration as both a nurse and a midwife. In practicality, this means little change on the ground for practitioners in terms of their registration or reporting bodies. There were a range of stakeholders involved during the consultation but most submitters were supportive and, where there were concerns, these were worked through in the draft bill. There is only one recommendation made by the committee, and that is that the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be passed. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (5.05 pm): I rise to speak to the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. I start by thanking the other committee members, the secretariat of the committee, the stakeholder groups that presented submissions and departmental officials. The stated aims of the bill are to amend the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, or the national law, as agreed by the COAG Health Council sitting as the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council. The key reforms to the national law include recognition of nursing and midwifery as two separate professions; enabling the COAG Health Council to make changes to the structure of national boards; the national regulation of paramedics; technical amendments to improve the effectiveness of the national law; improvements to the complaints management, disciplinary and enforcement powers of national boards to strengthen public protection and ensure fairness for complainants and practitioners; to amend the Health Ombudsman Act 2013 and other Queensland legislation as essentially consequential amendments as a result of changes to the national law; and to further amend the Health Ombudsman Act as requested by the Health Ombudsman as part of the inquiry into the performance of the Queensland Health Ombudsman's functions pursuant to section 179 of the Health Ombudsman Act 2013 by the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee.


Queensland is the host jurisdiction for the national law under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 and, under the intergovernmental agreement, proposed amendments to the national law must be approved by the COAG Health Council. The national law currently regulates 14 health professions: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island health practice, Chinese medicine, chiropractic, dental, medical, medical radiation practice, nursing and midwifery, occupational therapy, optometry, osteopathy, pharmacy, physiotherapy, podiatry and psychology. In 2014 the COAG Health Council conducted an independent review of the national scheme which involved an extensive consultation process, including consultation forums in capital cities. The implementation of the COAG Health Council's response to the independent review is occurring in two stages. The first stage consists of the amendment to the national law being progressed in this bill.

In terms of some of the stakeholder views that were very helpful and informing of the debate for the committee, there were 39 submissions to the committee. Some of the key stakeholders that submitted included the Australian Medical Association Queensland. It made contributions that were important in a number of areas, one in terms of decision reviews. The AMAQ supports enabling the Health Ombudsman to review their own decision to take immediate action under part 7 of the Health Ombudsman Act on application by the practitioner or on the Health Ombudsman's own initiative. It states that it provides health practitioners with an additional review avenue when they have been made subject to an immediate action by allowing them to apply to the OHO to vary an immediate registration action for a review of its decision.

The AMAQ holds the view that the veracity of a complaint needs to be more thoroughly determined before the OHO takes serious action. The AMAQ also submitted on progress notices. The AMAQ does not support enabling a health service being investigated by the Health Ombudsman and any relevant complainants to waive the right to receive three-monthly notice about progress of the investigation. They feel it is crucial to the health service complaints system that regular progress notices be communicated to parties to a complaint. This measure instils public confidence, serves as an accountability measure for the OHO and should assist with the timely resolution of complaints. The AMAQ also dealt with the issue of immediate powers. The AMAQ does not support the expansion of the powers of the Health Ombudsman to allow it to take immediate action in the public interest as the notion of 'public interest' is too broad and open to interpretation.

The contribution of the Australian Dental Association Queensland was also useful. The national board may ask registered health practitioners for practice information. The ADAQ sees some difficulty with this section in terms of interpretation. Also, it believes that it could be simplified so that the practitioner is obliged to supply practice information at all sites at which he or she practises their profession. The ADAQ also submitted in terms of the power to take immediate action. It believes that the existing legislative requirements for immediate action are currently sufficient. Further, it looked at expanding the powers of the Health Ombudsman to take immediate action and believes in stronger requirements for timely decision-making and administration being placed upon the HO.

There was a range of other contributors including the Australian Psychological Society which made a relevant contribution, considering that the proposed modifications to the bill especially with respect to the complaints, management, disciplinary and enforcement powers of national boards have the potential to provide improvements to notifiers and practitioners. There were other submitters who made valuable contributions. I support the bill.

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (5.11 pm): I support this bill. I particularly support the sections of the bill that deal with establishing midwifery as a separate profession. Recently, my union took the step of rebadging as the QNMU and it is good that this bill recognises that midwifery and those who hold a midwifery certificate often do not also hold a nursing certificate and that it is a profession in its own right. It is closely related but it is a separate profession.


Because of the quasiquicentennial of the Queensland Ambulance, I refer to a section of this bill that deals with paramedics. Next year, I would have been a nurse for 30 years and I have witnessed significant changes and improvements across all of the health professions. In terms of my colleagues in the paramedic field, their role has expanded and their level of professionalism has increased dramatically. I reflect on the many emergencies that I have dealt with in a hospital context. We deal with those emergencies in situations where we can quickly mobilise more staff to support us. If we do not have the appropriate equipment, we either can bring the equipment to us quickly or can quickly take patients to that equipment. We have a very controlled environment. At times it may seem chaotic, but we have quite good control in a hospital environment.

Then I think about what a paramedic has to deal with. Often they are the first health professional on a scene. If they are talking to another health professional, it is often a nurse, a doctor or an off-duty paramedic who has stopped and has no equipment with them. They can be in very difficult situations where the lighting is poor, the terrain is unknown and they must quickly assess the situation. They must determine if it is safe for themselves, how to make their patients safe and how to keep other members of the community safe. Not terribly long after that, if necessary they have to work towards establishing an airway for a patient and then in many cases restarting circulation for a patient and maintaining that circulation, administering fluids to maintain circulation and administering oxygen to maintain oxygenation.

Quite frequently they will have to administer pain relief, a tricky business indeed, particularly when people are in acute pain caused by a recent trauma. No doubt inevitably on many occasions, there will be loved ones nearby, such as family or friends, so that the person who has had the trauma has people nearby who are deeply concerned for that person's welfare. The paramedic must not only manage all of those clinical decisions in relation to that patient but also communicate with those people nearby and, often times, bring them into the care of that patient. It is a truly confronting and difficult situation to be in.


One of the most difficult things for a paramedic, despite all of their best work and efforts, is being there at the end of life for some people. They would be the last person comforting a person as they die, comforting their family or friends who may be nearby. That must be a very difficult situation. All of those things I have just described—assessing a situation, establishing and maintaining an airway, establishing circulation, relieving pain, communicating with patients and their families—are highly skilled activities that require a high degree of professionalism. Paramedics do not just do that every now and then: they do that all day, every day and at a very high level. I know from my dealings with many paramedics, from seeing them bring in patients to a hospital situation, that the quality of the handovers and the information that we receive is truly lifesaving. They give us the information so that we can continue the care that they have started under very difficult situations. Fortunately, we have much more managed situations to work in.

I know that many of those paramedics that I have spoken to over the years feel like poor relations in the health profession. Nothing could be further from the truth. They are every bit a part of the health profession as everybody else in the health profession. I certainly view them as very important parts of our team. I know that every nurse, doctor, midwife and allied health professional views them in the same way. This bill takes the appropriate step of establishing that registration process. They will continue to deliver the same high levels of professional care. They will continue to accept the high levels of ethical responsibility that they have, but they now will do so with the protection and benefits that professional registration brings. I am extremely pleased in this quasiquicentennial year to support this bill and I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (5.18 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to this debate. I spent 15 years as a paramedic, obviously until 2015. I have a lot of content knowledge in what we are talking about. When I started in Victoria in the 1990s there was talk about registering paramedics. I transferred to Queensland. The transfer process between states is quite difficult for paramedics even to this day because of the amount of work that has to be done by the prospective employee to prove to the ambulance service to which they are moving that they have the capability, qualifications and ability to do the job.

For 20 or 30 years there has been talk about registering paramedics in Australia and it is a delight to be in this House as a member of parliament when we start to make significant tracks into doing that. We need to protect the paramedic title. It is used inappropriately by some. It is a very important title. It deserves protection. We need to register our paramedics; it is the right thing to do. Of course, other states will follow this process. We particularly need to ensure that our paramedics can transfer between states as freely and easily as nursing and other professions where there are not cumbersome processes to prove that they are good operators. Paramedics who work interstate get more experience in more diverse fields, making them better operators, whether remote, rural or in the city, irrespective of the colour of their uniform or the state in which they work.

I was on the QAS Clinical Review Committee for a year or two where a group of us were tasked with reviewing situations in Queensland that went horribly wrong and making recommendations to the medical director about the future of that particular paramedic's employment. In a way we were operating a type of registration board. We are now making the best step of all in sending this to a nationwide board. I thank everyone involved and I most strongly support this bill.

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (5.20 pm), in reply: I was very pleased to participate in this debate this afternoon and I acknowledge the contributions of all members of the House. I thank the shadow minister and the LNP for their support for this important legislation. One of the pleasing aspects of the debate was that the lawyers in the debate were massively outnumbered by the former health professionals who spoke on the bill. I acknowledge the member for Surfers Paradise, a registered but now not practising dentist—I am sure he would like to have a go at me at some stage, perhaps without anaesthetic, but we will have to wait until our parliamentary careers are over for that. I acknowledge the member for Gaven, who has worked in a communications centre in an ambulance service. On the government's side I acknowledge the member for Greenslopes, who is a registered nurse and continues to maintain the currency of his practice through appropriate clinical time; as well as, very importantly, the member for Thuringowa, who served for 27 years as a paramedic and is now an honorary paramedic in Townsville; and also the member for Barron River, who also spoke at length about his service as a paramedic. I think it speaks highly of our parliament that we have such highly regarded professions now represented in the parliament through those members of parliament. Sadly for the members for Thuringowa, Barron River and Greenslopes they have gone from the highest regarded profession to a profession just underneath those professions being members of the Queensland parliament. We are all privileged to serve in this House from wherever we come from and I think it is wonderful that we have so many health practitioners who have worked in that area now contributing to this legislation.

I again acknowledge the service of paramedics to our state. We have heard from all members about the great contribution they make to Queensland. I reflected on my experience as the Minister for Ambulance Services. I think I am the first minister in Queensland to hold that specific title: not just the Minister for Health but a designated ministerial title as the Minister for Ambulance Services and I am very proud to serve in that capacity. I know the sacrifices that hardworking ambulance officers and paramedics make to attend emergencies day and night. We often take for granted the work they do, but we feel a great sense of comfort and relief when paramedics are on scene with us. When they respond to a call there is a visible sense of relief from all of us who have had that experience, who have experienced the kind, calm but highly professional way that paramedics engage in health responses, often very serious critical responses that are required, and I want to express my thanks to them.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to thank you as the chair of the committee for the work of your committee in guiding the bill through the committee. I thank you for the detailed consideration of those matters. I addressed that at the beginning of the second reading speech. I also want to address some of the issues that were raised in response, notably by the member for Caloundra, in relation to emergency department performance. I do not really want to go on at length, but it was raised in the debate and I do want to address that. Before I turn to that, I want to address the matter of occupational violence that the member for Surfers Paradise raised. Our government takes that matter very seriously. We set up a dedicated task force not only for paramedics but for all health workers in Queensland. The Paramedic Safety Taskforce made 15 recommendations. We have implemented them all. We will continue to monitor this both for paramedics and also for health workers across Queensland. There is no excuse for abuse of any form, physical or verbal, against any health worker in the state. Our government has taken steps to implement significant, often landmark, reforms in this area. The truth of the matter is there was no action for three years under the Newman LNP government and the problem continued to grow. Not only have we taken steps; we have made it very clear to our staff that it is unacceptable. I anticipate there will be more reporting of violence and abuse against staff because we are encouraging them to report. It is the only way we can address that issue.

In response to the member for Caloundra, demands on emergency departments and ambulances is at an all-time high, as reported a few weeks ago. The single busiest day in the 125-year history of the Queensland Ambulance Service and its predecessor organisation occurred a couple of weeks ago. The QAS is now attending 86,000 incidents a month—15 per cent more every month than when the LNP was in power. Our major emergency departments are seeing 74,000 presentations each month—12,000 more every month than was occurring under the LNP: a 20 per cent increase. We have increased funding to the Ambulance Service by \$80 million since we came to power. We have increased ambulance officers and staff members rebuilding the front line by 225. Category 2 presentations are up. NEAT times—our emergency access time—is expected to be 76 per cent in 2016-17. Notwithstanding this very significant increase in demand, it is equal to the best ever result achieved by the LNP.

I say to the member for Caloundra, let us not tear down paramedics and our emergency staff as he seeks to do. Let us support them across Queensland. I thank all members of the House for their contribution. This is an important day in the history of our Ambulance Service and the future professionalisation of our paramedics in this state.

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 87, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (5.27 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. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (5.27 pm): I move—


That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Natural Disasters, Recovery Assistance

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (5.27 pm): I move—

That this House—

1. notes the failure of the opposition leader and the Queensland LNP to unequivocally stand up to Canberra in support of the Palaszczuk government's category D economic recovery package;
2. notes with disappointment the Turnbull government's pitiful increase to reconstruction assistance funding announced on 27 August 2017 to just \$48.1 million—still less than half of what is needed—yet at the same time is spending \$122 million in the marriage law postal survey; and
3. calls on the federal government to invest the full amount of NDRRA economic recovery funding originally requested to support the crucial recovery and resilience projects of the Rockhampton levee, Whitsunday Airport and the Mackay Bluewater trail and Queens Park redevelopment, which will aid the recovery of our cyclone ravaged communities ahead of the fast-approaching storm season.

Let us get something clear from the start: the LNP in Queensland and the LNP in Canberra have let our cyclone ravaged communities down. The Turnbull government has turned its back on Queensland communities by failing to match the state government's \$110 million contribution to category D. Malcolm Turnbull, sitting in his harbourside mansion, has been too gutless to even visit the Whitsundays since Cyclone Debbie hit. He is still refusing to give these regional communities what they need. He is happy to turn up straight after the cyclone hit and take as many selfies as he could, but he has not been back since. The Leader of the Opposition, Tim Nicholls, has been right there beside him missing in action. They are on a unity ticket and they are selling out Queensland.


It has been 167 days since Cyclone Debbie and Tim Nicholls has totally failed to call out his federal LNP colleague's disgraceful behaviour. He has stayed silent while our regional communities of Rockhampton, Mackay and the Whitsundays have suffered. When the Turnbull government made up fake problems with paperwork and disgracefully accused hardworking Queensland mayors of trying to rot the system, where was the Leader of the Opposition here in Queensland? Did he meet with the mayors and councils of Whitsunday, Rockhampton and Mackay? No! Did he write to the Prime Minister advocating on behalf of these cyclone ravaged communities? No! Did he stand up for disaster affected communities in the media? No! Did he stand up in this place and fight for Queensland? No, he did nothing! He backed his mate Malcolm Turnbull in Canberra rather than demand a fair deal for Queensland communities that continue to suffer today. It makes sense, though, doesn't it, because it is the merchant banker from Point Piper and the inner-city spiff from Clayfield. It is pretty clear the Leader of the Opposition has no interest in regional Queensland, just like the Prime Minister. Regional Queenslanders know that. They know it and they do not want a bar of the opposition leader. They know it on that side of the House, too. Everyone saw the story during the week that regional LNP members do not even want him in their electorate. They would prefer the member for Nanango.

Government members interjected.

Ms TRAD: Absolutely. I take that interjection from government members. They only wanted the member for Nanango after they found out that Barnaby Joyce was a kiwi. The opposition leader gets one bad poll and immediately runs to the seat of Chatsworth, doing the washing and eating pies with the member for Mansfield. Regional communities can see right through him.

In contrast, the Palaszczuk Labor government will not let down our hardest hit communities. The entire point of category D funding is to provide extraordinary assistance not only to repair the damage but also to fund projects that will contribute to the economic revitalisation of affected areas. In other words, it is to set up for the long-term economic growth of the regions affected by disaster. That is what the Whitsunday Airport will do as a new tourism gateway for the community.

After the 2011 floods in South-East Queensland, the federal Labor government joined the Newman-Nicholls government of the time to fund the Toowoomba flood mitigation project, including two brand-new detention basins and an upgrade to infrastructure. That is what you get from a federal Labor government: genuine partnership and participation in the NDRRA process. Talk about double standards! Nothing about this is fair and it is hurting Queenslanders already devastated by Cyclone Debbie. I know it, Labor knows it and members can be rest assured that regional Queenslanders know it, too.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (5.32 pm): At the outset, I continue to pay my respects to those residents, business owners and operators from across the Whitsunday, Mackay, Isaac and Rockhampton council areas, as well as those from all of the council areas along the eastern seaboard down to the Gold Coast and the Scenic Rim so devastatingly affected by Tropical Cyclone Debbie. Do you know what? They deserve so much better than the squabbling and the political games of the Deputy Premier.

Tonight the LNP is opposing the motion, because it is inherently false and it is wrong. I will step through just why. From the outset, just because the LNP members in this House do not posture the way that the Deputy Premier does, it does not mean that they are not representing their communities. On any day I will pit the member for Whitsunday and the member for Burdekin against the Deputy Premier in representing their communities, and they do that alongside federal members such as George Christensen. Because of that, they increased the federal contribution to \$48 million. Any suggestion that they did not is inherently wrong.

As for calling on the federal government to invest in projects—and I will come to the specific projects in a moment—I go back to the actual guidelines for what NDRRA category D stands for. The guidelines state—

Category D: Exceptional circumstances assistance beyond Categories A to C. Category D assistance is generally considered once the impact of the disaster has been assessed and specific recovery gaps identified. Category D assistance is requested from the states and requires agreement from the Prime Minister.

It goes on to state that category D is for—

Assistance to alleviate distress or damage in circumstances that are considered exceptional.


I repeat: in circumstances that are considered exceptional, it is to alleviate distress or damage. Let us bear that in mind while we consider the projects that the Deputy Premier has listed in the motion.

The Rockhampton levee bank: if the Labor Party had done what the LNP government had done and continued to invest in two programs, the Royalties for the Regions and the LNP's Betterment Fund, the Rockhampton levee could have been built. Last time we had this debate, I listed project after project after project that were funded through Royalties for the Regions and that are now protecting communities across this state, whether that be in St George, Roma, Burnett or the Burdekin. All of those places have received funding through Royalties for the Regions to build things like the Rockhampton levee bank.

I turn to the Whitsunday Airport. I will take advice from the member for Whitsunday, but I think they have called it the wrong thing. Are they investing in the Whitsunday Airport at Airlie Beach or are they asking for investment into the Whitsunday Coast Airport, just south of Proserpine? On 13 June, the government said that project was fully funded and that the \$40 million upgrade is occurring. If I recall correctly, the airport was so damaged that it was actually able to open the next day and they started ferrying people in. Again, I refer back to what category D funding is actually for.

We also have the Queens Park redevelopment. My understanding is that it was so devastatingly damaged that they were able to hold a food and wine festival there. As reported in the *Daily Mercury*, the event was staged and the day was an outstanding success.

Let us be clear: this is nothing more than political posturing by the Deputy Premier to cover up her inability to deliver for regional communities around the state of Queensland. It is disgraceful that the Palaszczuk government has once again raised the hopes of local councils that are already doing it tough. Labor has struggled with the NDRRA process. They failed to fund Royalties for the Regions. They have failed to fund the LNP's Betterment Fund. If they had, they would not need to go, cap in hand, to the federal government.

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Economic Development) (5.37 pm): I rise to support the Deputy Premier's motion and so should those opposite. What a weak defence against the motion from the last speaker. This motion should be supported by all levels of government and I will outline why that is the case. I am particularly concerned about the federal government's treatment of Rockhampton after both Cyclone Marcia and Cyclone Debbie which has, in fact, been consistent over the entire period. If we go back to the 2013 flood events in Rockhampton, the same dead hand was in play to deal with the issues, particularly the matter that I am interested which is the flood levee.

In July 2015, Michelle Landry told the *Morning Bulletin* that she had lobbied hard for category D funding after Cyclone Marcia. That was for the Rockhampton riverbank development, as some may recall. Then she said it was not eligible based on the logic put up by the previous speaker. That is completely and utterly wrong, which I will reflect on in a moment, but it sounds very familiar. It is habitual conduct on her part in these matters. In 2015, the Palaszczuk government committed \$15 million to that transformational plan. We invited the federal government to match our contribution and they refused outright. Sometime later, they coughed up a paltry \$7 million from their National Stronger Regions Fund. Here is the rub: to date, \$44.64 million has been committed to that redevelopment and one sixth has come from the federal arena. The state government has contributed \$17.27 million, the councils had to do the lifting, unnecessarily in my view, at \$17.38 million and the federal government is stuck on a \$7 million contribution. The Turnbull government's contribution is a fraction of what they should be putting forward, because Michelle Landry has failed to represent the interests of her community. After all, the federal budget is eight times that of the state government's budget. For every dollar we spend on these sorts of projects we need to get \$8 from the federal government to keep budgetary pace, rather than fifty-fifty which they refuse to meet.


We have had the same attitude from the federal government in 2017 as we had in 2015, which makes it doubly insulting. The common denominator is the federal member in Rockhampton, Michelle Landry. Her abject failure to lobby on behalf of Rockhampton has cost us \$25 million after Cyclone Debbie. She has been the problem for years. It is wilful and deliberate negligent for which she will never be forgiven by the people living in Depot Hill, for example, or by the local business operators who are very upset.

Those opposite should be hanging their heads in shame on this matter and should be supporting the motion. I cannot see what the Leader of the Opposition has done to fight for those communities and I cannot see what any of those opposite have said in support of us. All levels of government should be working for the betterment of the community.

What is really interesting is that back in 2013 the then minister for local government, community recovery and resilience was David Crisafulli. David Crisafulli made it clear that he was very, very, very supportive—as quoted by Mayor Strelow—of the levee bank proposal based on the 2013 flood. David is a coming, one would say. The Leader of the Opposition might be worried about that. David supported it, but then Michelle Landry got involved and killed it off. We have seen the same habitual issues in 2013, 2015 and 2017. After Cyclone Debbie we have had the same issues. I am going to get a T-shirt with '13 15 17' on it.

The silence of those opposite is simply ridiculous. These projects well and truly fit within the characteristics of category D funding. There are numerous examples of where that funding has been supported. The federal government's own criteria has been reflected upon. The point that has not been made is that eligibility is at the discretion of the Prime Minister and the Premier. They should be exercising that discretion.

There are many projects in Queensland that have been supported by this type of funding. After the 2011 Brisbane floods seven new Brisbane City Council ferry terminals were built. They have been relocating communities based on floods. If there were ever projects that should be supported by all levels of government it is these sorts of disaster protection projects. It defies logic that a local federal member would not support that and that this opposition has not been more vocal in its assistance.

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (5.42 pm): I am delighted to rise to contribute to this debate tonight and hit back at the motion that has been put forward by the Deputy Premier. In her contribution this evening the Deputy Premier referred to fake paperwork. All we get from the Palaszczuk Labor government regarding this category D fiasco is fake news—fake news across Mackay and the Whitsundays and fake news across Central Queensland.

Let us go back to what is in the motion. The motion refers to the Whitsunday Airport. The Palaszczuk Labor government does not know whether it is Arthur or Martha. The Whitsunday Airport is actually at Flametree adjacent to Shute Harbour. I will talk about Shute Harbour in a moment. What the government was alluding to was the Whitsunday Coast Airport, formally the Proserpine Airport. It is an insult to Jeffrey Ruddell, a local canefarmer done well, who owns the Whitsunday Airport at Flametree—the home of the Air Whitsunday fleet that is iconic across the Whitsunday islands. They have the wrong airport in the motion before the House tonight.

Let us talk about the cyclone. I know we used to have girl cyclones or lady cyclones, but now we also have boy cyclones. Let us not forget that when we talk about botched paperwork this mob gave paperwork to Canberra on behalf of the people of Queenslanders—no matter where they live, no matter who they vote for—which referred to the cyclone as Cyclone Marcia. I thank the member for Rockhampton for drawing the short straw tonight and reminding me about Cyclone Marcia. Famously, they put the paperwork into the federal government and referred to category D Cyclone Debbie, which devastated the Whitsundays, my island communities, my mainland communities—all of our communities—as Cyclone Marcia. I love Marcia Hines, but that is a disgrace.

In talking about botched paperwork in terms of category D funding, people in the Whitsundays like Bob Eden, who lives at Gregory River, was sent a bill for \$177. When it comes to hardship payments to people who were doing it tough, some people were underpaid, some people were over overpaid and some people were not paid. People like Kerry Hamilton from Preston are in this situation. It goes on and on.


Let us talk about Shute Harbour. I cannot believe that the Deputy Premier had the audacity to move this motion tonight. On 30 June I took the then minister for Northern Australia, Senator Matt Canavan, down to Shute Harbour to see the damage for himself. We were in the company of local government representative Councillor Jan Clifford. Subsequent to that, on 21 July not only did I push the envelope with the Prime Minister, I wrote to the Prime Minister. I did rock the boat. I take umbrage at some of the rot coming from government members. I fired a shot. I rattled the cage. I put on a song and dance.

On the back of that, I personally spoke to Queensland's most senior MP in the coalition, the former health minister, the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, the Hon. Peter Dutton, at Cape Gloucester Saturday week ago. I said to 'Dutto', 'We need to get this money because some

projects were not eligible and some were.’ The projects that Canberra has funded they have given a big tick to. Initially the paperwork from the Palaszczuk Labor government was botched. It was a dog’s breakfast.

Back in March 2010 we had category 3 Cyclone Ului. What happened on the back of that? The then Whitsunday council, with the then mayor at the helm—‘the Great Moscow Circus’, the now Labor candidate for Burdekin—botched the paperwork so well that they received all this money for the town of Bowen. I remember when I started my career with News Ltd in Bowen that we had dirt streets. All of a sudden in Bowen, guess what baby? They were paved with gold, figuratively speaking. They were as smooth as a baby’s bum. No wonder Canberra was reluctant to deal with the Palaszczuk Labor government—they had been duded before. They are mixed up. I am happy to take them for a mixed grill at Metropol. That is how mixed up they are. The locals have had enough.

As for Queens Park in East Mackay, the Food and Wine Day went ahead on 8 July. There were thousands of people there. There were people from all over the place. The editor and the deputy editor of the *Daily Mercury* were there. They saw no damage. I was there last Friday for the Rats of Tobruk service, and guess what? The diggers saw no damage either. It goes on and on. At the end of the day, I fired a shot to get the Whitsundays back on track. I am out of time, but those opposite are out of touch.

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events and the Commonwealth Games) (5.47 pm): We have just had a five-minute contribution from the local member who is meant to represent the community of Whitsunday and not once did he talk about how that economy is recovering and the empathy that he has for the businesses in that community.

Ms Trad: Showed none.

Ms JONES: That is right. I will take that interjection. If I can remember, it was all about a singer from the eighties. He talked about the gender names of cyclones. He wanted to talk about gender names of cyclones and how that has changed over the decades, but he did not want to talk about the one thing that this motion goes to the heart of—that is, getting the Whitsundays community back on its feet after Cyclone Debbie.

An opposition member interjected.

Ms JONES: No, he did not. Unlike the honourable member for Whitsunday, I had a meeting today with the mayor of the Whitsundays and the CEO of Tourism Whitsundays.

An opposition member: No kidding.

Ms JONES: No kidding; that is right. That is my job. I do my job. As the Minister for Tourism I have been meeting with them regularly to talk about how we can work with industry in the Whitsunday community to support them into the future.

What is category D all about? Category D is all about funding projects that will provide a long-term economic benefit for a community that has been hit hard by a cyclone.

Ms Trad: Exceptional.

Ms JONES: An exceptional circumstances—an unforeseen, natural occurrence. As Australians we say that we live in a beautiful country. Part of what happens when you live in Queensland is you have cyclones. When they hit a community they hit hard. We, as Australians, believe that we should chip in, that we should step up and help other Queenslanders out when that occurs.

Mr Costigan: Did you talk about The Gap storms in here?

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock.

Ms JONES: Of course I spoke about The Gap storms when I was in here. I want to go to the heart of what we heard in the member for Whitsunday’s contribution. Instead of talking about his role in trying to secure additional funding for his community, he—

Mr COSTIGAN: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take offence to what the member for Ashgrove has just said, because I wrote to the Prime Minister and made it pretty clear that I did. I ask the member to withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Will you please withdraw?

Ms JONES: I withdraw. What we heard in the member for Whitsunday’s contribution was him peddling the myth about paperwork. I put this to the member for Whitsundays: if the paperwork for package 1, the local council packages, was so bad then why were half funded but not the other half? Come on! Wake up, Australia. Where is the logic in that? If the paperwork was so shoddy then why did they pick and choose which projects they were going to fund?

What the member for Whitsunday failed to acknowledge in his contribution when he was talking more about the gender identity of cyclones—do you know where the Deputy Premier got the projects from to nominate to the federal government? She got them from talking to the councils on the ground in the communities that had been hit hard. Every single one of those projects had been nominated by the local councils, and in the case of the member for Whitsunday it was his mayor, Andrew Willcox. I will say this about the mayor of the Whitsundays: he is a great man. He is a man who will stand up for his community and fight for his community. The contrast between the behaviour of the mayor of the Whitsunday Regional Council and the member for Whitsunday could not be more stark.

Mr Costigan: You wanted me dead the last time you came in here. You wanted me dead. It is in *Hansard*.

Ms Trad: He knows how to fight for his community.

Ms JONES: I do not even know what his interjection was. We will not give up. It has been 167 days since Cyclone Debbie devastated big parts of Queensland. Of course as the Minister for Tourism I have a particular interest in the Whitsundays.

Mr Costigan: You just want a seat.

Ms JONES: I take that interjection.

Ms Trad: You just gave your seat away tonight, you idiot!

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Would you please withdraw?

Ms TRAD: Mr Speaker, I withdraw.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. We will wait a moment.

Ms JONES: Once again we have seen here tonight a failure by the LNP member for Whitsunday and a failure by the LNP leader here in Queensland—the man who goes around saying that he thinks he can be the premier of Queensland—to stand up for this state and for Queenslanders and the communities in which they live. That is what we have seen here. It is a Labor government that is working hand in glove with local communities. It is a Labor government that is standing up for the councils. It is a Labor government that is standing up for the workers in those communities because we want a long-term, bright future for those communities. We do not want them to have to fight tooth and nail with their federal government, which is meant to be there to represent them, to get the funding to rebuild their communities.

Mr Costigan: Where's our money for the highway?

Ms Trad: We are rebuilding the highway.

Ms JONES: We are rebuilding the highway; I take that interjection.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. You have the call, Minister.

Ms JONES: Thanks, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Time has expired.

Ms JONES: The people of the Whitsundays will see you for what you are, mate.

Mr COSTIGAN: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. You called time on the member for Ashgrove and I take offence to what she just said then after her time had expired. I again ask her to withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: I did not hear the words. Will you withdraw whatever comments the member found offensive?


Ms JONES: What comment did he find offensive? I do not know.

Ms Trad interjected.

Ms JONES: Oh, the bit where I said they will see right through him. I withdraw.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, we have another motion immediately after this one. We have a further speaker on this motion.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (5.54 pm): The performance from the government members here tonight in debating this particular motion is nothing short of disgraceful when you consider what has happened in the Whitsundays following Cyclone Debbie. I was there. I was on the ground. I slept on the ground in the aftermath of that cyclone to help with the clean-up. I worked with the SES workers and the Defence Force and the council workers, so I know firsthand what that community went through and what they are still going through.

The motion moved by the member for South Brisbane tonight should be seen for what it is: a desperate attempt by a financially strapped Labor government to get the federal government to prop up their budget bottom line. That should come as no surprise when we look at the pitiful track record of this do-nothing government when it comes to delivering crucial infrastructure in this state.

Labor axed the LNP's Royalties for the Regions that built flood mitigation projects and built more resilient infrastructure. They failed to continue the LNP's Betterment Fund and, following Cyclone Debbie, they failed to complete the necessary NDRRA funding request forms, with more than \$161 million deemed ineligible following the assessment process. What a damning indictment on the Deputy Premier that is! How do you, Deputy Premier, explain that to Queenslanders? Will you go into North Queensland and explain to the residents, the businesses and the councils how you stuffed up and how you failed in your performance of your duties as Deputy Premier of this state?

This is the second occasion the Deputy Premier has moved a motion in this House on this issue. Let me reiterate my challenge to the Deputy Premier on the last occasion: show me the business case for the claims that you have submitted; show me the evidence and the impact information to support your application, because this is not a lucky dip. There are stringent guidelines to be met regarding NDRRA funding, and history shows that there are significant repercussions for those who get it wrong.

Let us look at the track record of those opposite when it comes to applying for NDRRA funding. Who could forget their bumbling efforts in the past which left Queensland out of pocket to the tune of \$800 million, including \$153 million which was claimed for ineligible projects? No wonder the Queensland Auditor-General was scathing in his assessment of Queensland's claims. It goes to show that if you do not get it right or you try to pull the wool over the eyes of the assessment team you will not be funded. The fact that \$161 million worth of works continues to be ineligible highlights the sheer incompetence of this Labor government.

Who could forget—certainly my colleague the member for Whitsunday highlighted this as well—the absolute debacle which occurred at the Whitsunday Regional Council under the watch of Mike Brunner when he made a number of ineligible claims following Cyclone Ului which almost sent that council bankrupt? It took years to pay back those funds and it was the ratepayers who shouldered the burden. There is a very clear message here about the need to get it right. It is obvious that those opposite did not learn from their mistakes because, as members will recall, they again tried to pull the wool over the eyes of the federal government following Cyclone Debbie by submitting claims for category C funding which were incomplete and then had the hide to cry foul when those claims were knocked back.

NDRRA is not a slush fund and it is certainly not there to prop up this incompetent government, which is desperately attempting to access funding for infrastructure projects it has been unable to deliver—projects like a levee bank in Rockhampton. I wonder whose seat is centred around that project, a \$60 million capital works project—that is right; a capital works project—that this government is trying to fund—

Mr BAILEY: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I know the member is keen not to talk about the motion and to talk about everything else, but I ask him to be relevant and address why he is selling out his community and not standing up to Canberra.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr LAST: I am talking about a \$60 million capital works project that this government is trying to fund with category D funding with the sole intention of propping up the member for Rockhampton at the next election.

There is no question that Cyclone Debbie caused massive damage and destruction when it crossed the North Queensland coast on 28 March this year. I will always support genuine claims for disaster assistance that are supported by a well-researched and legitimate business case. What I will not support are claims that are designed to help bail out a government that is floundering and unable to deliver the infrastructure we so desperately need in North Queensland.

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

AYES, 43:

ALP, 42—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Power, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

INDEPENDENT, 1—Gordon.

NOES, 41:

LNP, 41—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Cripps, Davis, Elmes, Emerson, Frecklington, Hart, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Perrett, Powell, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Seeney, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Walker, Watts, Weir.

Resolved in the affirmative.

MOTION

Youth Offenders, Order for Production of Documents



Mr WALKER (Mansfield—LNP) (6.04 pm): I move the motion standing in my name but do so in an amended form to change the date by which the report is to be given to the parliament from 7 September to 21 September. I move—

That, in accordance with standing order 27, this House orders the Attorney-General to produce to the House a list of proposed locations for the Palaszczuk government's supervised bail accommodation options for youth offenders by noon Thursday, 21 September 2017.

There has been a culture of secrecy that has permeated through this Palaszczuk Labor government and it is in full swing when there is something that the government has to deal with that is either politically inconvenient or challenging. Between the cover-ups, the redacted reports, the ongoing reviews and inquiries, the legal excuses and the convenience of confidentiality, there always seems to be an excuse as to why Queenslanders do not need to know about important issues, reports or government policies that impact on them and their way of life. It is the fundamental role of any government to keep its citizens safe, and yet under Labor crime rates are up, strong laws are being weakened and it seems that the rights of criminals are put ahead of the rights of victims of crime.

Last year Labor hastily changed the laws to finally enact the transition of 17-year-olds from adult prisons to youth detention centres and treat them under the Youth Justice Act in the criminal justice system. Those changes have been spoken about for around 25 years, but the challenging circumstances involved meant they were never enacted by either party. There is good reason for that: they are difficult matters to put into practice. The cost is expensive. The department estimated \$400 million to build the centre necessary to accommodate 17-year-olds. We have to ensure that the community is kept safe, that detainees are kept safe and that staff are kept safe.

Without any implementation plan, last year the laws were changed, and we did not support that because there was no real plan other than a plan to have a plan within 12 months.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Mansfield, I apologise for interrupting. Have you got a copy of your amended motion?

Mr WALKER: I can give you one, Mr Speaker. Our two youth detention centres are already in crisis management with ongoing lockdowns, riots and violent assaults against staff. The morale of staff is at a significant low point. I want to make sure that members of the House realise the sorts of offenders that sometimes are dealt with in these centres. It is not always minor offences. When I toured the centre at Wacol—the Moreton Correctional Centre—I was told that they had recently held a 16-year-old who had been charged with two murders, the murder of his mother and his sister, so we have potentially serious offenders involved in the youth justice system.

In estimates this year it was revealed there was a \$16.9 million capital allocation in the budget to deal with overcrowding in our youth detention centres and the transfer of around 50 more 17-year-olds in mid-November this year, and that is where the rubber really hits the road on this policy. The Attorney-General could not outline in estimates what the \$16.9 million in capital allocated in the budget was going to do—whether it was extra capacity at the youth detention centres or another plan—but it has since been revealed what that secret plan really is, and that is for youth bail accommodation options to be dotted across the neighbourhoods of Queensland.

What that means is that young people charged with an offence could be housed in suburban detention centres in the community. The *Sunday Mail* reported on 20 August that bail houses for young Queenslanders on criminal charges would be set up across the state. A spokesperson for the Premier yesterday confirmed the plan and I quote—

We want courts to have the option that instead of releasing a young offender on bail to their home address, which may be unsafe or unstable, to send them to one of these supervised bail facilities ...

Is it any wonder they have not gone into further detail about these plans? We hear that the Deputy Premier had a veto power over a planned suburban detention house in her electorate. I wonder how many other people will have that privilege. It seems like there is one rule for Jackie Trad and another rule for all other Queenslanders. As the *Sunday Mail* of 27 August reported—


DEPUTY Premier Jackie Trad is ducking accusations she intervened to scuttle plans for a controversial youth bail house in her South Brisbane electorate ...

If the Deputy Premier is able to have that veto power so should every other Queenslanders. They deserve to know. The Premier promised to lead a government of consultation. There has been zero consultation on this issue or Labor's plans. It is similar to the 18 minutes notice we were given when the electoral system was turned on its head in this parliament—no consultation whatsoever.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I apologise, member for Mansfield. I now call the member for Mansfield so we can hear him.

Mr WALKER: We call on them to do the right thing, the honourable thing, and to come clean with the people of Queensland within the two-week period that is specified in the motion. Queenslanders could well be horrified at the thought of youth offenders possibly moving into the house next door. There is no real plan to deal with this. It is a kneejerk reaction and Queenslanders need to know what plans this Labor government is hiding.

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (6.10 pm): In speaking to the motion put by the member for Mansfield, I was going to circulate an amendment that actually proposed Friday, 22 September. I am happy to settle for Thursday, 21 September 2017. I move the following amendment—

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

'this House notes the Attorney-General's undertaking to table in the House a list of proposed locations for 'Supervised Bail Accommodation options' for youth offenders by noon Thursday, 21 September 2017.'

We word it in that way to follow the conventions of this House when it comes to asking for documents to be produced. It is appropriate to 'call on' as opposed to 'order' a minister to produce a document. Having said that, we have no objection to producing the document by Thursday, 21 September, and we ask for members on both sides of the parliament to support that amended motion.

This motion put by the opposition today is all about trying to create fear in the community. We have talked about this before. They say that there has been zero consultation, but what they mean is that they have not been consulted. Quite honestly, why would we consult an opposition who believes that the only solution to deal with youth justice is to create more offences, to clog up our courts and to have overcrowded youth detention centres that will lead to adult correction centres being overcrowded because that is exactly where those young people will end up?

The opposition have learnt absolutely nothing from when they were in government. They have not at any point learnt anything. They like to refer to the Hon. Judge Shanahan and his annual reports. What they never read out from those reports is the criticism in relation to their legislation and the changes that they brought in. The judge went into great detail to say there was no trend in escalating youth crime, despite the rhetoric from those on the other side claiming there was. When specifically talking to what was the opposition's bill in 2014, he said—

Several of these changes cause me grave concern.

The principle that detention should be a sentence of last resort in relation to a child is of long standing in the common law and recognised in all other Australian States.

He then went on to talk about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. He talked about the importance of rehabilitation. He said—

Change was unnecessary in the light of the statistics and the principles of juvenile justice.

He said—

If the rationale was some sort of “naming and shaming” then the measure is particularly ill advised.

He went on to say—

“Naming and shaming” does little to impact on recidivism and may significantly impact on the chances of rehabilitation, particularly in small communities. “Naming and shaming” regimes have been abandoned in the Northern Territory and the United Kingdom. I am aware of no empirical evidence that shows it has an impact on recidivism.


Yet what we have is the LNP’s new policy, or should I say the recycled policy of the Leader of the Opposition, Tim Nicholls. The only thing they support recycling on is LNP policies from the Newman government. This policy has five dot points. That is how they are going to deal with youth justice, with five dot points. They talk about the complexity of dealing with 17-year-olds but they have absolutely no idea. They talk about supervised bail accommodation like this is a new concept. There are NGOs in the community who are housing youth, who are providing accommodation, for kids in the youth justice system who are on bail. Shock, horror! They are actually in our communities right now and they are called youth shelters. They are all over this great state and I want to acknowledge the great NGOs who are doing that work and supporting those organisations.

The opposition have no policy and they have no direction. They talk about honesty to the people of Queensland, but they need to be honest. What are they going to do in relation to the legislation on 17-year-olds? Will they reverse it? Will they support NGOs who are doing this great work in the community? What about all the NGOs who were defunded because Skilling Queenslanders for Work was scrapped? It is those same NGOs. The opposition do not support community organisations. They do not support early intervention and restorative justice.

An honourable member: Wait and see.

Mrs D’ATH: Wait and see? We will.

(Time expired)

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (6.15 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion moved by the honourable member for Mansfield. I know just how worried my community will be about this sneaky plan of this Labor government to solve its overcrowding issue by emptying inmates from the two youth detention centres and setting up accommodation centres in suburban areas, potentially in and around the town of Bundaberg. We all know that Labor are soft on crime. They are soft on crime, and our residents deserve answers.

We all know that Labor has a sneaky plan to empty its jails of 17-year-olds and house them in our streets, in our neighbourhoods. This is another thought bubble—a dangerous Labor plan that raises more questions than answers. Yes, our youth detention centres are overcrowded. They are overcrowded because Labor has done nothing to redress the problem—nothing—and just hoped the problem would go away. This is further evidence of Labor’s failed youth detention policy.

Now Labor thinks it can fix the problem by emptying its jails and putting those youth in our suburbs. This government is clearly so desperate to solve youth detention centre overcrowding issues that it is willing to let the youth loose on our streets, into our neighbourhoods and into our suburban shopping centres, parks and main streets. I know that the people of Bundaberg and the surrounds of Burnett will not be impressed at the thought of youth offenders living next door to them. I hold grave concerns for the welfare of our families, elderly residents and those young and old who live alone in our communities who could find themselves living next door to these—

Mrs D’Ath: Shame on you.

Mr BENNETT: Shame on me for sticking up for my community. I will take that interjection, thank you very much.

The fact that we have these juvenile offenders being housed in overflowing adult prisons in the first place is evidence that they have committed extensive or serious crimes and this government has failed. Alarm bells should be ringing. This will clearly create more problems for policing and our entire community. We can expect to see a rise in crime, including break and enters and illicit drugs use. These people are not angels. I ask this government to explain just how they are going to keep my constituents safe. This is an ill-thought-out plan and we need an explanation.

This Labor government has not been up-front with the community. Why the secrecy? Why hasn’t there been any community consultation whatsoever? I guess we know the answer to that. Of course those opposite will not be honest with the people of Queensland because it will not be popular. I ask

those members opposite whether they would want a violent offender awaiting sentencing living next door to them. I bet I know the answer to that. We have already seen that in South Brisbane with the intervention of the Deputy Premier. I have spoken with Bundaberg and Burnett residents and business owners who are shocked to hear that these supposed bail houses could exist in the region. Local business owners say that there is enough crime to battle already. Some raise concerns that they would have to invest in more security measures, which is an added expense that they simply cannot afford.


There are key questions that deserve answers. What homes in our suburbs are going to be rented by the government and where? What sort of security and surveillance will be in place? Will there be any sort of consultation with local residents or local council representatives? Will there be any consultation with local members of parliament? I am very concerned about any plans for the community that I represent, the community of Bundaberg and the wider Burnett regions. It is no secret that the Attorney-General let the cat out of the bag during estimates by saying that she was confident of being able to ease overcrowding at the state's two youth detention centres, which are virtually full.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I apologise, member for Burnett. There is too much chatter in the chamber and I am having difficulty following you.

Mr BENNETT: The problem is that we have been given no details on how this will be achieved, except that it now appears that Labor is going to set up holding centres in our suburbs. The obvious questions for the Attorney-General and the Premier to answer are: how many and where? How many suburban houses are being commissioned and what are the locations? These questions deserve answers. This is so typical of Labor: no genuine plan, no consultation and no details. Queenslanders are sick of the culture of secrecy of this government. Is it any wonder that Queenslanders are concerned about their safety? I warn Queenslanders that this Labor policy is coming to a street near them. This is clearly yet another soft-on-crime policy that will cost our community. It will put our entire community at risk, and I am not willing to take that risk on behalf of our community.

I commend the motion to support the listing of housing locations for supervised bail accommodation options for youth offenders by noon on Thursday, 21 September 2017 because our community deserves to know where these community housing bail detention centres will be built. Our communities deserve the consultation that has been promised over many, many years from this Labor government. We deserve to know about future youth detention policies because clearly this Labor government has failed on all those levels.


 **Hon. CJ O'ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland) (6.20 pm): The Palaszczuk government is a government that makes a difference on youth crime and helps offenders to become better members of the community. As a government, we recognise that communities need their young people rehabilitated and helped so they do not reoffend. This is not a bleeding heart policy; this is a policy that delivers real results for community and real results for young people. Compare that to those opposite—boot camps, a failed policy that delivered no reduction in offending and did not help the community or the young people. In fact, 75 per cent of young people who attended boot camps reoffended. We have seen that 70 per cent of young people who have participated in programs like Transition 2 Success have not reoffended. Our approach—the only approach that is working for everyone—is already quite clearly delivering results. With everything that we have implemented in Townsville, the number of offences committed by young people has decreased by 12 per cent in the past year.

In parliament last September I announced our five-point plan to reduce youth crime in Townsville. The plan has five priority areas: targeted policing; local community driven responses; addressing causes of offending; boosting jobs, training and education; and improving collaboration and integration of services. This is a holistic plan that protects the community through policing but addresses the root causes of offending behaviour in young people. From a policing perspective, as at 30 June, there were 307 police officers based in five police stations responsible for calls for service across the Townsville metropolitan area. The area is supported by a further 146 officers who perform police district functions including criminal and child protection investigation and the Rapid Action Patrol group. The district hosts a further 125 officers who perform central functions such as forensics, intelligence and road policing.

Since the Palaszczuk government was elected, our police have increased actions against offenders, including arrests, cautions and summons in the Townsville local government area by 10 per cent. The offence clearance rate has increased from 66 per cent to 68 per cent. That is not all we are doing. The 2017-18 budget provides \$7.3 million over two years to continue innovative services that we

announced last December under our Townsville Community Youth Response. These services target young people and include a specialist high-risk youth court with a dedicated magistrate hearing cases; intensive case managers working with high-risk repeat offenders and their families on a 24-hour basis, ensuring young offenders adhere to a tough and rigorous program; an after-hours diversion service to keep young people off the street at night; and cultural programs that we are using to connect young people directly with their culture. Last week I announced that Queensland Youth Services in partnership with Yinda have been provided with the winning tender to help mentor our Indigenous 10- to 17-year-olds and help them actually choose a different pathway to go down.

We have seven government departments on the Townsville Stronger Communities Action Group who are also intensively coordinating services for young people at risk of offending and their families. The group has contact with some 80 high-risk families. We have shown that we understand this is a complex problem that requires more than a knee-jerk reaction. The Palaszczuk government has listened to the very substantial concerns of the people of Townsville and we will continue to deliver evidence based initiatives for youth crime. The policy of those opposite will do nothing to reduce recidivism but will do everything to take away any chance of rehabilitation and real change.

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (6.25 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Mansfield. What do we know about this government when it comes to law and order? We know a couple of things. We know that they are tricky and they are secretive when it comes to law and order. We also know that they care more about the criminals than they do the victims of crime and law-abiding citizens. We also know that they do not understand that the No. 1 priority—

Mr BAILEY: I rise to a point of order. The member for Everton is very concerned about criminal behaviour. Does this mean he is going to name the secret donors of the Liberal Party tonight? Is that what he is going to do?

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I can hear you, Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Member for Yeerongpilly, I think I might warn you under standing order 253A. If you persist, I will take the appropriate action. The challenge you have is that warning goes on for the rest of the evening. You will be on your best behaviour? All right.

Mr MANDER: This government does not recognise that its No. 1 priority as a government is to protect the community, is to keep the community safe. There is no greater example of this than their latest crazy idea to put juvenile offenders back into the suburbs, an idea they had to work up as a reaction to removing 17-year-olds from the justice system without any plan whatsoever. What we have heard about is possibly \$200 million to house 51 offenders in the youth justice system. There is no plan whatsoever, so they come up with these crazy sorts of things.

Before I go any further on that particular idea, I want to talk more about the secrecy that this government has in the law and order space. Of course, we had that disgraceful example a couple of sittings ago where the Corrective Services minister kept a secret from the Pullen family—a secret that he knew about—that one of their son's killers had been granted parole. He did not tell them. He actually paraded them during a press conference celebrating the passing of that particular law. He then hid behind confidentiality, which was an excuse that was brilliantly debunked by the member for Mansfield at the last sitting, showing what a charade that was.

We have also heard recently that the *Sunday Mail* had an RTI request about the prisoners who are currently in jail who would come under the no-body no-parole laws—again, zip, secret. We hear nothing, despite the fact that this is public knowledge; people were convicted publicly. They will not tell the public which prisoners come under that jurisdiction.

Now we have another secret: the location of the supervised bail accommodation option sites. Where will these facilities be located? Tonight the Attorney-General has been dragged kicking and screaming—she is embarrassed—to come forward with these locations only because the newspaper exposed the secrecy behind these things. It is only when we bring a motion to the House tonight that they agree that these things need to be made public.

The residents of Everton Hills, Albany Creek, Everton Park, Mitchelton and Enoggera all want to know whether one of these bail houses is going to be next door to them. They want to know whether they have to beef up security. Do they have to have higher fences and bigger walls? Do they have to have security cameras? Do they have to have guard dogs? We do not know any of the answers to

these questions because they are being secretive about this. This government is not only secretive but they are tricky with regard to descriptions of programs when they do not want us to know what they are really about. They get together and say, 'What can we call this program so that people will not really know what is happening?'

There is no greater example of this than boot camps. They criticised us for boot camps, but what they did do? They had their own version: culturally appropriate adventure based learning programs. They are boot camps; that is what they are. Now they are calling these supervised bail accommodation options. Let's call them what they are: suburban youth detention centres. They are in our suburbs and the public deserves the right to know what they are.


This is a government that seeks to understand juvenile offenders, not punish them. This is a government that does not want to protect the community from juvenile offenders. For two nights in a row they have been shamed—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, I am looking at having more members join the member for Yeerongpilly. In particular I am looking at the member for Chatsworth and the Minister for Health. I would urge you not to continue. Member for Everton, you have eight seconds remaining.

Mr MANDER: This is the second night in a row this government has capitulated to the motions that have been moved by the opposition. That is the only way—

(Time expired)

 **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) (6.31 pm): I am very pleased to participate in this debate tonight as the minister—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: No, stop, Pause the clock. Minister, I think we will start again. I cannot hear you. Would you like to start again, please.

Ms FENTIMAN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am very pleased to participate in this debate tonight as the Minister for Youth in the Palaszczuk government. We just heard the contribution from the member for Everton, who talked about us being tricky or sneaky. He said, 'Supervised bail accommodation—what could it mean?' Maybe we need to say it a little bit slower: supervised bail accommodation. If you are literate, you will know what that means.

I am proud to be part of a government that is finally acting to align ourselves with the rest of this country by treating 17-year-olds as juveniles in the youth justice system. This is a government that wants to address youth offending and its causes rather than sensationalising and scapegoating young people in Queensland.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I apologise, Minister. Member for Chatsworth, I cannot hear the minister clearly and if I cannot, Hansard cannot. If you and your associates continue you will be warned.

Ms FENTIMAN: The Palaszczuk government absolutely believes that we need to hold young people who offend to account, but we also recognise that we need to address youth homelessness, intervene to support families earlier, provide alternate education options and properly rehabilitate young people to reduce reoffending. This motion is nothing but a distraction for the LNP because they do not want to talk about their failed policies in the area of youth justice which have left us with a mess to fix.

Who could forget the travesty that was the LNP's boot camp policy? It was a very special project from the former attorney-general, a significant election commitment and, I have to say, an unmitigated \$14 million disaster—\$14 million of taxpayers' money went down the drain. Do you know how many young people went through these boot camps? Thirty-six. Those opposite spent \$14 million on 36 young people, not to mention there was not one impact on reoffending rates.

While we are talking about boot camps we also have to talk about some of the dodgy procurement practices that were involved with them. The Queensland Audit Office found that the previous attorney-general's decisions resulted in significant issues regarding the procurement processes for some boot camps in relation to his decision to select providers that were not recommended by the department. The Audit Office found—

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, Minister. I would urge you to try and make sure there is some connection with the amendment before the House, please.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The opposition has had some latitude and the government is getting some latitude as well. I call the minister.

Ms FENTIMAN: They do not want to talk about their record on youth justice—\$14 million for 36 juvenile offenders with no impact on reoffending. In relation to the boot camps the Queensland Audit Office found that there was a lack of sufficient and appropriate documentation, which meant that the subsequent processes followed by the then attorney-general and his staff to award contracts did not meet—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. One moment, Minister, I apologise. I cannot hear the minister. I do not know who the members are from the opposition. If I identify you, you will join the member for Yeerongpilly. The minister has the call. She has two minutes left.

Ms FENTIMAN: Fourteen million dollars went down the drain for 36 offenders with no impact on reoffending and there was a dodgy procurement process. They also do not want to talk about their legacy of cuts to youth organisations right across the state. There was \$7.3 million cut to organisations—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Ms FENTIMAN: Member for Nanango, I am very happy to take that interjection, because there were a number of organisations cut from your electorate in Kingaroy. Let's list them—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Leader of the Opposition—

Mrs Frecklington: She is baiting me, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. We will wait. I call the minister. She has one minute left.

Ms FENTIMAN: Queensland Youth Services lost \$1.5 million in funding; the Brisbane Youth Service was cut by \$170,000; the Gold Coast Youth Service lost \$89,000 in funding; the Goodna Youth Service was cut by \$55,000; and the Queensland PCYC Youth Welfare Association lost \$121,000 in funding. Their record on youth justice is a failed boot camp policy, \$14 million down the drain and—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, you are warned under standing order 253A. You join the member for Yeerongpilly with a first warning. If you persist I will take the appropriate action. I call the minister.

Ms Bates interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. You are also warned, member for Mudgeeraba, under standing order 253A. You have had a pretty good go all evening. I have made it very clear what my view is. The minister has the call.

Ms FENTIMAN: Where the LNP has no vision to reduce crime, just tabloid headlines and knee-jerk reactions, the Palaszczuk government is committed to reforms that ensure timely and effective justice for young people across the state.

(Time expired)

Amendment agreed to.

Question put—That the motion, as amended, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Motion, as agreed—


That this House notes the Attorney-General's undertaking to table in the House a list of proposed locations for 'Supervised Bail Accommodation options' for youth offenders by noon Thursday, 21 September 2017.

Sitting suspended from 6.40 pm to 7.45 pm.

LABOUR HIRE LICENSING BILL

Resumed from 25 May (see p. 1445).

Second Reading

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (7.45 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Palaszczuk Labor government came to office with a commitment to restoring fairness in Queensland workplaces. Once again, with this bill before the House, that is exactly what we are delivering. For far too long and far too often we have all heard the stories of vulnerable workers being exploited and mistreated at the hands of unscrupulous labour hire operators.

Just last week a joint operation was undertaken by Queensland Workplace Health and Safety, the Queensland Police Service and the Fair Work Ombudsman at four vegetable farms in the Lockyer Valley after receiving allegations which included underpayment of wages, workers being provided unsafe and very poor accommodation, unsafe drinking water, unregistered transport and workers being charged job-finding fees by the labour hire companies involved.

In June this year a Queensland labour hire company was fined nearly \$450,000 and \$223,000 back pay was ordered after foreign workers on temporary visas were treated as slaves under what was described as a calculated scheme that caused mental, emotional and financial stress and anxiety for those workers. In March a labour hire company was found to have underpaid workers \$77,649 over a seven-week period. Some of these workers were at times forced to work entire days harvesting produce without food or drink and without pay, as well as being forced to live in isolated, transient accommodation. In September last year a Boonah labour hire business was caught ripping off over 100 foreign workers and was forced to pay back \$16,000.

These insidious practices are a national disgrace. They are blatantly unfair to the labour hire workers who are being exploited and mistreated and they are unfair to responsible labour hire providers that are doing the right thing and have to compete with those who base their business models on unlawful activities. To allow this state of affairs to continue in Queensland is not an option. Doing nothing is not an option. Cases like the ones I have just highlighted have been reported time and time again through the media and a stream of reports and inquiries, including through our own parliamentary Finance and Administration Committee, which conducted an investigation into the labour hire industry last year. As the deputy chair of the committee, the member for Mermaid Beach, rightly pointed out in his statement of reservation in response to this bill, 'evidence of the existence of some unscrupulous operators in the labour hire industry is irrefutable', yet still those opposite believe that there is no evidence to warrant a licensing scheme using—wait for it—the union-bashing card.

With this bill we are saying that enough is enough. We will not stand by and allow cheats and rorters to profit from some of the most vulnerable workers in our community. In the continuing absence of federal government leadership on this matter—in fact, the Deputy Prime Minister has confirmed that they want nothing to do with fixing labour hire—the Queensland government will do all it can at the state level to protect vulnerable workers and clean up the labour hire sector. The only way for state governments to put an end to this appalling record of exploitation at the hands of labour hire companies is through the introduction of a rigorous labour hire licensing scheme, and that is what this bill delivers.

I wish to thank the Finance and Administration Committee for its scrutiny of the bill. It is disappointing that the committee was not able to reach consensus on a bill that is designed to protect vulnerable workers from exploitation and improve the integrity of the labour hire sector. One would have thought this is something all sides of parliament could find common ground on, but unfortunately that was not the case in the committee inquiry process.

I do note that the government members of the committee made clear their strong support for the bill and that the chair of the committee, the member for Sunnybank, commended the bill as an appropriate and much needed response to the irrefutable evidence of exploitation in the labour hire industry. I also acknowledge the contributions of other members of the House such as the members for Mirani and Dalrymple, who over a long period of time have highlighted the problems in the labour hire industry and advocated in support of vulnerable labour hire workers. Many of my colleagues on this side of the House have raised these issues with me.

I have noted the comments made by the committee in its report and I am acting upon these through the revised explanatory notes which have been supplied to the House. As the committee suggested, the revised explanatory notes are designed to provide further clarification and explanation

of particular provisions in the bill. The main points of clarification are in relation to the scope of the bill at clauses 7 to 9 and the anti-avoidance provision at clause 12. In response to another committee suggestion, I will be introducing an amendment to the transitional provisions at clause 109 that will allow existing operators 60 days to apply for their licence after the proposed commencement of the scheme, up from 28 days that is currently provided in the bill.

I also wish to acknowledge the work of the committee in its earlier inquiry into the labour hire industry in Queensland. Its report lodged in June 2016 found serious and systemic issues of mistreatment and exploitation related to the use of labour hire arrangements—cases of wage theft and unauthorised deductions, sexual harassment, workers housed in overcrowded and substandard accommodation, lack of proper safety equipment and training, systemic tax avoidance, sham contracting and phoenixing of companies, leaving workers stranded without their entitlements and in danger of their health and safety. In the government's response to that report we said that we would consider further measures to better protect vulnerable workers from exploitation and ensure improved and effective regulation of the labour hire sector. We deliver on that commitment with the bill before the House today.

I now turn to outline the key features of the bill. The Labour Hire Licensing Bill 2017 will establish a mandatory business licensing scheme for all labour hire operators. The two core elements underpinning the scheme are first a requirement that labour hire providers must be licensed in order to operate and supply labour in Queensland. To be licensed, a labour hire provider will be required to establish that they are a fit and proper person to run a labour hire business and that their business is financially viable and they operate in compliance with relevant laws. The second key element of the bill is that persons who engage labour hire providers must only engage a licensed labour hire provider. Users of labour hire will be able to check an online register to help them identify and use legitimate labour hire providers. Similarly, workers will be able to check if a labour hire company is legitimate and law abiding before accepting work. The bill sets out strong penalties for operating without a licence or for using an unlicensed provider. The bill will also create an obligation for licensees to report regularly on their labour hire activities and any associated activities such as the provision of accommodation and in relation to their compliance with relevant laws. These key elements of the bill will help protect workers from exploitation by unscrupulous labour hire operators and promote the integrity of the labour hire industry throughout Queensland. This will be done in a way that minimises the administrative burden on labour hire providers and host employers, particularly ethical operators who are in compliance with their legal obligations.

This bill does not seek to change or take away a particular type of employment arrangement that a business has chosen to use. What it does do, for example, is give cause for a business operator who is not directly employing their staff to stop and ask themselves if they are using labour hire in their operations and, if so, whether the provider is licensed and doing the right thing by its workers in their workplace. End users of labour hire workers should not, and if this bill is passed will not, be able to turn a blind eye to worker exploitation. The scope of the bill is deliberately wide both in terms of the industries that are covered and the types of labour hire arrangements. The licensing scheme is not industry or sector specific and will apply to any labour hire arrangements in Queensland. This deliberately broad approach keeps in scope a range of arrangements which people might enter into which would be considered labour hire by a reasonable person. It will also improve visibility of the labour hire industry, which until now has been left largely unregulated, and ensure that labour hire providers are held accountable regardless of the sectors in which they operate.

Labour hire arrangements are used across a multitude of public and private sector industries including administration, IT, horticulture, construction and large multinational corporations. While some of these sectors are more high risk than others, it would be naive to assume that there is no risk of worker exploitation in other sectors. The evidence of the committee was that exploitation and poor practices in the labour hire sector extend across a number of industries including, but not limited to, horticulture, meat processing, security, cleaning and hospitality. The labour hire sector as a whole needs to be cleaned up. Regardless of what industry sector we are talking about, the reputation of good, law-abiding labour hire companies is being tarnished by those dodgy companies that continue to exploit their workers and undercut reputable businesses. Furthermore, our strong view is that, regardless of the level of exploitation or otherwise, if you are in the business of selling labour to third parties you should be licensed in the same way you need a licence to sell a house or a car or alcohol.

The meaning of a provider of labour hire services is also purposefully given a broad definition within the bill. Again, this is intended to cast a wide net over the diversity of arrangements that can be properly categorised as labour hire, but at the same time it is not intended to clog up the licensing

system with arrangements that fall outside genuine labour hire. The scope of the bill is set out under division 2 at clauses 7, 8 and 9. It provides that a labour hire provider is a person who, in the course of carrying on a business, supplies to another person a worker to do work. As the revised explanatory notes outline, the definition is designed to capture the triangular labour hire relationship between the worker provider and the end user or client that a worker is supplied to, as well as variations on this model which can be used to disguise labour hire arrangements. As I previously made clear to the House when the bill was introduced, businesses that undertake recruitment leading to direct employment or permanent job placement, genuine independent contracting arrangements and workforce consulting services are not in the scope of the bill. The revised explanatory notes make it clear that volunteer or pro-bono work is not labour hire either and neither is work experience or student practical placements organised by an educational institution as part of a course.

Finally, the bill includes a regulation-making provision that can deal with other arrangements which are genuinely not within the scope of labour hire. In this way the bill provides avenues for the scheme to respond to other scenarios where necessary, to provide further clarification on the scope of the scheme. I undertake that the department will continue to consult widely with stakeholders in the development of the subordinate regulation leading up to the implementation of the scheme. I make the point again that a broad scope and a definition of labour hire is necessary and appropriate to achieve the purpose of the scheme. Once you narrow the scope of the scheme, you simply create loopholes for unscrupulous labour hire operators to avoid coverage, and that is not an outcome that we are prepared to accept.

As I already mentioned briefly, the scheme is backed by stiff penalties for labour hire businesses acting unlawfully. The bill introduces three key offences. Firstly, a person must not provide labour hire services without a licence; secondly, a person must not enter into an arrangement with an unlicensed provider; and, thirdly, a person must not enter into avoidance arrangements. The maximum penalty for these offences is 1,034 penalty units or three years imprisonment for an individual, or 3,000 penalty units for a corporation. These penalties are justified as they help create ethical conduct and compliance with the scheme and increase its effectiveness.

The offences are also designed to encourage users of labour hire to use their market influence to improve workplace standards and practices. The creation of an offence for entering into an avoidance arrangement helps support the labour hire providers who do the right thing. Under the scheme, license applications and associated reporting requirements will be done online to reduce the need for hard copy documents. The streamlined online processes will minimise the administrative burden on licence holders. The information requirements in the bill at the application stage and for the purposes of ongoing reporting are common for licensing schemes. When an applicant applies for a licence, they will need to pay the prescribed fee and provide information to satisfy the fit and proper person test and confirm their financial viability in compliance with relevant laws. Given the evidence of exploitation described, these are all perfectly sensible, proportionate and reasonable requirements to place on labour hire providers. In fact, it would be irresponsible for the scheme not to require labour hire providers to provide information to meet these basic conditions.

The dictionary located at schedule 1 of the bill gives examples of the type of laws relevant to the licence. I will be introducing one further amendment to include the Payroll Tax Act 1971 as an additional example of a relevant law. The amendment responds to evidence from the Office of State Revenue that has identified a number of labour hire businesses which appear to be employing people but which did not pay payroll tax. When they began investigations of these businesses, the business was typically dissolved before they were able to take any action. This is known as phoenixing. By including this act in the list of relevant laws, labour hire inspectors will be able to inspect payroll records and make referrals to the Office of State Revenue if noncompliance is suspected.

Following the initial application stage, licensees will be required to lodge reports on a six-monthly basis on matters like location and type of work, number of workers, disciplinary or enforcement action, and accommodation details. This reporting is crucial to ensure the ongoing eligibility and compliance of licensees with their obligations. It will also provide valuable information on the performance of industry which will be used to inform future policy and compliance activities and provide visibility to a sector that has long been left unregulated.

Ethical operators should have no difficulties meeting the information and reporting requirements under the bill as they are similar to the information required as part of other legal obligations such as for taxation and WorkCover. The bill also recognises this by providing the chief executive with the discretion to waive particular information requirements if the provider has met substantially similar requirements as part of their compliance with other regulatory or accreditation schemes such as an industry certification scheme.

Stakeholder feedback during consultation on the bill revealed a very high expectation for strong enforcement and monitoring of the labour hire licensing scheme. In response, a dedicated licensing unit and inspectorate will be established in the Office of Industrial Relations within the Queensland Treasury to promote awareness of the scheme and ensure compliance. The powers granted to inspectors under the bill are standard across Queensland legislation. Labour hire licensing inspectors will have powers which enable them to enter premises suspected of running labour hire operations, require production of documents, seize evidence, and prosecute infringements. These powers are necessary to ensure action is taken against accounts of worker exploitation. They reflect community expectations that inspectors will have the powers they need to prosecute rogue operators. The licensing unit and inspector will refer any possible offences which they uncover that fall outside the scope of the bill to the relevant authority. In this way, the Queensland labour hire licensing scheme will also assist other enforcement and regulatory bodies such as the Fair Work Ombudsman and the Australian Tax Office in their efforts and investigations to tackle worker exploitation and rogue operators.


Like any licensing scheme, this bill provides a licensee or applicant with the right to review and appeal decisions that are made under the bill. Clause 93 also provides third-party appeal rights for a person or organisation with an interest in protecting workers or the integrity of the labour hire industry. This type of appeal right is appropriate as labour hire workers are some of the most vulnerable workers in the community. It also responds to the broad community interest in protecting workers and promoting the integrity of the labour hire industry. The risk of vexatious appeals is limited as labour hire licensees cannot apply for a third-party appeal review against a business competitor.

The public register of licences under the scheme is an important feature of the bill and will be critical to the success of the scheme. The register will provide a list of licensed operators and their contact information, the industries and locations they service, information on their compliance with relevant laws, work health and safety performance, and the provision of accommodation. These are not commercially sensitive matters. The register will provide users of labour hire with the comfort that they are not entering into an arrangement with an unlicensed provider. For providers, it provides them with an advertisement of their services and is a public recognition of their ethical conduct.

Subject to the passage of the bill, the scheme is intended to commence in the first half of next year and there will be an extensive information and awareness campaign to ensure labour hire users and providers are prepared.

I am proud that the Palaszczuk Labor government is leading the way, becoming once again the first jurisdiction to legislate for a state based labour hire licensing scheme. The sector has been left unregulated for too long. If the parliament is serious about doing something to stop the exploitation of labour hire workers and clean up the sector, then a legislated labour hire licensing scheme is required. If one is in the business of selling labour, one should be licensed in the same way if one is selling a house, selling a car or selling alcohol. Legitimate providers have nothing to fear from this scheme and people will continue to be able to use labour hire arrangements as long as they are using a licensed provider.

The bill is a much needed and appropriate response to the evidence of exploitation in labour hire which has gone on for far too long. The only way to put an end to this appalling exploitation and to take the first step to cleaning up this industry is the introduction of a rigorous labour hire licensing scheme. That is what the state can do, that is what this government will do and that is what this bill delivers. It is interesting that those opposite are not supporting this bill. They have no idea about protecting workers, and I am not convinced that they understand that doing nothing is not an option in this space. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (8.08 pm): This parliament is serious about tackling these issues of exploitation of workers but the bill before the House is not the answer to solving the issue of exploitation of workers. In her closing paragraph the minister said that no-one has anything to fear, that those in the labour hire industry will have nothing to fear from the legislation. That is like telling builders in Queensland that they have nothing to fear from the CFMEU being involved in the building industry in Queensland. Those in the labour hire industry have everything to fear. They have everything to fear from this bill, the CFMEU and the ETU in Queensland.

It is no secret why this bill is being introduced. The minister's job was to negotiate in good faith with the Commonwealth government to work out and solve the issues of exploitation of workers. We now have a bill before the House which no other state and territory is implementing because they recognise that it is a federal responsibility and that the federal government should solve these issues. This bill is about union encouragement before an election. This bill is about donations to the Labor Party. This bill is about preselections. This bill is ensuring that before an election, whenever that may

be, this Labor government can tick a box and say the union movement wanted the labour hire legislation to go through and hence it is going through. This exercise is a tick of the box by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations.

One only has to look at the committee report that looked into this bill and those stakeholders who submitted and were consulted. There was the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union. Surprise, surprise, they support the bill. There was the AMWU; they support the bill. The AMIEU support the bill. United Voice support the bill. The MUA support the bill. All the unions support the bill. Virtually every other stakeholder opposed the bill. Does it not say something that the only supporters of this bill are the union movement and all the other industry stakeholders are opposed to the bill? Does it not say something that the AMWU, which supported this bill in its submissions to the committee, gave \$31,279 to the Labor Party in 2016? Its submission to the committee to support the bill cost \$31,279. It only cost the AMIEU \$16,000, which it donated to the Labor Party in 2016. It cost United Voice a fair amount more to get its support of this bill. It cost United Voice \$245,373 donated to the Labor Party in 2016. It looks like the MUA got it the cheapest. It only had to donate \$11,100 for its support of the ALP in 2016. Is it any wonder the only stakeholders who supported this bill are the union movement that is donating to the Labor Party? That is why the Labor Party wanted this legislation through. With all the speculation of an election around the corner, those opposite have to get this bill ticked off. They are rushing through other bills this week because they need to get the Labour Hire Licensing Bill through. They have done the Industrial Relations Bill. They have ticked that box.

In the minister's diaries there are always meetings and then bills get introduced into parliament. As I have said on numerous occasions, the federal royal commission into union corruption did not go far enough. What a royal commission ought to do in the future in Queensland is look at the union movement and the Queensland Labor Party and the decisions that this government has made over the last three years. That is what a commission of inquiry should look at: the relationship between the decisions the Labor government of Queensland has made and the union movement. Time and time again we have seen the union movement making donations to the Labor Party and then a week or two later legislation has been dropped into the parliament. Do not tell me and do not fool Queenslanders that those instructions were not given to those Labor ministers at the meeting the two, three or four weeks before. The riding instructions as we all know are issued by the union. There has to be a bigger spotlight on the decisions this Labor government has made, the legislation it has introduced and the influence the union movement has on it. Many people in the media take a big interest when business and Chinese investors donate to political parties. The biggest donors to political parties in Queensland are the union movement and no-one seems to worry or care.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection. The minister is about to get the Leader of the House up on a point of order. I will spare the minister the trouble. She is going to say I am not being relevant to the bill. The long title of the bill, to assist the minister, is an act to provide for the licensing and regulation of providers of labour hire services and related matters. The union movement have labour hire services and related matters. They have already submitted to the committee, so union donations to the Labor Party and the submissions they made to the committee are very relevant. The submissions and the support the union movement gave to this bill came at a cost.

Ms Grace: Is that the best you can do?

Mr BLEIJIE: No, it is not the best I can do. The best you will see in the next 54 minutes, I can assure the minister of that. The minister has served in this parliament with me from 2009, although she took a little break, so she ought to know by now that the more she interjects, the more she whines, the longer I will go.

Government members interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I see the newbie down the back there. I love it when the squawking of the newbies starts down the back and they think they are making very intellectual comments.

Ms PEASE: I rise to a point of order. I take offence at the member's comments and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr BLEIJIE: I did not identify anyone.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): Order! When I have silence I will continue. I do not know that the member for Kawana identified you, member for Lytton. If there is some degree of offence that you have taken maybe you should mention it and we can get him to withdraw. You have been doing a fair amount of interjecting during the course of his speech to the parliament, so I would caution you on that as well. Do you want to continue?

Ms PEASE: I take offence at him saying that I am squawking.

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order. There was absolutely, and I am happy to check *Hansard*, no personal reflection. The member is unaware of the standing orders. It has to be a personal reflection and there was none. It was the newbie squawkers down the back. If she wants to volunteer for that description, that is up to her.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I made that point and I asked the member for Lytton whether she wanted to continue on that point of order and she did. Just for the sake of procedure, will you withdraw, member for Kawana?

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw. The collection of dysfunctional squawkers all over that side of the House, with the drivel that comes out of their mouths, have not learnt yet that the best thing one can do in this place is to take irrelevant interjections. What these new members of parliament ought to understand is that sometimes it is just best to stay quiet. It is best not to open your mouth. I saw that the member for Yeerongpilly was about to jump up. The Leader of the House had to race down the back and tell him to sit down. The member for Yeerongpilly had his microphone on already. The Leader of the House had to tell him to sit down and cut it off.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Whitsunday, I can hear you very, very clearly. Member for Kawana, could you reasonably wander back to the bill.

Mr BLEIJIE: Absolutely. At a slow pace I will wander back to the bill. As I indicated, the only reason this bill is before the House is because of union donations and the influence they have over the Labor Party. This is not about the workers, because if it was the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations would have picked up the phone to the federal government and talked about how they can resolve these issues.

To justify this legislation the minister mentioned there was a big raid last week and they captured an unscrupulous employer exploiting the workers. If that is the case that is based on the current laws we have in the state, not these laws. They investigated and carried out the raid under the current laws of Queensland which means the current laws are working. If the authorities are capturing people and they are capturing exploitation in the workplace, the current laws are working. Only recently a labour hire company was fined \$100,000—a portion of that was a fine to the farmer and the other portion was to the labour hire company—so the current laws are working. If they want to bolster the current laws, they can work collaboratively with their federal counterpart to do so. Essentially, this is cracking a walnut with a sledgehammer. As the minister said, only last week there was a raid which, as I said, shows that the laws are working.

There is a regulatory compliance body. It a regime for underpaid workers in Australia. It is called the Fair Work Ombudsman which operates under the Fair Work Act. They squawk about penalty rates, but they need only look back to 2009 when Cameron Dick, the current member for Woodridge and at that time the member for Greenslopes and industrial relations minister, signed away the industrial relations powers in the state of Queensland, giving those powers to Canberra. Cameron Dick, as the member for Greenslopes and the minister at the time, signed the industrial relations powers over to the federal government. Now they say that, because the federal government is not looking after potentially exploited workers in this industry, they have to do it in Queensland. That is ridiculous, because the Fair Work Ombudsman has been set up to look at those issues. The system is in place and, as I said, it is working.

Between July 2014 and June 2016, the Fair Work Ombudsman commenced 100 litigations in relation to complaints raised with it. In 2015-16, a total of \$3.85 million in underpaid wages and entitlements was returned to 2,132 employees as a result of their employers entering into enforceable undertakings with the Fair Work Ombudsman, which was up slightly on the \$3.75 million recovered for 2,507 workers in the previous year. If Labor had concerns, they should have tried to work with the federal government to address those issues, but they are incapable of doing so.

This is a perfect example of unnecessary red tape and regulation, which we know is in Labor's DNA. It just adds more costs and bureaucracy, bloating the Public Service, to solve a problem that already has a solution. It means that Queensland families will pay even higher taxes, higher fees and higher charges at a time when the cost of living is out of control and we have record high electricity prices under this Labor government.

Let us be clear: this is not about ensuring that workers are paid for the work that they do. It is not about standing up for workers' rights or the actual objectives of the bill, as the minister for industrial relations would have Queenslanders believe. This bill is about keeping the greedy union bosses happy and ticking off another promise to union bosses that is in their interests, not in the interests of Queensland workers. This is all because greedy fat-cat corrupt union bosses are worried about losing control and access to workers, which means members and donations to the Labor Party in Queensland.

If we have a look at this issue a little more closely, what is one area that the union movement, that is, the ETU and the CFMEU, do not have their dirty little greedy corrupt hands in at the moment?

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: It is the labour hire industry and the agriculture industry; I take the interjection.

Mr Hinchliffe: You said that they operated them. At least be logically consistent.

Mr BLEIJIE: I can tell you why they operate a few of them: it is because they do not control the other ones, so they have had to set up in competition with the labour hire industry. We have enterprise bargaining agreements where the unions can get their dodgy deals through. On construction sites they can get their dodgy deals through, but they cannot do that in the labour hire industry. We have heard stories, such as the one about an electrician who had a run-in with the ETU many years ago. He walked off construction sites, never to have a job there again, and set up a labour hire company. Ever since he set up that company, the ETU has been gunning for him. They are trying to hound him, but they cannot because they do not know his business practices as it is a private business. This legislation will open up his business practices. This will put a list in the public domain so the union movement can see who runs all the labour hire companies in Queensland. Then where do members think the intimidation and bullying is going to go? It is going to be like a cancer from the construction industry where the ETU and the CFMEU have their dirty grubby corrupt little hands and it will extend to the agriculture industry and the labour hire industry.

As the interjection from the Leader of the House shows, we know that they operate labour hire companies, but they do not control all the other labour hire companies. They have control over the construction industry and the electrical industry, but they do not have control over the labour hire industry. This is about putting a spotlight on the agriculture industry and the labour hire industry, so that the unions know who they are and then the fear, intimidation, threats and bullying seen on construction sites will happen in the labour hire industry.

Farmers should be shivering at the thought of this bill passing. I suspect it will pass as I suspect that some of the crossbenchers will support it, otherwise the minister would not have brought on the legislation. I hope that the Katter party oppose the legislation on principle, but they do receive quite a substantial amount of money from the CFMEU.

Mr Knuth: Very proud.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take that interjection; they are 'very proud' to receive a substantial sum of money from the CFMEU. As I was talking about the Katter party and the CFMEU, I will refer to the member for Dalrymple. The member for Dalrymple has just interjected to say that the Katter party is proud to receive CFMEU donations, details of which are available on the electronic disclosure regime. I wonder if the member for Dalrymple read yesterday's *Courier-Mail* and an article headed 'CFMEU fined almost \$50,000 by Federal Circuit Court judge, slapped down for thinking it can "usurp Parliament"'. I will table this in a minute for the benefit of the member for Dalrymple. I will ask the attendant to take a copy to him, so that he can read it. The article dated 5 September 2017 states—

A BRISBANE judge has launched a scathing attack on the CFMEU, accusing it of arrogantly thinking it can "set the law in this country" and "usurp Parliament".

The Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union and Brisbane-based Dig It Landscapes on Tuesday copped more than \$40,000 in fines each after a waterproofing business' contract was terminated ...

Federal Circuit Court Judge Sal Vasta did not mince words when handing down the fines following a successful prosecution by the Australian Building and Construction Commissioner for breaches of the Fair Work Act.

"It beggars belief that the CFMEU believe that they can act in a manner where they are the ones who dictate who can or cannot work on a construction site," Judge Vasta said.

"The Parliament is the only entity that sets the law in this country and the Parliament is directly responsible to the people of this country.

"It seems that the CFMEU feel that they can usurp Parliament and that they can set the law in this country.

"There is no place for such an attitude in Australian society."

That is what the federal circuit court judge said. Apparently, it is that attitude and behaviour that the Katter's Australian Party like to see in Queensland. One would think a party that presents itself as a party of the bush would not allow the CFMEU to enter the agriculture sector. I really question it then—

Mr Knuth: They do a good job representing the farmers.

Mr BLEIJIE: The CFMEU do a good job representing the farmers? I take that interjection. I doubly take that interjection from the deputy leader of Katter's Australian Party. I hope the tweets are already out there, going full bore. If the member for Dalrymple believes that of the CFMEU, I wonder what he thinks about AgForce and other farming industry bodies that are actively supporting the farmers. He reckons the CFMEU is the best friend that the farmers have ever had.

Mr Knuth interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): Order! The member for Dalrymple will cease interjecting. I suggest to the member for Kawana that he has not quite wandered back far enough, in terms of the bill.

Mr BLEIJIE: That is like saying that the building industry like the support of the CFMEU. It is like saying that the builders love and support the CFMEU. We hear a lot of serious stories. The sad reality is that on a daily basis you can read what federal judges are saying about the CFMEU and the ETU. There are constant breaches of the law by the CFMEU, yet members in this parliament get up and say, 'They're my comrades,' or, 'The CFMEU is a great friend of the farmer.' We will have to see what AgForce says about that.

If the member for Dalrymple, who is from the Katter party, really represents farmers then he ought to read AgForce's submission to this committee. Let me look at AgForce's submission to the committee. For the member for Dalrymple's benefit, AgForce's submission to this committee reads—

AgForce does not consider that a state-based licensing scheme is the right mechanism through which this issue should be addressed, with alternative national approaches likely to be more effective. For the reasons outlined below, AgForce does not support the Bill.

The Katter's Australian Party is supporting this bill because the CFMEU supports the bill, but the Katter's Australian Party will not support the bill because AgForce does not support the bill. They are supporting the bill despite AgForce not supporting the bill and they are relying on the CFMEU as a reliable witness. I am glad the member for Dalrymple is in the chamber tonight. When the member for Dalrymple speaks on the bill, I think he should put on the record how much the Katter's Australian Party received in donations from the CFMEU. I table a copy of the AgForce submission to the parliamentary inquiry.

Tabled paper: Submission, dated 19 June 2017, by the General President, AgForce Queensland Industrial Union of Employers, Mr Grant Maudsley, to the Finance and Administration Committee, titled 'Labour Hire Licensing Bill 2017' (Submission 018) [[1585](#)].

I also table a copy of the article that I referred to titled 'CFMEU fined almost \$50,000 by Federal Circuit court judge'.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Courier-Mail*, dated 5 September 2017, titled 'CFMEU fined almost \$50,000 by Federal Circuit court judge, slapped down for thinking it can 'usurp Parliament' [[1586](#)].

These are the stories we can read every two days—that is, either a state based judge or a federal judge in Australia somewhere is slapping down the CFMEU for noncompliance with laws.

We have the newly elected secretary of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, Sally McManus, saying, 'We believe in the rule of law, but if we do not think it is a good law then we think people should break the law.' She said that if they do not believe the law is fair on the unions then it is okay to break it. It is okay if a person does not think a 100 kilometre an hour speed limit on the Bruce Highway is okay, they can do 200 kilometres an hour. That is what Sally McManus says.

We have this Labor bill which is a complete sellout to our agricultural sector and our labour hire industry. The Labor Party also say that they are champions of those in our community who need help the most. I want to raise one particular submission that was sent to the committee. That submission was from Steps Group Australia, based on the Sunshine Coast. I will read a part of their submission into *Hansard* because it sums up how flawed this bill is. The submission states—

This is bad law that will be bad news for jobs in Queensland and, bad for Queensland employers. As a restrictive licensing scheme it over regulates an entire sector and throws up numerous unintended consequences that will further dent the confidence of employers and businesses in Queensland.

At the outset let me state that we strongly support initiatives to protect workers from exploitation—not only by the providers of labour hire services, but by all who seek to profit from worker exploitation. This Bill as it stands will however fail to protect workers from exploitation.

An honourable member: How?

Mr BLEIJIE: I will get to it. It continues—

The following are reasons why we believe this Bill should be withdrawn and reconsidered following genuine consultation with industry and employers.

1. This Bill does nothing to stamp out the poor practices of dodgy Labour Hire firms. It will not for example cover contracting and, as a result will fail in its objectives. So, if a dodgy exploitative relationship already exists between a worker and the user of employment services—that dodgy deal will likely remain.
2. The Government should focus licensing on high risk industries that present the greatest threat to workers and those in which disreputable labour contractors are most prominent.
 - a. Not all labour hire firms are created equal. This Bill will capture labour hire firms that already comply with the law and, fail to capture dodgy operators that fly below the radar and have no intention of applying for a license.
3. There is a complete misalignment with the objects of the Bill, given there is no evidence of exploitation in industries other than horticulture which was the only sector consistently identified in the Finance and Administration Committee's Inquiry Report. Selective licensing of high risk industries was also the recommendation of Professor Anthony Forsyth from his Inquiry into the Labour Hire Industry in Victoria.
4. This Bill is anti-business and will further erode the already shrinking confidence of employers to do business in Queensland.

Ms Grace: It is already on the record. We know what they said. It is already on the record.

Mr BLEIJIE: I am putting it on the record again in parliament because this is from Steps Group that look after thousands and thousands—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Minister on my right and member on my left, please direct all your comments through the chair.

Mr BLEIJIE: This is a submission I am reading into *Hansard* from Steps Group which employs thousands of disadvantaged people with disabilities. The minister sits there flippantly saying, 'This is already on the record. We have heard it all. Why are you reading it into *Hansard*.' I am reading it into *Hansard* because it is worth reading into *Hansard*. The minister did not refer to it. When I receive a submission from a disability advocacy group, I am going to champion for them. If the minister is not going to champion for that group, I am going to champion for that group. The submission goes on to state—

5. This licensing scheme is politically motivated, with conditions such as bonds and compulsory insurance left to the discretion of the Chief Executive. This will invite appeals that QCAT is not equipped to handle, third party intervention from 'interested parties', and add to the administrative burden already required of Queensland companies.
6. In addition, reporting obligations are both overly onerous and fail a 'pub test' as to the level of information workers or users of labour hire services would reasonably expect is available about the labour hire firm they are working with.
7. The definition of Labour Hire is extremely broad and will capture a large number of unintended organisations and work arrangements that ignore occupational licensing arrangements in every sector of the economy and in every corner of Queensland. Some examples of organisations that will require a licence will include:
 - A corporate health service that "supplies" a nurse to deliver 'flu vaccinations;

I will say that again—

- A corporate health service that "supplies" a nurse to deliver 'flu vaccinations;
- A religious body that "supplies" a chaplain or pastoral care worker under the Australian School Chaplaincy Programme;
- A first aid attendant "supplied" by one school to another schools sporting event;
- A community organisation that "supplies" a cultural advisor to government or to a business;
- Or, a secondary or tertiary educational facility that "supplies" students on work experience or practical placements.

What an indictment on this bill. That is the assessment from a national non-profit organisation that helps disabled Queenslanders live and work more independently. I have not only read their submission into the record, but for the benefit of the minister who keeps flippantly disregarding Steps Group Australia, I table a copy of their submission dated 19 June and signed by Carmel Crouch, the manager director.

Tabled paper: Submission, dated 19 June 2017, by Ms Carmel Crouch, Managing Director, Steps Group Australia, to the Finance and Administration Committee, titled 'Submission regarding the Labour Hire Licensing Bill 2017' (Submission 019) [\[1587\]](#).

On that note, I thank the work of Steps Group. I know Carmel Crouch and know the amazing work they do. I went to their independent living facility in Caloundra which opened recently. Rather than disabled people being put into nursing homes or aged-care facilities this is actually allowing them to live independently. They learn over a 12-month period how to go back into a normal living environment. It is taking them out of aged care. I thank Steps Group Australia for the work they have done in the disability area and for the great work they do right around Queensland. I thank them for the work they put into this submission and for raising these concerns.

The Chamber of Commerce & Industry also lodged a submission with the committee. Further to that, they wrote to all members on 5 September and issued a press statement yesterday. In their letter to MPs they stated—

To our mind blanket regulation of the labour hire industry will impose a significant additional cost burden on businesses offering and benefitting from labour hire services. The proposed legislation imposes another layer of regulatory compliance on businesses in Queensland and would be a counterproductive measure towards addressing issues with respect to rogue operators.

Legal experts have also labelled elements of the bill as unjust and unfair as well as vague and ambiguous and call into question its standing as good law. The Queensland Law Society also raised significant issues with elements of this bill. So we have AgForce, stakeholders, employer groups, labour hire companies, the Queensland Law Society, disability groups and not-for-profit groups opposed to the bill. The only one that supports this bill is the union movement.

I also met with BHP Billiton yesterday. They are very concerned about the proposed changes and the definition, as outlined in their submission to the committee. BHP employ 10,000 Queenslanders, but because of the broad definition of 'labour hire' they could get caught up in the provisions of this bill. Can you imagine getting to a situation in Queensland where BHP, employing 10,000 people, potentially will have to register as a labour hire company because of their 10,000 employees? This Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk, says she is all about red-tape reduction for small businesses. Right on! We will see about that one. What a fanciful—

Ms Grace: I don't think BHP is a small business.

Mr BLEIJIE: I am talking about any regulation.

Ms Grace: That's not what you just said.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take that interjection. I will expand on that. The Premier spruiks about regulation reduction for all types of businesses in Queensland including BHP Billiton. It is not just BHP that will be tied up in this. All of these types of businesses, including not-for-profit businesses, will be tied up in this. The CCIQ are saying that. AgForce are saying that. BHP are saying that. Disability groups are saying that. The minister is not listening. She is not listening to any of these groups, despite the Premier saying, 'We are the most consultative government that Queensland has ever seen.' Rubbish! They consulted but they did not listen. If they listened to the consultation undertaken, this bill would not be being debated tonight. It would have been taken out or it would have had more than 200 amendments, as the minister had in her first racing bill in this government.

This bill will drive up the costs of employing Queenslanders at a time when we should be trying to create jobs, particularly in regional Queensland. As I said before, the Minister for Employment has all but given up on fixing youth unemployment in Queensland.

Mr Minnikin: How did that go?

Mr BLEIJIE: I take that interjection about how it went. I will tell the House. In the outback, the rate of youth unemployment is now 57.4 per cent; in Wide Bay, it is 23.6 per cent; in Townsville, it is 22.2 per cent; in Brisbane east, it is 19.2 per cent.

Mr Minnikin: What did she have to say about it?

Mr BLEIJIE: I take that interjection about what the Minister for Employment had to say about those high figures of youth unemployment. She said, 'There is not much you can do about it.' That is what the minister said.

We need to be helping businesses with the costs of employment, not increasing regulation and red tape to make it harder. The LNP will not support these changes and will be opposing the bill. As I said at the outset, we fundamentally support workers being paid what they are entitled to be paid. No worker should be underpaid. Anyone who thinks they are being underpaid should be able to make a complaint to the Fair Work Ombudsman. That is not the question here.

This bill is fundamentally flawed in its objectives, and its design is really just a payback to the union bosses who call the shots in Queensland. It will increase the costs of employment and act as a disincentive for employment and destroy jobs, particularly in regional Australia. What else would you expect from a South-East Queensland-centric government that is run by union bosses and governs in self-interest and not in the interests of Queenslanders?

Madam Deputy Speaker, can you imagine when this bill goes through this sitting week, if it does—and I suspect it will with the crossbench support of the Katter party, funded by the CFMEU—and the first list of companies delivering labour hire services in Queensland goes up online. You do not

think Michael Ravbar and the ETU will be looking at the list of all the labour hire companies in Queensland and then making the phone calls—‘Boys and girls, we are the ETU,’ or ‘We are the CFMEU. We want to meet you.’

Mr Stevens: ‘How would you like to hold up your licence?’

Mr BLEIJIE: Exactly. ‘You are not going to get any work in Queensland unless you sign up your workers to our union.’ That is what is going to happen.

Then in this bill we have what is called a ‘fit and proper person’ test. If a mum-and-dad operator who is operating a labour hire company does not want any involvement with the union movement—the CFMEU or the ETU—their workers are happy and they are getting work but the union movement does not want them to get work, the unions will lodge complaint after complaint about the ‘fit and proper person’ test of that individual. That person can have their licence suspended for quite some time until such time as it is sorted out.

That is the disruptive nature of the CFMEU. That is how they have become known as the thugs they are in Queensland because of their disruption, their fearmongering, their tactics, their bullying on work sites. Week after week they have been fined in the hundreds of thousands of dollars by judges of the land because the unions are bullying people, breaking the laws—and they do not care. The CFMEU do not care about the laws of this land. We are meant to uphold laws, but the Labor Party take donations from a union movement—and I collectively say the ‘movement’—who are continually being fined. The hard-earned money of the workers is being forked out to two places (1) the Queensland Labor Party and (2) court imposed fines. That is where all their membership dues are going. That is where all their money is going. I do not think that is in the interests of Queenslanders.

Mr Stevens: On holidays and dinners.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! Member for Mermaid Beach, if you wish to interject, please do so from your seat.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the member for Mermaid Beach, despite him not being in his seat. I take his interjection with respect to dinners and so forth of the union movement. This was the government that got rid of the expenditure disclosures, so we do not know where the money is spent now. We cannot see the credit card expenses. They used to be disclosed on a website where the public could go and have a look.

Isn’t it interesting that in this bill the Labor Party are making public the names in the labour hire industry yet only a month or two ago they hid all the union credit card expenses and the expenses of the union movement? They want the private and not-for-profit sector and the agriculture sector to be held up in the spotlight to let the world see what they do, yet they continually hide what the union movement does.

This bill is all about membership of the union movement. The reason the unions do not like the labour hire industry is that they do not get a membership base from it. What would you expect, Madam Deputy Speaker, when the union movement numbers are on the decline in Queensland? Despite having a Labor government, despite having Bill Shorten as the federal Labor leader—maybe I know why the union numbers are going down. That is probably why.

Ms Grace: Relevance?

Mr BLEIJIE: It is relevant because the union movement are involved in the labour hire industry. The union movement give donations to the Queensland Labor Party. Join the dots, Minister. It is all connected. I do not understand why the Minister for Employment is asking for relevance when I am talking about the unions. If we did not have the unions, this bill would not be in this place. It is because of the unions that we are debating this bill. That is the only reason.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Kawana, nonetheless, I do urge you to ensure that you stick to the long title of the bill.

Mr BLEIJIE: The long title of the bill is ‘an act to provide for the licensing and regulation of providers of labour hire services and related matters’. The union movement, which are registered industrial organisations, do provide labour hire services to Queensland.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I simply give you that warning.


Mr BLEIJIE: As I said, the CCIQ are opposed to this. AgForce are opposed to it. BHP Billiton are opposed to it. The Steps disability charity group are opposed to it. Most stakeholders are opposed to it—

Mr Minnikin: Except?

Mr BLEIJIE:—except the AMWU, which gave \$31,000 to the Labor Party; the AMIEU, which gave \$16,000 to the Labor Party; United Voice, which gave \$245,000 to the Labor Party; and the MUA, which gave \$11,000 to the Labor Party. Madam Deputy Speaker, could you imagine if we debated a bill here tonight which somehow was of benefit to businesses and there was a particular business that benefited or even made a submission to the committee that gave us \$245,000? You do not think the Labor Party would be squawking about the influence that particular business would have? United Voice gave \$245,000 to the Labor Party. If it were from a business and it benefited the business, the Labor Party would be squawking: what influence did that business have over the LNP government who would be introducing or debating that bill?

The reality is that this is not for the worker; it is not for the farmer; it is a bill designed for the union movement, by the union movement. It will have CFMEU and ETU representatives start to go onto farming sites. It will get farmers off tractors. It will have union encouragement and bargaining clauses, but my biggest fear is the bullying that will ensue with labour hire companies that do not play the game of the union movement, that do not want to play the game of the union movement and that say no to the union movement. It is the labour hire companies that say no to the union movement that will be bullied the most. Then we will have the chief executive officer issuing directions as to whether they are a fit and proper person to operate their business.

What will happen, and what the union want to happen, is that these businesses will slowly start to be deregistered because if private enterprise and not-for-profit sector businesses slowly start to get deregistered the union influence prevails. We will do whatever we can on this side of the House to ensure that union-bullying corruption influence does not prevail. We owe it to the people of Queensland to ensure that the influence of the union movement which continually gets court imposed fines by the courts of the land does not prevail. I promise this side of the House that if we have the opportunity to serve in government we will ensure the union influence does not creep back into Queensland. We will ensure that businesses are not bullied by union influence, because union influence should never prevail.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (8.51 pm): I rise in the House tonight to speak to the Labour Hire Licensing Bill 2017 and to recommend that the House pass this legislation. The bill addresses issues that for too long have been put on the backburner. The federal government has not had the courage or the moral fibre to take on the big end of town that for far too long has been taking advantage of vulnerable workers, so it is up to the state government to do what the federal government should be doing. Where the federal Liberal National government fail, the Palaszczuk Labor government has the courage to bring legislation to the Legislative Assembly to protect once and for all vulnerable workers who for too long have been exploited.

Not long before the Finance and Administration Committee report into the labour hire industry, the Victorian government conducted an inquiry with a series of hearings across its state into the industry and the cases of abuse by contractors against workers. Findings from that inquiry led to the state of Victoria calling on the Turnbull government to implement a national labour hire licensing scheme and to tighten provisions in the Fair Work Act, but Barnaby Joyce said that the labour hire industry and the questionable practices of some contractors was something for the states to control. Deputy Speaker, you may be asking why. The comments by Barnaby Joyce simply make no sense.

I will now briefly turn to the non-government statement of reservation which seems to be another example of union bashing for the sake of it. The statement of reservation states—

Allocating more funding to policing existing fair-work inspectors would undoubtedly achieve greater results in eradicating dodgy operators under current national laws—

I repeat, under current national laws—

than this legislation will achieve.

What we have here is the federal government saying it is the state's job and the state opposition saying it is the federal government's job. This from an opposition which says that it is the alternative government of this state. As we said in the government members' statement of reservation, it is disappointing that the committee has not been able to reach consensus on a bill that is designed to protect vulnerable workers from exploitation and improve the integrity of the labour hire sector. One would have thought that this is something all sides of parliament could agree on, but unfortunately that appears not to be the case.

The bill is an appropriate and much needed response to the evidence of exploitation in the labour hire industry. As the minister said in her introductory speech, for far too long and far too often we have all heard the stories of vulnerable workers being exploited at the hands of unscrupulous labour hire

operators. These are good laws and they are sorely needed to help protect workers from exploitation and to help those labour hire operators that are doing the right thing. Regulation of the labour hire sector will promote greater transparency and security of labour hire operators, give confidence to those businesses which use the services of labour hire providers, and raise the standard of integrity and professional conduct across the industry. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (8.55 pm): Another day, another Palaszczuk Labor government union-serving Trojan horse legislation. It should come as no surprise that this blatantly union-serving legislation has come before the House at this time. What better way to halt declining union membership than to create a political excuse driving greater union participation in the growing labour hire industry.

I should put out a shingle as a psychic. Indeed, I previously rose on 15 September 2016 following the farcical inquiry into the labour hire industry—a precursor to this bill's announcement in the House—as it was obvious to me and my LNP colleagues that a licensing arrangement for labour hire firms would not assist or solve the difficulties caused by a small number of rogue operators. The percentage identified to the committee of rogue operators in the industry is in the single digits. We have brought in this legislation which is a sledgehammer to crack a walnut under the guise of trying to build greater union membership. I table in the House a copy of an article in today's *Australian* of the unions building a \$1.5 billion war chest.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Australian*, dated 6 September 2017, titled 'Unions build \$1.5bn war chest' [[1588](#)].

They also have a disposable income of \$900 million per year to fund the political campaigns for those opposite. I do not see that much coming to this side of the House, but that is what this legislation has been generated to support.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! I realise this is a topic that excites people from both sides of the House, but I think that Hansard may be finding it hard to hear the member for Mermaid Beach.

Mr STEVENS: Unscrupulous operators that I and other LNP members of the House do recognise exist in the labour hire industry and have no doubt are causing problems—

Mr Power: What are you going to do about it?

Mr STEVENS: I take the interjection from the member for Logan because the minister herself has declared to the House very successful prosecutions that we have had throughout the year. As I said before, the only way we will address these dodgy rogue operators and phoenix operators is to put in a regime that is well funded with plenty of inspectors to take these operators out of the system.

These terrible practices will continue to exist. That was a comment from departmental officers in relation to this legislation in answer to a question on notice that I put to them. They will continue to abuse good Queensland workers and this legislation will not stamp them out to any significant degree. What this sledgehammer to crack a walnut legislation will provide is an added layer of bureaucratic paperwork, delay and obstruction, with more jobs for Palaszczuk Labor government's union mates.

One alarmed business operator contacted my office to express his concerns relating to the broadly defined labour hire services and the possibly detrimental impact this bill could have by not dealing with the consequences should an existing good-practising operator not have their licence granted, renewed or suspended or stayed by QCAT. We would be faced with workers being suddenly unemployed and out of a job.

I note that the Chamber of Commerce & Industry Queensland have absolutely and blatantly come out against this particular piece of legislation. They represent literally hundreds of thousands of workers in Queensland and some 40,000 members in the small business industry in Queensland. They are totally against this legislation. How can the minister for jobs and employment go forward with this legislation? I can tell the House how this minister goes forward with this legislation. I remember the days when the current Hon. Grace Grace was one of the union heavies out there—

Ms Grace: And proud of it.

Mr STEVENS: She was very proud of it then and she is proud of it now. She is bringing the union legislation into the House now under her new guise as a politician rather than a union heavy. It does not wash. She is still a union heavy and she will always be a union heavy. She loves the union heavies and she is very proud of it.

As I am sure those opposite in the chamber will mention, there is a waiver provision. I remind them that, more importantly, as identified in our statement of reservation—

... there is still an undetermined “catch-all” philosophy that may impact on disabled employment groups and other yet to be determined groups that will fall under the umbrella of this wide-reaching labour-hire definition.

Further to this, trade unions and other third parties, as part of the third party rights review in the bill before the House, will allow for them to delay and potentially overturn decisions in a relatively unrestrained manner, to which they should not expect to have purview or influence of. This is opposite to what this bill is purported to be about. Instead of protecting labour hire operators, we are exposing them to more possible harm while not significantly impacting on the abhorrent practices of those unscrupulous rogue operators. While the effectiveness and cost competitive nature of the labour hire industry currently provides great advantage to good employers, it does restrict the dwindling union memberships and the ability of their associated union affiliated workforces to control matters as they might wish.

This control will be granted, through this troubling bill, through imbuing inspectors with broad powers to enter the premises, with or without consent, and, among other activities, seize items that could be a requirement of completing that job. While some employer groups unwittingly expressed support for a licensing regime under this legislation during the committee process, it is obvious to my eyes that they are unaware of the likely longer term consequences this legislation will bring—through overbearing union demands to meet to satisfy licensing requirements as well as the continuing ongoing fees.

All of those employer groups thought, ‘Yes, it will be wonderful. I’m a good employer so I’ll get a licence very easily and it won’t cost me any money because the government will pay for that.’ The rude shock will come with the implementation of this scheme when those licensing fees ratchet up to almost electricity prices for licences. There will also be a long delay to get them and they will have to conform with all union matters, requests and demands to get that licence.

This is one of the worst pieces of legislation I have seen in this House. I am very fearful of the longer term consequences of where this legislation will lead us. It is very disappointing that, in the dying days of this Palaszczuk Labor government, they are bringing this union-building legislation into the House—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr MINNIKIN: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Would you please direct the member for Pine Rivers that she should be in her rightful seat if she would like to interject.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): The member for Mermaid Beach has the call.

Mr STEVENS: It is another additional cost to Queensland businesses brought about by the Palaszczuk Labor government and her union mates. For a government that has been promising jobs, jobs, jobs, putting in further obstacles and more bureaucratic hurdles feels more like jobs, jobs, jobs for their union mates. Clearly, the Palaszczuk Labor government is focused on dancing to its union puppetmasters. I understand that the union did a great job in getting them into this House in the first place in the election that it was not expecting to win. I think that is a fair comment. I note the member for Bundaberg and others had a lot of union support at the last election. I understand why they have to go forward and pay the piper to the union—

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Minister and member for Kawana, please cease your debates across the chamber or I will issue both of you with a warning.

Mr STEVENS: It is a tough gig up here tonight. Clearly, the Palaszczuk Labor government are focused on dancing to their union puppetmasters’ tune, as made evident by the creation of this legislation. It was identified in the earlier inquiry prior to its creation as being unnecessary and it would be much better addressed by supporting federal legislation across all the states. A lot of these labour hire companies are interstate companies so they will come into Queensland for the licensing regime that they do not have in any other part of Australia and they will be subjected to the heavy demands. I am sure unions will get mentioned in relation to when they apply for their licence to see how many employees will be part of their union roster, if you like, in terms of getting a swift resolution to the licence application.

The sole recommendation from the report into the practice of the labour hire industry in Queensland was that the minister progress this issue through COAG meetings to work together with the federal government. This was a sensible approach that would allow for the production of legislation that is uniform and complementary to the Commonwealth or another state.

However, what we have witnessed instead is typical of the Palaszczuk Labor government's approach of creating more burdens on our Queensland businesses and more opportunity for the lessening of work practices throughout Queensland. Increasing policing of existing fair work inspectors and the funding towards the associated national laws would benefit Queenslanders far more. It would undoubtedly achieve greater results in eradicating dodgy operators than this politically inspired, opportunistic legislation to generate more fees from an emerging industry and promote union membership to the benefit of the Palaszczuk Labor government's union overlords. To put it more bluntly, the minister as the former union boss has brought in legislation to help out her union mates at the cost of further crippling Queensland so that industry cannot get on with the job of fixing Queensland's parlous state.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Mirani, I would like to read out the list of members who are on a warning from just before the dinner break. I want members to be aware of this. The members who received warnings were: the member for Hinchinbrook, the member for Kawana, the member for Everton, the Minister for Local Government, the member for Toowoomba North, the member for Burleigh, the member for Yeerongpilly and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. All of those members need to be aware that if they breach any of the standing orders further they will be asked to remove themselves from the chamber.

Mr BLEIJIE: I rise to a point of order. Madam Deputy Speaker, could you check on one thing. I was warned at question time and I think the Speaker has said that that expired at the dinner break.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you for raising that. I apologise. It is the member for Yeerongpilly and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Notwithstanding that, we have a long debate ahead of us so I am sure everyone wants to stay in the chamber if it is their turn to be here.

Mr PEARCE (Mirani—ALP) (9.08 pm): Every time members on this side of the House rise to stand and defend workers in Queensland, we have to listen to the member for Kawana. He stands on every occasion to show his hate for workers and the union movement. The unions are the only people who are prepared to stand up and help workers. When I hear the member for Kawana speak, I often wonder what happened to him as a child. He is a sad and angry man and I really do have some concerns about him.

I go back to an incident some weeks ago when a number of people were outside—

Mr BLEIJIE: I rise to a point of order. I do not usually rise on these points of order for personal reflections, but I do take personal offence at that. I am not sure what the member was implying, but I do take offence at what he just said about what happened to me as a child. I ask him to withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): I ask the member to withdraw.

Mr PEARCE: I am happy to withdraw. There was a demonstration out the front here one day. There were a number of workers out there demonstrating and amongst those workers was a man called Michael Garrels, who lost his son in a workplace accident in Clermont. That day the member for Kawana said on his Facebook page—

Get back to work bludgers! The pubs will do alright this arvo!

That is what this man thinks about workers.

In speaking to the Labour Hire Licensing Bill I point out that, like all Queenslanders, the people I represent demand world's best practice outcomes for communities and the environment from the multinational mining companies operating in Queensland. Like me, the people I represent in this place agree that if those companies are not prepared to deliver on the requirements they should not be welcomed in this place. In other words, if they do not want to do the right thing they should get out; they should go home. We only want the best companies here. They have failed to respect and cater for people's needs. They have failed to respect and cater for workers' needs. The people of Queensland expect multinational mining companies operating in this state to lead the way for the rest of the world in social responsibilities and the management of workforces by providing regulatory stability and genuine care and management of men and women. The employees are the most valuable asset that a company can have. Give them the respect they deserve and let them do their job—that is the best thing that any company operating in this country can do.

I have spent many years working in the coal industry and several years of advocacy for and on behalf of resource communities, so I want to talk about the disgraceful acts of some labour hire companies who operate for and on behalf of the multinationals. In Central Queensland we are able to focus on mining companies who control workforce placement through labour hire. That is what they are doing: they are controlling the workforce through labour hire companies. I will run through a number of

instances in which men and women are being bullied by labour hire companies for and on behalf of the mining companies. What I bring to the attention of the House is not rare; it is common practice and highlights why we as a Labor government have acted in the interests of the workers. I am going to run through a list of things and this will explain the situation so everybody can understand. Anybody on that side of the House who has a heart or has a concern about a worker will understand why we need to have a system in which labour hire companies and the companies themselves—multinationals and mining companies—respect the worker and respect the communities they live in.


There are instances in which workers have not been provided with personal protection equipment—they have to go and buy their own—and where a potential employee must pay for coal board medicals. They could pay for several coal board medicals out of their pocket before they get a job. Some employees must buy their own work shirts. Part of that is in the sign-up documentation. Labour hire workers—casual workers—can be forced to stay in camp during extended rain events. They are not allowed to get in the car and drive home if they live nearby; they have to stay in the camp. I know workers who have stayed there for four or five days and were not allowed to go home. Employment has been terminated due to a worker going home during extended standdown periods. If a bloke thinks he is going to be stood down for five days and he goes home, he loses his job because they have no-one to turn to; they have no-one to help them out.

They make workers stay in a camp despite a nearby community being only 15 minutes away; so they are not allowed to go out into the town to buy food or any such thing or even have a beer at the local club. Workers are being stood down by labour hire companies for traffic infringements. If they receive a traffic infringement and the boss of the mine goes and complains to the labour hire company, they stand down the worker; he will not have a job at that mine anymore. The host company can tell the labour hire company that a particular employee is no longer required. If somebody at the mine decides they do not like a worker that has come in with a labour hire company, they just say, 'I'm sorry. We don't want that person anymore.'

These are the things that are happening to men and women who work in the industry. Those members opposite do not want to protect them because they just do not care about them. Skilled labour hire workers often find themselves working with unskilled labour and receiving different rates of pay. They stand alongside somebody who does not have the skills that a labour hire worker has and yet the labour hire worker is on the lower rate of pay. I have heard of a labour hire host employer who changed his mind about its operation, leaving labour hire employees to be told at the destination airport that they were no longer required. They paid for the trip to get to a place like Emerald, they were just about to get on the bus to go out to the mine and they were told, 'You are no longer required. You have to go home.' I was told recently by a mineworker of 10 years that he was trying to get out of the mining industry as the strains, both financially and mentally, are increasing due to what these companies are getting away with.

I know of a situation where females were dismissed because they allowed themselves to get caught up with the power of a boss. When women get caught up with the boss, the boss hangs onto his job and women get put off. That is the type of people we are dealing with. Partners of blacklisted workers have been dismissed. Employees have been told that they are no longer required because of comments made in a shopping centre, in a newsagency. Labour hire employees have been told they are no longer required if they challenge management on health and safety issues. This is why we have things like black lung and other incidents happening in the coal industry, because they are too scared to speak up for fear of losing their job. If management takes a dislike to an individual, that person can say goodbye to their job. Personal and family illness means nothing; it does not mean anything to the mining companies because they use the labour hire company to do their dirty work.

I know I have to finish but I wish to say that I do support the legislation before the House because, ladies and gentlemen, members of this place, we are all here to protect the people of Queensland, the men, women and youth who want a job, who want to have the right lifestyle—the same sort of lifestyle that members opposite enjoy. However, they do not want to give them a chance. They should wake up to themselves.

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (9.17 pm): I rise tonight to speak to the Labour Hire Licensing Bill. We have to give it to Labor governments; they are shameless in their love and support for the dead hand of regulation across business, across commerce in Queensland and they are shameless in their absolute support for seeking to gift the union movement with ever greater influence. At a time when union membership is declining around the nation—perhaps about 15 per cent of the total workforce—here in Queensland the union influence seems to determine the legislative agenda of this government and in particular of this minister.

I believe that tonight's bill represents the perfect example of the overreach of union attempts at influence over Queensland businesses and Queensland industry. I submit that it is not just a matter of the dead hand of regulation. I submit that it is not just a matter of ever greater union influence over industry and commerce. I actually submit that this bill we are debating tonight is one of the most technically and legally flawed bills that we have seen. I want to take the House through a couple of the legislative lowlights in the bill and go through them in particular.

I want to start with clause 7 of the bill. This is the definition of 'labour hire services'. It states that 'labour hire services' are defined to mean—

... if, in the course of carrying on a business, the person supplies, to another person, a worker to do work.

Someone could drive a truck through that definition, and I am not talking about the garden variety one tonner. I reckon someone could drive a B-double through that definition. It is absolutely clear that that is precisely what the government thinks as well because they have listed a couple of examples of potential relationships that may be caught by this regulation tonight. The first example is—

- a contractor who supplies workers to a farmer or fruit grower to pick produce for the farmer or grower.

That deserves further contemplation and I will come back to that later in my contribution. The second example in this definition states—

- a group training organisation or principal employer organisation under the *Further Education and Training Act 2014* that supplies an apprentice or trainee to an employer.

I am not sure whether the government recognises that group training organisations are actually a creation of the ACTU along with Lendlease in the 1970s. Group training organisations were set up precisely to assist young men and women into a trade and to get them into a job. We have a situation where the alleged party of the worker in Queensland is seeking to overregulate group training organisations, which will make it more difficult for them to train our young people for tomorrow's jobs.

I have a couple of great group training organisations in Toowoomba, and they have been pretty vocal in their representations to me. Mr Lindsay Weber is the chairman of GoldenWest Apprenticeships in Toowoomba. He is gravely concerned, as are other group training organisations throughout the state, about the impact of the dead hand of regulation and how this bill is going to make it more difficult for them to do their job training the workers of tomorrow. Mr Weber wrote to me saying—

GTOs in Queensland make a substantial contribution to the strategies securing a skilled workforce and tackling youth unemployment. Apprenticeships are not only for the youth, many displaced or disenfranchised adults also obtain trade qualifications and create future careers. Many then go on to be employers in turn, the supporting role of group training extends to those in our communities who are disadvantaged, disabled and distressed. They contribute to the social and economic welfare and prosperity of our great state.

The thing about group training is that labour hire services are completely different in practice and intent, and I think the minister should take this on board. Group training organisations seek to train youth into jobs. They are not job ready. They go on site and work for employers who supervise and train them to appropriate qualifications. With labour hire they are job ready. We are talking about completely different principles here. All I can do is reflect the opinion of the group training industry, which is deeply concerned about what this regulation will mean for their industry. It is not just a matter of group training. We have very clear examples, as the member for Kawana has already articulated tonight, of unintended consequences. The Ai Group said that this was vague in its definitional terms. I believe that WorkPac said it was dramatically flawed in its definitional interpretation.

I want to quickly run through a few of the unintended consequences that I have not heard addressed properly at all during the committee proceedings or here again tonight. These are a few of the potential scenarios: contract teachers engaged by the education department; chaplains seconded from a church organisation into schools; IT contractors who engage a friend for a few weeks work when they are under the gun; the plumber who has a mate who backs him up doing a job from time to time; contracts for services for which skilled and qualified people are assigned to specific projects for specific work; secondment arrangements; transfers of employees between related entities; and disabled employment groups who second workers to community projects. All of these people have no idea of the far-reaching consequences of this bill on offer here tonight from this government. There will be unintended consequences, and people who never in their wildest dreams would have thought they are providing labour hire services will be caught by this regulation. In the context of group training, it will mean that people are less likely to employ young people.

Turning to section 10 in the next legislative lowlight on offer here are the actual penalties that will be imposed on people who are completely oblivious to the regulation's applicability to their operation. For an individual it will be a fine of nearly \$100,000 or three years imprisonment—which is similar to

breaching a domestic violence order or dangerous operation of a motor vehicle—and for a corporation the fines are in the vicinity of \$400,000. It is a matter of the unintended consequences and the flowthrough of significant penalties to people who have no idea that this regulation even exists.

The next stop is section 103 of the bill. Under the proposed legislation we will now have a licensing obligation on labour hire companies. We will now have chief executives setting out a number of grounds that need to be completed and a number of pieces of information that need to be provided, and that will be placed on a public register. It all starts off pretty innocuously with the licensee's name, contact details, business names, ABNs and the like. The kicker is subparagraph (i), which talks about 'the locations in Queensland where work is carried out by workers supplied by the licensee'.

There has already been commentary from the opposition tonight regarding the hidden consequences behind this particular provision, but I want to pass over to Ms Carroll from the AMMA who gave evidence to the committee. She explained that in the resources sector labour might be engaged for one shift which might be seven days, for instance. Over a six-month period—which is the reporting period in the legislation—it may be that a labour hire employee is assigned to a project in circumstances where they might be engaged for a short term or are working on different projects around Queensland. Imagine a company that has 3,000 employees working in the resource sector. Compiling and maintaining a register of information of that nature for the purposes of reporting on it every six months will be ridiculously onerous. We know that trade union officials are hunting down more information than ever before about where workers are located and how many of them work there. They want that register, and they need that register in the face of declining union membership around the nation.

Another issue that I do not believe has been raised tonight in respect of publicly disclosing the locations in Queensland where work is carried out is privacy. Under the proposed legislation an elderly pensioner receiving in-house care from a disability worker will have their address on a public register. I have no conceivable understanding of why that particular regulation is necessary. It is in the bill; it is clear. We will now have privacy concerns about people who are receiving in-house care, and there will be other scenarios and other unintended consequences. When you turn your mind to the broadness of the definition of labour hire, which I have already talked about, the extent of that definition will be determined from time to time by the chief executive of the day. It will be determined by the minister of the day without any oversight, so we are outsourcing perhaps the most poorly defined legal concept there is to the minister of the day and the chief executive. We are outsourcing the legislature's responsibility to appropriately define such an important term in this bill.

I will turn from section 103 to section 93, which contains the review and appeal provisions that a number of other speakers have already commented on tonight. Section 93 states that 'an interested person may apply for a review of a decision' to grant a licence, revoke, vary et cetera. The definition of 'interested person' is a telling one, in that section 93(3) states—

Interested person means a person or organisation ... who has an interest in the protection of workers or the integrity of the labour hire industry.

A person who seeks to review a decision of a chief executive to grant a licence, revoke or vary any other decision of the chief executive has 28 days from the moment they become aware of that decision. It is possible that union official after union official will line up and seek to delay and frustrate a legitimate process. Then it gets worse, because once the review process to the chief executive is over we start looking at QCAT appeals.

Under section 98, if you have exhausted all other industrial instruments available to you in commissions or tribunals you can make appeals under this particular piece of legislation and then you can go to QCAT. I am not even sure whether QCAT, under the QCAT Act, is properly constituted or has the jurisdiction to consider matters relating to the protection of workers or the integrity of the labour hire industry. I have not heard anything in respect of whether there has been contemplation about the applicability of the QCAT jurisdiction in these matters, particularly when you realise that QCAT explicitly excludes industrial dispute bodies including the Industrial Court, the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission and the review functions of the Public Service Commission. I have not heard any consideration of issues of that nature—whether QCAT is even the appropriate jurisdiction to which to take appeals of this nature.


I return to section 7 of the bill, the definitions section. The first example given in the bill related to essentially the horticultural industry—people supplying workers for the picking of fruit or produce for a farmer or grower. The committee heard some quite disturbing anecdotes and saw some quite disturbing things. I submit that there are existing legislative mechanisms. We know that there are measures

available within the federal jurisdiction—the tax act, the Fair Work Act, ABNs issued to employees to make sure employers meet their obligations—and the state has existing workplace health and safety laws that could be further imposed.

Something that has been ignored during this entire process is the self-regulation that is already in place and is becoming ever more prevalent throughout the industry. I refer to the Recruitment and Consulting Services Association, which has been active in developing a national certification program. Ms Hourigan, the Queensland vice-president, spoke eloquently to this program. The RCSA is the peak body for the recruitment and employment sector in Australia and New Zealand and sets the benchmark for industry standards. Their members abide by a code of professional conduct. Beyond this, they have initiated a workforce services accreditation program. The certification was developed in consultation with the NUW and the AWU and has been trialled in Victoria and Queensland in the horticultural sector, where exploitation of workers has been identified. What we see is an industry that is seeking to address these concerns. With the existing federal powers and the existing state powers, I believe that this is a bill in search of a problem that can already be solved by existing mechanisms along with the self-accreditation efforts that are currently underway through the industry.

I reflect on the sledgehammer approach—the dead hand of regulation—being introduced in this bill. The submission of the Anti-Discrimination Commission of Queensland reflected on a United Kingdom act, the Gangmasters (Licensing) Act, which was introduced in 2004 in response to a terrible tragedy in which 21 Chinese workers perished off the Lancashire coast. The tide had swept up around them as they were collecting cockles in the ocean. The response of the government at that time—I know something about this because I was acting as an in-house counsel for a labour hire services company in the United Kingdom at the time—related to the particular industry, addressing the problem in front of them. It was not an overarching overreach of regulation that would impose itself on unsuspecting businesses that would never have contemplated being caught by such legislation.

That particular legislation was specifically limited to wild creature collection and other particular farming activities as well as certain processing and packaging. That was an appropriate response to a terrible tragedy. It was a targeted response, not regulation for the sake of regulation. What has been evidenced in the United Kingdom since the time that law was passed is a far safer environment for workers in industries, particularly the horticultural industry. A particular option like that was not considered here. Instead, the government reached for the sledgehammer to crack the nut. They reached for the dead hand of regulation. I would argue that, for the sake of workers such as young workers under group training organisation arrangements or for the sake of commerce and industry in Queensland, this bill should be rejected.

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (9.35 pm): I rise to speak of the urgent need for reform in the Queensland labour hire industry—an industry that is largely unregulated and presents an open invitation and a golden opportunity to dodgy owners who exploit their workers here in Queensland. It is time these organisations were held to account and that only those people who are fit and proper are entitled to be licensed to operate in this sector.


There are numerous reports proving that strict regulations are desperately needed in the labour hire sector, including a report earlier this year of a firm that was found to have underpaid their workers \$77,000 over nearly two months and a report of a former labour hire worker who had worked as a diesel fitter in the coalmining industry for over 10 years who says—

I wasn't allowed to become a permanent employee, I couldn't plan for the future and I had no safety net. When I wasn't paid correctly, there was no regulation or accountability to get it fixed.

This is disgraceful. When the LNP continues on its monotonous bleat about the unions being the destabilising influence in the operation of labour hire firms, it begs the question: is licensing of real estate agents designed to bolster union membership in the real estate industry? Are car dealers licensed so that union membership is supported in the car industry? Of course they are not. It should be remembered that it is unions, as well as other civil society groups, that have been at the forefront of uncovering much of the labour hire exploitation that has occurred. Unions are the backup to support the affected workers. That is more than we can say for the LNP.

There is broad acknowledgement that a national labour hire licensing scheme would be the most desirable outcome. However, the Deputy Prime Minister, who supports the LNP in Queensland—even though he may now be a New Zealand citizen—has made clear that the federal government is not interested in doing anything to level the playing field. In the absence of any action at the national level, the Palaszczuk government is doing all it can at a state level to protect vulnerable workers in our state and to clean up the labour hire industry.

A business-as-usual, carry-on-regardless approach is not an option in this state anymore. Yes, we do need the federal government to step in to help us ensure the Fair Work Ombudsman has the necessary power and resources to enforce compliance with the workplace laws we have. However, the existing approach is clearly not working, as report after report has uncovered similar damning evidence of exploitation of labour hire workers over a number of years. The recent ABC *Australian Story* on the tragic death of English backpacker Mia Ayliffe-Chung at Home Hill has once again put this issue in the spotlight. I commend this bill to the House because it is a good bill.

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (9.38 pm): As a member of the Finance and Administration Committee it gives me great pleasure to rise tonight to speak about the Labour Hire Licensing Bill 2017. It has been very interesting to listen to speakers from both sides of the chamber here tonight. I respect the member for Mirani, Jim Pearce. Jim is someone I would classify as having good, old-fashioned Labor values. There is no disputing that.

Mr Mander: A true believer.

Mr MINNIKIN: I take the interjection from the member for Everton. He is a true believer. We have also heard the minister interject many times tonight and say that she is very proud to wear her trade union hat. That is all fine and well, but at the end of the day what we are looking for here is nuanced and balanced debate. The previous speaker made some very good points.

The member for Toowoomba South worked through the draft bill section by section and made some outstanding and very good points. Let us cut to the chase: when we look at the electoral cycle, we are now in the back end or the top of the ninth, so to speak. It is indeed time to pay the piper. It is absolutely screaming through every bit of ink that you see. As a member of the committee—and I will go through some of the submissions that we received—this is absolutely something that needs to be kicked into the long grass. This is indeed nothing more than a sap to the union bosses because we know that they are worried about losing control and, most importantly, access to workers. Fill in the gaps: what does that actually mean? It means a lack of future membership growth. It also means—kerching!—less donations to the Labor Party which then flows to fewer delegates to the state Labor conference.

In fact, as a member of the committee I want to play a little game for some of those who might be interested. If we go through the committee's review and listen to stakeholder comments, there were 41 submissions to the committee. In the interests of time, let me highlight some of the most notable: the Queensland Nurses' Union—support; Allens—raised several issues; and the AMWU—funnily enough—support and, as was said earlier, donated \$31,279 in 2016. In the interests of having a good time, let us continue: the Australian Sugar Milling Council—oppose; the AMIEU—funnily enough after giving the ALP in 2016 \$16,000—support; BHP Billiton—oppose the drafting; AgForce—oppose; Steps Group—oppose; Growcom—oppose; CCIQ—oppose; the Queensland Law Society—oppose the drafting; the National Farmers Federation—oppose.

Ms Fentiman interjected.

Mr MINNIKIN: I can hear the bleating from the member for Waterford; bless her heart. Let me continue: the Housing Industry Association—oppose. There is a recurring theme. United Voice's donation, which led to it funnily enough supporting, was the princely sum of \$245,373.

An opposition member: That buys a bit of influence!

Mr MINNIKIN: It buys a fair degree of influence; it certainly does. I will finish it off with a token mere bagatelle: a small contribution of \$11,000 to the financially illiterate across the chamber also donated in 2016 from the MUA. The non-government members of the committee reiterate—we have heard two of them already, the member for Mermaid Beach and the member for Toowoomba South—our rejection of the need for this legislation as expressed in the findings from the inquiry into the practices of the labour hire industry in Queensland. The report to the House was tabled in 2016.

Mr Harper interjected.

Mr MINNIKIN: The bleeding heart from Logan will get his chance, but I can tell members what—

An opposition member: It was Thuringowa.

Mr MINNIKIN: I am sorry; we have someone who is a look-alike and sound-alike. I apologise very much to the member for Logan—I really do—on multiple fronts. As noted at this time, it was irrelevant that the inquiry produced no supporting evidence that a licensing regime would in fact address the problems of rogue operators in the highly successful labour hire industry, and this union directed Labor government would proceed with introducing labour hire legislation to further the interests of its union masters regardless of the outcome. This has occurred through this proposed legislation and the

non-government members are still of the opinion that this legislation is a politically inspired opportunity by this government to generate more fees from the industry whilst at the same time promoting union membership. This legislation will not stamp out the abhorrent practice of unscrupulous rogue operators to any significant degree. It will simply stifle employment.

There was evidence of the existence of some unscrupulous operators in the labour hire industry. That is irrefutable—absolutely irrefutable—but this bill is a sledgehammer. As was said by the member for Kawana and maybe the member for Mermaid Beach in his contribution earlier and maybe the member for Toowoomba South, this approach uses a sledgehammer to crack a walnut to overcome the really small number of undesirable operators in the industry, and they absolutely deserve to be weeded out. There are no arguments on this side of the chamber about undesirable operators in the industry. They should be absolutely rejected every time. At the end of the day, it is both a complete overkill and a political excuse to seek greater union participation in the labour hire industry.

There is no certainty that rogue operators will in fact be defeated by this very legislation, and this was confirmed by departmental officers who fronted the committee. There is no national adherence to the regime inflicted by this particular legislation on employers operating in Queensland. It is yet another layer of bureaucratic paperwork, shuffling, delay and obtrusion designed by the union—via select government members—to halt and arrest the decline in membership on behalf of their union puppetmasters. In fact, allocating more funding to policing existing Fair Work inspectors would undoubtedly achieve greater results in eradicating dodgy operators. I repeat: the dodgy operators need to be addressed, but it would have been far more beneficial to allocate more funding in that particular area of public policy. That would make far more sense.

In fact, several employer groups that supported the establishment of a licensing regime under this legislation would probably be unaware of the longer term consequences of the legislation in terms of, for example, fees payable and union demands meant to satisfy licensing requirements in the longer term. In fact, despite the fact that there is a waiver provision in the legislation, there is still an undetermined catch-all philosophy—we are always wary on this side of the chamber of the dreaded catch-all philosophy—that may impact on disabled employment groups and other yet to be determined groups that will fall under the umbrella of this wide-reaching labour hire definition.

The third-party rights review in the proposed bill will provide trade unions and other third parties with a relatively unrestrained right to involve themselves in delaying and potentially overturning decisions which they should have no expectation or right to influence—none whatsoever. While employers see great advantage in utilising the effectiveness and the cost competitiveness of the labour hire industry, the union movement is obviously concerned about the industry's effect on its dwindling union membership. I have heard figures of 15 per cent. I read in the *Australian*—and I stand to be corrected—figures around about 13 per cent three months ago. State industrial relations 30 years ago when I was at uni were nearly around about 38 per cent to 40 per cent. How the mighty have fallen! It is about their ability to control matters in relation to employers' use of a union affiliated workforce.

This legislation is neither warranted nor efficacious. This legislation is specifically designed to enshrine a state based system of licensing labour hire firms which will further empower the union movement in its future control of the growing sector of the union movement. CCIQ's submission states—

... CCIQ does not believe labour hire warrant legislative intervention and increased regulation.

It went on to say—

The prospect of an additional regulatory scheme is particularly daunting for businesses already suffering from the cumulative compliance burden of workplace relations laws, workplace health and safety laws, and other legal requirements.

They went on to say—

Greater regulation of the labour hire industry would impose significant additional costs on already compliant firms.

What a pure stroke of genius from those opposite! It goes on—

Imposing another layer of regulation and business in Queensland would be a counter-productive measure towards achieving job creation and economic growth. To this end, the CCIQ believes this bill will add to an already significant compliance burden for businesses.


There is absolutely no doubt about that. They went to say—

It will undermine—

this is the so-called mantra of a job-creating government—

job growth, and create an unnecessary layer of legal requirements to which a sufficient safety net for temporary forms of employment already exists.

I repeat: at the end of the day there are members on this side of the chamber who do come from strong union families. Over many years we have respected greatly some of the basic rights and freedoms and we acknowledge that, but those opposite come into this place with legislation that is so shoddy that one can shoot holes through it. They present it in this chamber and expect it to be passed like any other piece of legislation that the minister has produced so far. However, it is so shoddy and so sloppy in its execution and framing that it will get what it rightly deserves. Along with the non-government members of the Finance and Administration Committee, we reject this wholesale. Absolutely, it should be kicked into the long grass.

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (9.52 pm): I joined the Labor Party 23 years ago first and foremost to ensure Queensland workers got a fair go at work. That fair go at work should not be for a privileged few in full-time permanent work; it should be for all working people. We on this side believe in tolerance and respect and in standing up to protect workers from exploitation and mistreatment.

While there might be some occasions when it makes business sense for other reasons, in my experience contracting out and labour hire is primarily about cutting the wages of workers, taking away their job security, making them more compliant and leaving them unsure whether they will have work the next day or the next week, and undermining the employment security of other direct employees.

Some of the stories we have heard about worker exploitation are appalling. We saw cases where farm workers were forced to work entire days harvesting fruit without food, drink or pay, as well as being forced to live in isolated dilapidated accommodation. I have seen firsthand how unscrupulous—

An opposition member interjected.

Dr MILES: Listen to this story. I have seen—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order, member for Kawana. Could the minister please direct his comments through the chair and not across the chamber.

Dr MILES: I have seen firsthand how unscrupulous contracting arrangements can lead to worker abuse. In 2014 I met a worker engaged as a contract cleaner. She told me of a man who had forced himself onto five women in locked rooms, including herself. He offered them lifts home with the expectation of sexual favours in return. He threatened them with deportation if they resisted—

Mr Mander interjected.

Dr MILES: Are you listening to this story?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!


An opposition member interjected.

Dr MILES: Swear on a pile of Bibles.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am calling the House to order. Both sides should come to order. Member for Everton, your interjections are not being taken and I have asked the minister to direct his comments through the chair, not across the chamber to other members. The minister has the call.

Dr MILES: He threatened them with deportation if they resisted and, if they complained, he fired them. This was not at just any workplace: this was at the Brisbane airport, one of our most respected corporate citizens. Too often companies believe that by using labour hire instead of directly employing staff they can avoid responsibility for their treatment. No worker, male or female, cleaner, teacher or nurse, be they on a farm or at an airport, deserves to be treated that way.

Despite what those opposite said tonight, despite their attacks, I am proud. It was my union, United Voice, which raised the alarm bell in that case. It is shameful that, after hearing these stories, Tim Nicholls and the LNP could not care less. The parliamentary Finance and Administration Committee inquiry into labour hire found serious and systemic issues of mistreatment and exploitation related to labour hire arrangements. This bill delivers the government's response to that inquiry. I am proud that Queensland is leading the nation in becoming the first jurisdiction to introduce a bill to establish a mandatory labour hire licensing scheme. I am proud to sit on these benches with the member for Brisbane Central, who is delivering on these commitments. Queenslanders would not forgive us if we overlooked workers' interests and failed to put them first. They will not forgive those opposite, Tim Nicholls or the LNP for opposing this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (9.56 pm): I oppose this bill. The bill should send shivers down the spines of all farmers in my electorate and across the whole state who use labour hire contractors. The only people who support this bill are those who donate to the ALP. The member for Chatsworth outlined that eloquently previously. Clearly, this bill is payback to the unions that donate to the ALP.

I represent a number of significant agricultural producers in my region. They use those contractors for seasonal labour, for work that needs to be done weekly, for a few weeks or on a two-monthly basis. It is labour that needs to be obtained for a short period of time on a seasonal basis. In some cases, labour hire contractors are used because quite simply there are not local people and local employees able or willing to undertake the work that is done by labour hire contractors and the people who work for them. These labour hire contractors pick lettuces, work on the farms picking carrots and get agricultural produce out of the ground and into markets overseas and on to our supermarket shelves in Queensland. This is local produce and this is the way that farmers in the South-East Queensland region and across the whole state manage to get their product out of the ground and on to our market shelves. The use of seasonal labour and labour hire contractors is a key part of that. Allowing the unions that support the ALP via donations effectively to veto the licensing of labour hire contractors is nothing but a naked grab for union power in agricultural industries. All of the agricultural sector that uses the labour hire industry should be very afraid.

Labor throws up so many barriers to profitability. We saw so much of that in the last decade, a decade unfortunately ruled by Labor in Queensland. We saw it in terms of electricity and its stuff-ups in that sector. It started with Beattie in 2006 and the sell-off of the retail sector, followed by Bligh and Fraser in 2010 when they locked in those terrible increases to network charges and the increases that led to power prices—

Mr POWER: I rise to a point of order. I appreciate the history lesson, but it is not relevant to the long title of the bill.

Mr KRAUSE: It is incredibly relevant because we are talking about efficiency.

Government members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! I am making a ruling on the point of order. If members of the government would like their colleague's point of order ruled on, perhaps they could give me an opportunity to rule. I would remind the member for Beaudesert to please be relevant to the long title of the bill.

Mr KRAUSE: It is very relevant because this bill is an example of how the Labor Party impacts on the efficiency of the agricultural sector. This bill will place extra costs and burdens on the sector. We have seen the costs added to the water sector across Queensland as a result of the failures of the Labor Party in relation to the Traveston Dam and the Wyaralong Dam and all the other costs that have been placed on our SEQ water system as a result of bungled policies by the Labor Party.

Our agricultural producers still manage to make a profit, export their produce and get on with life and employ hundreds and hundreds of people—thousands in fact—across the whole state despite all the barriers that members opposite have put in their way over the last decade. Those opposite put in place more barriers and impose more costs on farmers trying to make a living and grow produce to export and to make a dollar for the state of Queensland. It is a disgrace that this bill will impose more costs on the sector. Those opposite continue unabated to put a tax on farmers who are producing our food and employing hundreds and hundreds of people. This bill threatens to do that by bringing in the corrupt, inefficient and simply impractical measures of the union regime into the agricultural sector.

This bill threatens the very viability of several large producers in my electorate, as I am sure it will across the state. That is not to dismiss the fact that there are labour hire contractors who do the wrong thing. We have heard about that. There are already measures under the federal laws and under our criminal laws for dealing with those contractors. The answer to dealing with those immoral and wrong practices is not, as members have said, to crack a walnut with a sledgehammer, it is not to overregulate the whole labour hire sector with rules that give unions the upper hand; it is to use those existing federal laws.

The Fair Work Ombudsman and other federal authorities have taken action against those people who are doing the wrong thing. We have acknowledged that there are people doing the wrong thing. The member for Burnett and the federal member for Hinkler have been a part of exposing those practices. This bill is not the answer to dealing with those practices. This bill is nothing but a naked grab for power by the union movement. All agricultural sectors in Queensland have rejected this bill. It is telling that the only people who support this bill are the trade unions who give money to the ALP. This is payback for those donations.

One of the sectors that has some element of labour hire firms engaged in it is the poultry industry and in particular the poultry meat processing industry. It was disappointing to see the news in the media last week that there will be several hundred job losses in Ipswich at a poultry processing plant as a result of a decision by the poultry processor Baiada to withdraw from Queensland. It is un-Australian that the decision was made without notice to poultry growers, several of whom are in my region. It was reported to me that growers found out by email on Monday morning last week that their contracts were being terminated as of January next year.

Ms Grace: Relevance!

Mr KRAUSE: I hear the minister call relevance. This is relevant because jobs are being lost in Ipswich in the factories and in the agricultural sector in the Scenic Rim as a result of this decision. It was made without notice. It is great to see that the Scenic Rim mayor is giving his support to poultry farmers in the Scenic Rim affected by Baiada's decision. I table an article from the local paper in relation to that.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Beaudesert Times*, dated 6 September 2017, titled 'Mayor criticises Baiada Ipswich plant closure' [1589].


Ms GRACE: I rise to a point of order. I know the member for Beaudesert has concerns about jobs being lost in his area, but it has no relevance whatsoever to the long title of this bill.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would remind the member to be relevant to the long title of the bill.

Mr KRAUSE: The minister may not be aware, but I am sure there are poultry farms and elements of the poultry processing industry that use labour hire firms, so it is terribly relevant. We know that the minister misses the point on a lot of employment issues. She has been quoted as saying that youth unemployment is an issue that cannot be dealt with because it has always been with us. We have significant youth unemployment issues in our region and we know that she cannot do anything about it. If she is going to have that attitude about youth unemployment then I am sure we know that the intent of this bill is completely corrupt. It is only for the unions. The minister does not really care about jobs in our region and jobs across the state because her comments about youth unemployment lay bare her attitude towards dealing with that issue.

Poultry farms in the Scenic Rim contribute significantly to the local economy, especially through contractors and suppliers. They are a massive driver for the spending of cash in our local economy. I welcome the mayor's support for the ongoing profitability of our poultry farmers. I call on the state to provide whatever support it can for workers in Ipswich who are affected by this callous decision and also farmers affected by this and in particular to see if QRIDA can extend financial support for affected poultry farmers.

We are opposing this bill. It is nothing more than a sap to the union movement. It is only supported by the unions. It will have a terrible impact on the agricultural sector across the state but in particular large agricultural producers in my region. All members, especially those on the crossbench who purport to represent regional and rural communities, should be voting this bill down.

 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (10.07 pm): With this debate it is no wonder the LNP has shown in the polls published today that they have gone from 41 per cent primary vote to 34. What all of their speeches say is that they do not care about people. At the last election when I doorknocked person after person in my electorate, one after the other said to me—

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Ipswich West and member for Gaven, I am struggling to hear the member for Bulimba.


Ms FARMER: The message their speeches are sending is they do not care about people. When I was doorknocking before the last election one person after another said the LNP does not care; they do not listen; they disrespect us. Not one single speaker on that side of the House has talked about the worker who is suffering, the vulnerable Queenslanders, and that is why they are in the position they are in now.

Several weeks ago I had the great privilege of meeting two decent hardworking young men who are exactly what this bill is all about. There was Lachlan who is 20, who is at the beginning of his working life. He worked for Trojan, a labour hire company, at Symbion Pharmaceuticals. He came to work every single day and he never knew how many hours he was going to be at work for. He could be at work for 12 hours, he could be at work for three hours. Nobody ever told him. One day he did not get called into work. The next day he did not get called into work. After a period of time he assumed, quite correctly,

that he had been sacked. Then I met Peter, who is 27 and has a young family to support. He worked at Mitre 10 for Rush labour hire. He cannot claim the potential underpayments, because Rush did not keep his pay slip record and there is no record of his superannuation. Rush was involved in the Plutus payroll scandal run by Greg Mitchel, who, in 2007, was banned from being a company director for three years because of his involvement in a failed corporation. Where does Peter go to reclaim the money? What does he do to get back that money? Does he have anywhere to go? No, he does not, because there is no protection for him!

This bill is about protecting vulnerable workers. Peter and Lachlan are just the tip of the iceberg and we all know it. If we had not heard of some of the appalling labour hire practices that occur in Queensland and Australia before the ABC's *Australian Story* on the tragic death of English backpacker Mia Ayliffe-Chung at Home Hill, we certainly knew about it afterwards. Unfortunately, we have had years of public and parliamentary inquiries and media investigations that have unveiled similar evidence about shocking sexual harassment, workers housed in overcrowded and substandard accommodation, systemic tax avoidance, sham contracting and phoenixing of companies, leaving workers stranded without their entitlements. However, not one member opposite has said, 'What are we going to do to help vulnerable workers?' We are here in this parliament to look after Queensland and to especially look after vulnerable Queenslanders.

Those opposite go on about the cost of living. They say that we are not doing enough to address the cost of living. The best way to deal with cost-of-living pressures is to give a person a steady job so that they know what their take-home pay is going to be, they know how they can live their life and they know how they can support a family. We are about building the future for Queenslanders and the LNP is about cutting it. This bill is about making sure that Queensland workers are looked after and can be sure of their future. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (10.11 pm): I rise to oppose the Labour Hire Licensing Bill 2017. The Labour Hire Licensing Bill being debated here tonight highlights fundamental differences between those on that side of the House and those on this side of the House. The bill overregulates the entire sector and throws up numerous unintended consequences, with far-reaching effects right across Queensland.

On a number of occasions in this place I have spoken about the labour hire industry and the impacts on my electorate of Burdekin. Each year, thousands of backpackers descend on Bowen, Gumlu and the Burdekin for the fruit and vegetable picking season, which is at its peak as we speak. Those backpackers provided much needed labour on farms, planting, picking and packing the produce that we see every day on supermarket shelves. Without them, we would not have an industry in the north. I have to say that in the majority of cases those backpackers are employed by reputable labour hire companies and are well looked after. However, there are a select few rogue operators who prey on backpackers, and their shameless exploitation of those workers is nothing short of disgraceful.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr LAST: The minister should listen. When it came to preparing my speech for this debate, I asked myself three questions: will the legislation stamp out those rogue operators; is there sufficient oversight in place to address the problems associated with rogue operators; and is this problem restricted to Queensland or is it part of a bigger problem across Australia and, thus, warrants federal intervention? One needs look no further than the committee review and stakeholder comments to understand the concerns associated with the bill before the House.

There were 41 submissions before the committee, and it is interesting to see who supported the proposed legislation: the Queensland Nurses' Union, the AMWU, the AMIEU, United Voice and the MUA. However, what is of more interest to me is the organisations that oppose the legislation, such as AgForce, Growcom, WorkPac, the Queensland Law Society and the National Farmers' Federation. Their reasons for opposing the legislation are clear and unambiguous: the definition of 'labour hire' is too broad, the operations are far too broad, the need for a consistent national scheme, the prospect of an additional regulatory scheme, the imposition of significant additional costs, the imposition of another layer of regulation adding to an already significant compliance burden, the undermining of job growth, the creation of an unnecessary layer of legal requirements and that the bill is inconsistent with the federal jurisdiction of the Fair Work Act 2009. Doesn't that ring alarm bells for the minister? When the peak horticultural industry body in Queensland opposes the bill before the House, there is something drastically wrong.

The critical question here is whether the labour hire industry can be adequately monitored and regulated through the existing suite of federal and state laws and agencies, and whether this issue can be better addressed through a national accreditation scheme for labour hire companies. It is my firm

belief that existing legislation at both state and federal levels exists to deal with the problem of unscrupulous labour hire companies; it is more a matter of resources and commitment to do something about it.

I have reported a number of instances of unscrupulous behaviour by labour hire companies to the relevant authorities and I will continue to do so, because for me a fair day's work deserves a fair day's pay and there is nothing worse than a rogue labour hire company that takes advantage of workers, in some cases treating them like animals, to feather their own nests. I liken those operators to blood-sucking leeches. Not only should they be prosecuted; they should be permanently removed from the industry. I have had reported to me rogue operators that take the visas and passports of backpackers and lock them in a safe until such time as they deem they have paid their way. I have heard of up to 31 backpackers crammed into a single house. I have heard of backpackers being forced to pay exorbitant fees for rent and food, and the list goes on.

The Fair Work Ombudsman regularly prosecutes and fines companies that breach the law in relation to the hire of labour and appropriate record keeping. Therefore, if there is already a ruling body that works to protect labour hire workers, why do we need the legislation before the parliament tonight? Those opposite would say that the Fair Work Ombudsman does not go above and beyond to protect the rights of labour hire works, but I do not believe that to be the case. In fact, on 26 July 2017 a Queensland labour hire company was fined more than \$84,000 for failing to keep proper records for overseas workers on a strawberry farm near Caboolture.


That proves that there are laws in place to ensure that workers' rights are looked after, so instead of pumping millions of dollars into a new government body, wouldn't we be better off providing more funds to the body that is already there to ensure no-one falls through the cracks? I have also suggested that a national task force with wideranging powers is better placed to investigate and prosecute the unscrupulous labour hire companies and operators that are doing the wrong thing, because those dodgy labour hire companies operate right across Australia and, for that very reason, the policing and compliance regime should be nationally driven.

The policy objectives of the Labour Hire Licensing Bill are to protect labour hire workers from exploitation and restore confidence in the labour hire industry through the regulation of providers of labour hire services in Queensland. Therein lies the problem. It is another layer of regulation that will impose even more red tape on a number of industries that are already struggling for survival. There is no evidence that a licensing regime would address the problems of rogue operators in the highly successful labour hire industry.

This union directed Labor government would proceed with introducing labour hire legislation to further the interests of their union masters, regardless of the outcome of that inquiry. That has occurred through this legislation and the non-government members are still of the opinion that this legislation is a politically inspired opportunity by this government to generate more fees from the industry while, at the same time, promoting union membership. Furthermore, this legislation will not stamp out the abhorrent practices of unscrupulous rogue operators to any significant degree. The objectives of the bill do not line up and, from what I see, this bill is about lining the pockets of the unions.

The LNP does not and will not ever conform to union bosses and their blatant membership drive, which is designed to do nothing but line the union coffers and, in turn, fund the Labor Party in this state. The bill before the House is a case of overkill and, unfortunately, there is no certainty that this legislation will eliminate those rogue operators who continue to operate with relative impunity across the state. Instead of going down the legislative track, the government would be better served in resourcing those agencies with responsibility for enforcing legislation regarding the labour hire industry in Queensland.

This bill is a little bit like asking bikie gangs to become licensed and that all bikie gang members should be fit and proper persons. Rogue labour hire operators have not and will not comply with the legislation before the House because they have no scruples and they have no interest in doing the right thing. They need to be prosecuted and there needs to be an ongoing compliance regime, particularly in the horticultural sector, to ensure labour hire operators are doing the right thing and it should be coordinated at the national level. The LNP will oppose the introduction of this bill because it is nothing more than a pocket liner for the Labor Party and their buddies at the unions.

 **Mr PEGG** (Stretton—ALP) (10.20 pm): We heard the member for Burdekin state, like so many of his colleagues, that there is no evidence to justify this bill. I will give him some evidence tonight if he is prepared to listen. Last year I was a member of the committee that conducted an inquiry into the labour

hire industry. Something that resonated with me was a statement from Mr Gino Marcon, who owns Marcon Family Farms and uses labour hire. He made the following statement in a public hearing on Wednesday, 22 June 2016—

If you asked me the question, 'Do we treat workers as slave labour? I would have to say yes. Do we abuse them? I would say, yes, we do simply because the only cost we can control is the cost of labour.

Member for Burdekin and all those opposite, if you want evidence, there it is staring you in the face. That shows the extent of some of the shocking practices and abuse of workers that happens in the labour hire industry in Queensland. When employers are directly admitting to these kinds of things, we have to think that something is not right with the way the labour hire industry is currently regulated. That is why this bill is so important.

In my maiden speech I spoke about the fact that people who work hard and play by the rules deserve to get ahead in life. This means jobs that come with permanency, fair pay, security and rights—jobs that allow people to plan for their family's future and jobs that are underpinned by a system that protects people's rights at work and provides jobs they can count on.


Before I was elected to this place I worked as a lawyer in private practice and also for the National Union of Workers. One thing I have never understood is how the industrial laws of this country allow two people to work side by side doing the exact same job yet one is paid considerably less than the other. This happens all around Queensland. In most other circumstances that would be discrimination, but our system of industrial laws means that, unless an enterprise agreement explicitly provides, labour hire employees can be paid at award rates. In my view, that is completely unfair and has to change.

The other thing that happens that is manifestly unfair is Queensland workers are being paid less for doing the exact same work as workers in other states—for instance, workers in the milk industry. We all know that Woolies, Coles and other supermarkets will sell two litres of milk for \$2 pretty much all around the country. What a lot of people do not know is that the workers in Queensland who process the \$2 milk generally get paid a lot less than workers in other states, particularly Victoria and New South Wales. Given that the milk sells for the same price I cannot see any justification for this. Yet somehow this is allowed under our current federal industrial laws.

During the time before I was elected to this place I heard numerous instances of people in the labour hire industry suffering because of insecure employment. I heard from these people directly. They included: the young woman who was being sexually assaulted by her supervisor but was afraid to complain because she thought she might lose her job; the young man who told me that he had been too afraid to take a holiday for over two years as he would not be guaranteed hours if he came back; the large multinational labour hire company who so consistently underpaid workers I could only conclude it was part of their business model; and the man who had his two front teeth removed because he could not afford dental treatment during a period he was unemployed, had no income and was waiting for his workers compensation claim to be resolved.

I am not going to pretend that this bill will fix all these problems. As the member for Burdekin has outlined, the federal government really does need to step up to the plate on this issue. However, I do not believe that we can afford to sit around and wait for Malcolm Turnbull to do something. We need to do what we can. I have no confidence that he is going to address these issues.

We cannot sit here and turn our backs on this issue. We cannot let our fellow Queenslanders down. It is our duty as a government to address these issues and draw the attention of the federal government to these shocking practices. Insecure employment is a serious issue that undermines social cohesion. Decent secure jobs, safe workplaces, respect at work and a job one can count on are a vitally important part of a fair society. The people of Queensland deserve no less.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (10.24 pm): In addressing the Labour Hire Licensing Bill, I will be confining my contribution to the horticultural and agricultural sector. The bill is an overreach, particularly in the mining and construction sector. We saw so many submissions to the committee. I will address my objections to this, but I will outline solutions without imposing this heavy-handed proposal in front of us.

I find the exploitation of seasonal agricultural workers completely unacceptable, as do many in our regional areas who talk to workers, hear or witness what can and does happen. I get bitterly disappointed by reports that rogue operators have exploited farm workers under the seasonal worker programs or other labour hire arrangements. We receive many submissions and representations into my office reiterating that something needs to be done to stem the alleged exploitation of predominantly backpackers. Members will recall that I have spoken many times on this subject in this House.

There are different types of arrangements that need to be explored, like being a strong supporter of the Seasonal Worker Programme because it is designed to deliver a win-win for farmers and seasonal workers from Pacific nations. We have many seasonal workers in my region, like on citrus farms, picking fruit and vegetables. These predominately Pacific islanders provide a wonderful contribution to the farming sector and local communities, whether it be in sport or local churches. The Seasonal Worker Programme, when operating correctly, delivers reliable harvest labour for Australian growers and economic opportunities for people from developing nations in the South Pacific.

The reports that the committee heard point to a small number of rogue labour hire companies failing to meet their obligations within the program to properly treat and pay workers. These issues can be addressed without this offensive bill that is poorly drafted and full of unintended consequences. These reports further raise serious evidence about whether the government's enforcement agencies are sufficiently resourced to monitor and police the program and able to bring dodgy operators to justice within a reasonable time frame.

The issue is that we have the legislation and we have great farmers achieving amazing results, but we need more enforcement agencies on the ground. All agencies are to blame, including the federal agency. My request is the agencies establish permanent bases in areas with large numbers of seasonal workers and backpackers, like Bundaberg, the Lockyer Valley, Bowen et cetera, to adequately deal with these issues. We do not need more legislation or regulations.

In their submission to the committee inquiry Growcom, Queensland's peak grower group, stressed that there is no place in the Australian horticulture industry for anyone who seeks to wilfully exploit workers or contravene the good intentions and economic outcomes designed to flow from the Seasonal Worker Programme. The Seasonal Worker Programme has been highly successful, with many workers returning year after year to the same farms where they have established strong, positive working relationships with growers and local communities.

To become an approved employer within the Seasonal Worker Programme, farm businesses or labour hire companies must complete a rigorous review and assessment process by the Australian government. Through federal professional development programs, such as the Fair Farms Initiative, peak bodies have strongly emphasised that growers must comply with the fair work laws at all times and have an important role to play in ensuring that those working on their farms are both treated and paid appropriately. This includes situations where workers are supplied to the farm through a labour hire company.

This issue has been a regular inclusion at training days, field days and in all peak body newsletters. The recommendation to growers is that they follow due diligence to ensure they are using a reputable company and follow this up with further checks directly with their workers. However, let us not be naïve. In instances where workers are being coerced into silence and labour hire companies are deliberately obscuring information, it is very difficult for growers to be sure that workers are receiving their proper entitlements. In these cases, we must be confident that the monitoring, compliance and enforcement mechanisms are being fulfilled at a government level, especially the federal government level.

I remind growers in my region that if they suspect that there may be a breach they must report it to the Fair Work Commission. I remind growers and labour hire operators that we all need to respect and follow the existing requirements, such as: check the labour hire company's business credentials, for example, an ABN; ensure robust labour hire contractor agreements are in place between the farm business and the contractor, which sets out who is responsible for what; do the appropriate checks to ensure the labour hire company has not been prosecuted by the Fair Work Ombudsman for not complying with workplace laws; review workplace practices on a regular basis—schedule time to check in with contractors and their employees regularly to ensure they are complying with workplace laws; ask for evidence of pay slips provided to employees; check that all employees know their pay rate; check that all employees know which award they are employed under; ask for evidence of superannuation payments and an up-to-date WorkCover policy; and ask for evidence of visa checks to ensure all employees have the right to work in Australia. These are existing laws that provide some coverage and confidence to our industry. It is clear to many and concerns are being expressed about the high level of inconsistency that the bill has with fundamental legislative principles. The bill breaches the Legislative Standards Act 1992 in sections 4(4)(a), 4(3)(d), 4(3)(e) and 4(2)(a).

I stress that labour hire does not present any unique challenges that existing legislation could not deal with, and any increased intervention will have a significant negative effect on the sector. What I am hearing is that any additional regulations or intervention is not welcome for businesses, such as family farms already suffering under government compliance and many regulations such as workplace health and safety, workplace relations and many other requirements that just add costs.


We know that having any key parts of legislation prescribed by regulations, and that change regularly without oversight, poses an inappropriate use of power without reason. This is unworkable. In a major overreach of the bill—the proposed search and seizure powers without a warrant—we need to reflect on how serious this proposal is. It is at odds with the Legislative Standards Act. We know that these types of powers should only be awarded by a warrant, as is appropriate. What is being proposed is to allow inspectors to enter property without consent or a warrant. Can you imagine what such a delegation of power will mean for some organisations in Queensland? What will this mean to farming families? This proposal is open to interpretation and abuse on so many levels.

When the Queensland Labor government proposes legislation that is a long way from the national standards, it should ring alarm bells. This standalone state scheme will, as reported, make us unattractive to business and investment. This is an attack on our sovereign risk. We should be working on removing legal burdens from our small businesses—those mum-and-dad farms that need our assistance—not adding more with a big stick approach. This proposed bill will significantly increase red tape for these small businesses such as the extensive application process, as well as six-monthly reporting obligations, and those yearly renewals will further add to the workload of many time poor businesses.

I have struggled with the third-party reviews. I note concerns about the erosion of natural justice and procedural fairness. Can you imagine legislation that allows a third party who has an external interest to interfere in legal proceedings? This is defined in section 93(3).

There will be politically motivated groups who will take great advantage as they inject their organisations into legal activities, even if not invited or welcomed by the main proponents. This is a disgraceful abuse. These activities could shut down exports and trading opportunities and delay operations and production. This will have a serious effect on jobs and our local economy.

Whilst evidence of the presence of some dodgy operators in the labour hire industry is well known, this overreach approach to overcome the small number of undesirable operators in the industry through complicated and unnecessary legislation is both overkill and a political excuse to seek greater union participation in the labour hire industry. There is no certainty that these rogue operators will be captured by this legislation—something that we heard time and time again and was confirmed by departmental officers during the committee process. Allocating more funding to policing existing Fair Work inspectors would undoubtedly achieve greater results than this legislation in eradicating dodgy operators under current national laws.

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (10.32 pm): I rise tonight to speak in favour of the bill. Members on the other side of the House are saying that we have to wait for the federal government and the federal system. They had an opportunity in the Senate on Monday night to expand the protecting vulnerable workers bill to labour hire, and they voted against it. That proves that we need to take action here this week.

To summarise the debate in this place tonight, we are hearing a lot of union bashing from the other side and a lot of generalisations. We are not hearing any individual examples of employers or farmers who this is supposedly going to hurt. On this side we are hearing real stories. We are hearing real stories about the people and the workers who have been affected. There have been contributions from the member for Mirani and the member for Stretton and also the member for Mount Coot-tha.

I want to talk about a real story that occurred in my electorate. In May 2015, the Capalaba Sports Club decided to outsource all of their casual employees. They brought all 32 of them into a meeting where they were effectively unfairly dismissed. They gave them 72 hours notice to sign up to a new labour company called Hospitality X, which is a subsidiary of AWX. This agreement that they had to sign up to meant that all casuals lost any penalty rates—night penalty rates associated with the club's award, weekend penalty rates and also public holiday penalty rates.

A mother and daughter were employed at the club. Some people might say that they could find a job somewhere else to get weekend penalty rates, but this mother and daughter did not have a licence. They worked at the club and had no option to go anywhere else. I met with the club. They ignored my pleas for them to revise their decision, so we started a community campaign.

The Hospitality X agreement was an agreement that was made with the votes of three employees from Tweed Heads. We later found out that that agreement went across Queensland and Australia, covering about 700 employees. There was one brave woman from the Capalaba Sports Club Samarah Wilson, who was studying law at the time, who brought this to my attention and organised a meeting at my office with the women involved. She refused to sign up to the agreement and effectively lost her job. We continued the fight.

Hospitality X was then taken to the Fair Work Commission by United Voice. That was settled out of court. The underpayments were paid. What did Hospitality X do then? Because the agreement was basically null and void, they folded the company. This is the exact reason why we need this legislation. It is as simple as a company using their agreement to sell to industry the ability to undercut wages. When that ability was taken away from them, they folded the company. They do need licences. They do need checks and balances.

I am happy to report that I still donate to the men's bowls club at the Capalaba Sports Club and that they have gone on to bigger and better things since they have gone back to employing everyone in-house. The Capalaba Sports Club won Redlands Retailer of the Year in 2017. That proves that, if you look after your workers, pay them the right wages and do the right thing by them, you do so in the best interests of your business. I support the bill.


Debate, on motion of Mr Brown, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.36 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

ARTC Inland Rail Line; Ipswich Rugby League Grand Final

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (10.36 pm): I rise tonight on a couple of issues. The first is about the ARTC railway line that is intended to be built from Toowoomba to the port of Brisbane. This is a totally illogical route. I cannot see that it is ever going to get built. It is proposed to be done under a PPP. I have written to the Hon. Darren Chester, the federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport. I cc-ed numerous other members too—the federal member Scott Buchholz, Senator McGrath, Keith Pitt, the member for Callide, the member for Glass House et cetera. I have also sent some information to the member for Logan and the member for Gladstone.

This railway line is a brain dead proposal. I am glad to see that Minister Anthony Lynham is in the House at the moment, as he has just announced the first mining leases in the Surat Basin in Central Queensland. Surely it would be more logical for the rail line to go from Toowoomba and head towards Bundaberg and Gladstone. Who is going to annoy 200,000 Brisbanites by trying to build a coal line from Toowoomba through to the port? I table some information I have on that proposal. I think ARTC are writing some of the scripts for *Utopia*, the show on the ABC—that is how stupid it is.

Tabled paper: Bundle of documents regarding plans for an inland rail link between Toowoomba and Gladstone [[1590](#)].

The real issue I want to raise tonight is the Ipswich Rugby League grand final on Saturday night.


Mrs MILLER: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Go Goodna Eagles!

Mr RICKUSS: The Fassifern Bombers—the country team in the Ipswich comp; the only side that is actually from outside of Ipswich—will win the comp on Saturday night. They were minor premiers. Jo has put me up to a \$250 bet. We are on \$250 each—with \$350 going to the players on the winning side and \$150 going to the players on the losing side. It will be a great Saturday night. I know there is a bit of disappointment about it being on a Saturday night, but the Fassifern Bombers have some great local names of Rugby League—the Parcelles, the Rodericks, the McGinnesses and others.

Mr Madden: The Cases.

Mr RICKUSS: And the Cases; that is right. I am sure I have left some out. Kent West is the President of the Fassifern Bombers and he has done a lot to make sure they get over the line. It is a great country club. I am sure Goodna and Fassifern will have a great event on Saturday, and the member for Bundamba will be there.

Shamsalipoor, Ms M

 **Mr BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (10.40 pm): I spoke for justice in this place last year for Ms Mojgan Shamsalipoor, a graduate of Yeronga State High School and a victim of sexual abuse in her country of origin, Iran. After more than a year and a half in cruel and no doubt expensive detention from late 2014 in Australia for no logical reason, Mojgan was released and has been living for the last year freely in our community on a series of bridging visas and making herself an educated and valuable member of our community by studying and working.

It looked like her case was finally on track for her to be granted permission to permanently stay with her beloved husband, Milad Jafari, a permanent resident of our nation who is in the process of applying for citizenship. However, in yet another unfortunate and regrettable twist, instead of granting her residency and closing this long and indefensible case, the Turnbull government has changed direction once again and has informed Mojgan that she must leave Australia by 14 December.


The Yeronga State High School, the broader community and many Australians are horrified at the inhumane treatment of a valued and much loved member of our community. Ms Shamsalipoor works, receives an income, pays taxes, lives independently with her husband—who also works full-time as an assistant manager and pays taxes—is studying for a certificate III in child care on her pathway to her dream job of being a midwife and will apply for tertiary education.

To give the chamber a sense of the respect she has, Mojgan has been invited to open the Yeronga community peace garden this weekend by the local community. Mojgan simply wants to be able to apply to the minister to remain on shore until her application is decided as it is not safe for her to return to Iran given that she has been the victim of sexual abuse by a member of her family and others pretending to help her. Her horrific experiences have meant she risks arrest on return due to blame apportioned to her for crimes committed against her. This is a nation where a woman who returned was subjected to 40 lashes for the crime of wearing a short skirt at a social gathering. Her brother Hossein, who is working as a boilermaker and also pays taxes, is also seeking to stay in our nation as an important part of her family support and in his own right and deserves similar regard from Minister Dutton as the ultimate decision-maker.

I say to Minister Dutton: in the name of decency and compassion, grant Mojgan and Hossein the right to apply for permanent residency without being required to leave Australia and then deal with this case once and for all and allow them to permanently stay and continue to contribute, as they have now for many years. Iran will not accept involuntary returnees under mutual agreement with our federal government, so if Minister Dutton follows through on his edict for them to leave Australia they both face indefinite detention and imprisonment at the order of our own federal government. What a waste and injustice that would be. They cannot agree to return to where they will not be safe.

I sincerely say to Minister Dutton: drop any politics or perceived politics, re-examine this case closely, re-interview them and let Mojgan and Hossain stay permanently and confirm what our community in Yeronga already knows: they are one of us and one of our community.

Redlands Electorate, Volunteers; Exercise Exodus

 **Mr McEACHAN** (Redlands—LNP) (10.43 pm): I rise tonight to recognise great local community volunteers and clubs. Last week the Redland Bay 1 Heart Foundation Walkers group celebrated 20 years of healthy morning walks, comradery and friendship. I was delighted to join Rita, Gail and the rest of the Redland Bay crew and some welcome visitors from Victoria Point walking group. The Bean and Leaf Cafe put on a splendid spread, and I can attest that they make a fine cup of coffee.

In a busy week, Victoria Point school St Rita's held its annual Springfest. Congratulations go to Debbie Stone, who pulled the whole thing together with a host of dedicated volunteers. The day was a resounding success and I would like to take a moment to congratulate newly arrived principal Carolyn Watson.


The Redlands Hockey Association held its end of season trophy presentation and also celebrated a decade since its formation. I would like to acknowledge Mel Woosnam, one of the key founding members; Andrew Tyson, the current president; and Kim Curnow, Coach of the Year. Congratulations to all the players who play with enthusiasm and fairness and get so much out of the great game of hockey, and congratulations from a proud uncle to my niece Mackenzie, who won her first grand final.

At this time I would also like to recognise Victoria Point's Bendigo Bank branch and Garry White. Garry and his team from the Bendigo Bank are generous supporters of the community. Garry can be seen on the weekend at the Redlands hockey as a sponsor and at the Redlands netball as a sponsor. In addition, Garry works with the Redland Community Centre, a centre that does fantastic work supporting the vulnerable in our community and much more. I know I speak on behalf of the Redlands community when I say that he is very much appreciated.

On a different note, spring heralds the spectre of severe bushfire risk in Redlands, from Mt Cotton, Victoria Point, Redland Bay and the southern Moreton Bay islands. Recently I took part as a volunteer with the Coast Guard in Exercise Exodus, a mock evacuation of Russell Island with a life-threatening weather event scenario. This exercise was undertaken after the devastating fires on Russell Island last year. Locals have raised concerns with me about the ongoing bushfire risk on Russell Island.

There are a number of elements we need to be vigilant in staying on top of or addressing. I am working closely with hardworking local councillor Mark Edwards, Rural Fire Service Queensland, SES and QFES on the following initiatives: firstly, continued risk mitigation including firebreaks and fuel reduction burns; secondly, adequate communications, particularly on the southern end of the island; thirdly, classifying the islands as remote given a minimum three-hour emergency response from the mainland; and, lastly, a safe emergency access point on the southern end of the island. I note the petition from Margaret Kemp and over 1,000 locals calling for an all-tide boat ramp to be built. I strongly support these initiatives and will work hard to achieve them.

Cairns, Tourism

 **Mr CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (10.46 pm): Cairns and the tropical north's booming Chinese tourism market is going from strength to strength with Hainan Airlines set to start direct flights to Cairns. This is the second large carrier to announce direct flights to Cairns from China in the last few months. Our booming Chinese visitor market is continuing to grow with Hainan's new twice-weekly direct flights between Shenzhen and Cairns, which is set to deliver \$64 million to the region's economy and attract an extra 30,000 Chinese tourists over the next two years.


The Hainan flights which are expected to start in December are the result of a deal signed last week between the state government and Hainan Airlines as part of the \$10 million Attracting Aviation Investment Fund. A few months ago Cairns was over the moon after hooking the year-round China Southern flights between Guangzhou and Cairns, starting in December as well, and injecting around \$30 million in overnight visitor expenditure in the region annually over the next three years.

The three China Southern flights per week will deliver 33,000 seats on an A330 aircraft. Hainan Airlines will fly twice a week over two years between Shenzhen and Cairns from December, and China Southern Airlines's three-year agreement for three flights a week from Guangzhou will further boost Cairns Airport's international arrivals, already up 9.2 per cent.

Tourism Tropical North Queensland, Tourism and Events Queensland, and Tourism Australia are to be congratulated for their work in this game-changer for Cairns. Cairns Airport chief executive Norris Carter said that the new direct route from Shenzhen would make it better and quicker for Chinese tourists to get to Cairns. He said that currently most international visitors to Cairns arrive and depart on domestic flights. With more direct international flights, it makes it faster and easier to get to Cairns, and we expect even more visitors. Cairns Airport has reported that over 80 per cent of Chinese visitors currently use a domestic flight to get to or from Cairns. The Hainan and China Southern services will give travellers the option of a shorter flight, no backtracking and more time to enjoy our destination.

Shenzhen is a major city in the Guangdong Province in China. It is one of the fourth largest and wealthiest cities of China. It forms part of the Pearl River Delta and has a population of some 11 million to 12 million people. The Pearl River Delta is the low-lying area surrounding the Pearl River estuary, where the river flows into the South China Sea. It is one of the most densely urbanised regions in the world and is an economic hub of China. It has a population of 120 million people. It is five times the population of Australia in an area half the size of Tasmania. Cairns is now directly plugged into this region with these two new airline services. Our city and region are ready. Tourism in Cairns is about to move into a whole new level that we have never seen before.

Gold Coast Highway, Median Fence

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (10.49 pm): I rise to bring to the attention of the House the dismal state of the Gold Coast Highway median fence in the Mermaid Beach electorate. I table the following images showing its terrible state within a two-kilometre radius of my electorate office.

Tabled paper: Bundle of photographs regarding a Gold Coast Highway dividing fence in the Mermaid Beach electorate [[1591](#)].

I would think that the Gold Coast Highway median fence, which is an important safety measure for those who use the Gold Coast Highway because it ensures pedestrians cross at nominated safe traffic crossing locations, would receive immediate attention from the Department of Transport and Main Roads upon their initial identification of the flaws inherent in their current form. However, I have spoken to the Department of Transport and Main Roads on multiple occasions to raise this serious safety concern but no action has been taken. I also table my letter in relation to this matter.


Tabled paper: Letter, dated 9 June 2017, from the member for Mermaid Beach, Mr Ray Stevens MP, to the Regional Director (South Coast), Department of Transport and Main Roads, Mr Paul Noonan, regarding a Gold Coast Highway dividing fence in the Mermaid Beach electorate [[1592](#)].

I cannot understand their recalcitrant attitude in not effecting its replacement as the highest priority. As a corroded fence with missing panels and leaning areas that you can just jaywalk through with ease, this would not suit the Gold Coast Highway median fence purpose when it was first put in place. Safety wise, in its current state—with the gaps, heavy leaning and a clear visual inducement to climb over lower sections of the fence—it is a massive failure. Furthermore, this truly abysmal state of a twisted, leaning, corroded safety fence will be a total embarrassment to a city hosting the most important international event of the decade in Australia early next year. With the multitude of visitors we should expect to the Commonwealth Games during March and April 2018, what impression will we be leaving when their initial introduction to the Gold Coast and its beautiful beaches is an ugly, careworn, ineffective fence?

The local residents planted up this median dividing fence. The businesses were very much against the fence because it would cut off trade for businesses on both sides of the highway. Unfortunately, it had to be put in place for safety measures. The department itself said that the original tender it accepted was flawed. From day one, it has been a flawed median fence that was put in place on the highway. I cannot believe that our local officers down there have recognised how bad the fence is but have not taken steps to replace that fencing. It is tilted. It makes the Gaza Strip fencing look like paradise. They can do a far better job coming into the Commonwealth Games.

This is not a major job and it is not a major issue, but it is visually major in the electorate. I hope immediate measures are taken. The businesses are all complaining about it and the people in my electorate are complaining about it. It is high time the Department of Transport and Main Roads took remedial action.

Creed, Mrs L


 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (10.52 pm): I rise tonight to pay tribute to the life of a well-loved, well-known remarkable lady in my electorate who recently passed away after a short illness. Leonie Creed was the eldest daughter of Ford and Ninette Dunning born on 16 August 1943, exactly 74 years to the day of her funeral. She attended the Central Girls School in Denison Street, Rockhampton and then the Rockhampton Girls Grammar School.

Leonie married George Creed on 5 September 1964 at St Paul's Cathedral in Rockhampton and they started married life in a half-built home at The Old Station. The birth of their three children followed—Elizabeth in October 1965, Andrew in 1969 and Ron in 1970. When the depression in the beef industry struck in the seventies, George took on a labourer's job at Queensland Alumina in Gladstone and Leonie embarked on a teacher aide career at Mount Larcom State School, a position she held for 28 years. When George became interested in local government politics, Leonie was the rock behind his career, always immaculately dressed and hence described by many as 'a true lady'.

She was the pillar and champion behind 26 highly successful air shows conducted at The Old Station, commonly known as The Old Station Fly In, over a period of 30 years. This is where the first seeds of a helicopter rescue service for this region were sown. Subsequently over those years, these events have raised over half a million dollars for the Capricorn Helicopter Rescue Service and other local charities. It was always a special event and a joy for Leonie to hand over cheques to these charities after the fly in event. Leonie served as a foundation director of the Helicopter Rescue service and subsequently remained in that role for 16 years. On 24 May 2013 she was awarded the prestigious Lions Club International Ray Phippard Fellowship in recognition of her exceptional service to the community. She was also highly acclaimed far and wide for her amazing country style cooking.

It was indeed fitting that Leonie left her funeral service in a helicopter. She was flanked by a guard of honour around the circuit road as the jeep taking her on her last road journey made its way to deliver her to her final flight. Leonie is survived by her children, Elizabeth, Andrew and Ron, and their partners, Chris, Nancy and Helen, and nine grandchildren, Josephine, Jack, Mellissa, Thomas, William, Jacob, Alicia, Samantha and Matthew. Leonie was laid to rest beside her beloved husband, George. They are now reunited on the hill overlooking Langmorn Station, the land where their hearts truly belonged.

Mount Ommaney Electorate, Student Leaders

 **Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (10.55 pm): I have always been a very big supporter of encouraging and assisting the next generation, our future leaders. I have had university students do research work in my office, and I have supported the Eric Deeral Indigenous Youth Parliament and the Queensland Youth Parliament, including the upcoming one. This will be the sixth year that

Mount Ommaney has had a representative at the Queensland Youth Parliament. We have had university students who have wanted to come in to be with journos in the background trying to do stories. Basically, we have seen any student who has shown an interest in politics.


I think it is an important responsibility as a politician to encourage our future leaders. That is why I have been very pleased to host Mackenzie, a year 10 student, as part of her school work experience program. Mackenzie wants to be either a teacher, a lawyer or a politician so her teachers decided it would be a great experience to actually see what the job of a politician is. Mackenzie has sat in meetings with me and attended community events. The committee of the Queensland Youth Parliament came to my office last week to go through the bill they are putting before the Youth Parliament and she was involved in those discussions.

Mackenzie is 15 years of age. I think back to when I was 15 years of age and I was more interested in what was happening on a Friday or Saturday night than in politics and the thoughtful contribution she wishes to make. I asked Mackenzie earlier today why she wanted to join the work experience program and what she had learnt from the time with me. She actually came into question time this afternoon and watched the proceedings here. Her answer was—

I feel it is important to grab opportunities with both hands when they come your way, so when my school was offering work experience, I was keen to get involved and sign up. I have always been interested in politics, so that was an obvious choice. I had never been involved in the inner workings of politicians and their offices and the things they do. From day one with Tarnya I have learned a lot. I have learned that the job is nowhere near as glamorous as it appears on TV. I have learned that politicians have a lot fewer staff than what I thought they did and that they perform a far greater variety of jobs than I expected. I learned that being a politician is in fact a lot of hard work. But being a politician still intrigues me so I am excited to keep on learning and hopefully be in parliament one day.

I think that is a great attribute for our future leaders.


Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (10.58 pm): Earlier today a Project Red Socks kit was delivered to each member's office. This kit is an initiative of the Rotary Club of Townsville Sunrise and is designed to serve as a reminder to all mature males to ensure they have an annual prostate check. Prostate checks can be as simple as a blood test where PSA levels can help early detection of this cancer, but I urge all males to talk with their GP to determine the best method for this testing. Mr Speaker, at the beginning of this sitting week you acknowledged that September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month and I thank you for making each and every one of us aware of this and also for allowing me to distribute the Project Red Socks kits to all members. The risk of prostate cancer increases markedly for males over the age of 50 years.

More men die of prostate cancer than women die of breast cancer. Prostate cancer caused the death of at least 3,398 men in Australia in 2016. My father was one of those men. I would like to thank each and every one of those members in this House who showed me compassion during the time of my father's death. In particular, I would like to thank the member for Burdekin for his personal support at that time. The most sobering statistic is that one in seven males in Australia will get this dreaded cancer. Using those same statistics, nine members in this House tonight will be diagnosed with prostate cancer. Members, look around in this chamber right now; you are looking at someone who will be diagnosed with prostate cancer. This also means that three women members in this chamber tonight will have their male partner diagnosed with prostate cancer.

By distributing these kits, I encourage all members to wear the Red Socks lapel badge and to ask as many members to wear the red socks in the chamber tomorrow to show their awareness of prostate cancer and the importance of this annual testing. If they are a little too shy to wear the socks, they can keep them front and centre of their sock drawer to remind them or their partner to test every year. I also encourage members to gather sometime tomorrow, take a photo of themselves and their mates wearing these red socks and then post their photos on Facebook. I encourage every mature male to wear their red socks and do their annual test with their GP because they could save the life of their father, their brother, their partner, their son or even themselves.

Beerburrum, Proposed Quarry

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (11.01 pm): This evening I rise to speak about the proposed Barro Group quarry at Beerburrum. The site of the quarry that has been submitted is some 1.3 kilometres west of Cobb and Co Drive at Beerburrum and is currently being assessed by the Sunshine Coast Regional Council. Whilst there are some in the Beerburrum community, both residents and businesses alike, that are very supportive of the proposal, there are many that are not. Those residents have approached me to bring their concerns to the state government.

On 2 August, some 24 hours after I was first made aware by residents, I wrote to Minister Miles as the Acting Minister for Main Roads to ensure his department was aware of the proposed quarry and in particular to communicate the main concerns of local residents, being the impact that quarry operations will have on road movements in and around the area including in the school traffic zone around Beerburrum State School. I am pleased to report to the community that today I received a response from the minister, and I want to read that into *Hansard*. It states—

This matter relates to a current development application that was triggered for referral to the State Assessment Referral Agency (SARA) for state transport and environmental interests.

SARA is responsible for overseeing state interests as outlined in the State Development Assessment Provisions (SDAP). Under SARA's procedures, the Department of Transport and Main Roads' (TMR) role is to provide technical advice and recommendations to address any adverse impacts of the proposal on state transport infrastructure.


In line with this process, TMR is currently assessing this application to determine what impacts it may have on the state transport network. At this time, TMR has not yet issued its technical agency response or recommendations to SARA ...

and I would add that therefore that has not been provided to the Sunshine Coast Regional Council. The minister concludes—

As Sunshine Coast Council is the assessment agency for this development approval, I have forwarded a copy of your correspondence to council for consideration and direct reply.

I want to reassure the community that I will always strongly represent their views. That is why I took the action of contacting Minister Miles within 24 hours of being alerted to the issue. That is why I held a community mobile office alongside local councillor Rick Baberowski to discuss the concerns of locals and the ways those concerns can influence the development approval process. What I will not do, though, is make promises or statements that mislead the community or create false hope that is not right, fair or responsible. I say to those members of the political community on the Sunshine Coast who have somehow suggested that 10,000 signatures will stop this that that is completely and utterly false. The only ones who can do that are the Sunshine Coast Regional Council and/or the Planning and Environment Court. I will not have individuals scaring my community or giving them false hope.

Indigenous Communities

 **Hon. M FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (11.04 pm): Just last month I had the honour to travel to four Indigenous and local government communities in the gulf and Cape York. On Mornington Island with ministerial champion Jen Howard, Mayor Bradley Wilson told me about the council's work they are doing with respect to gathering information on alcohol management. I heard of the need for the right services to support alcohol management, including rehabilitation and detoxification services that were delivered by the former Labor government and subsequently cut by the LNP Newman-Nicholls government. These callous cuts have left communities vulnerable and feeling the pain from the flow-on effects that come when vital services are stripped away. I look forward to receiving further information from council on this issue to take to my cabinet colleagues. I would like to thank the member for Mount Isa for also attending this meeting and for his commitment to working together on a way forward.

In Aurukun, Mayor Derek Walpo showed the incredible progress that has been made in that community over the past two years. I was impressed to see the famous 'Aurukun dogs' sculptures at the Wik & Kugu Art Centre. I also heard about the positive impact the Deputy Premier's Works for Queensland program is having locally. Council received \$2.5 million to expand, renovate and build new accommodation for staff and contractors, creating local jobs and training.

Pormpuraaw Mayor Ralph Kendall echoed this positivity on Works for Queensland. I inspected the latest project to be completed there: new contractor accommodation, meaning jobs for locals during construction. I also visited the Community Enterprise Queensland store where feedback about this new initiative, introduced by the Palaszczuk government in July, was absolutely glowing. Mayor Kendall told me more locals are being employed, fresh food is now being delivered weekly and there has been a big price reduction since CEQ came into effect. This is another example of our commitment to these remote areas and to reducing the cost of living for all Queenslanders, particularly those in rural, remote and discrete communities.

Finally, I visited Burketown to meet with Burke Shire Mayor Ernie Camp. I saw the benefits the new fibre-optic cable is bringing the community, with better education outcomes for students and opportunities for business. We were privileged to go to the school and meet some of the students, the staff and the principal of the school. Mayor Kemp also showed me the wharf pontoon project. It was great to see the Palaszczuk government's investment, which contributed around 12 local jobs.

I do thank the mayors, councillors and community members who welcomed me to their regions last month and I look forward to returning in the future. The local authority members, mayors and councillors in those regions do an outstanding job. Sometimes they do it tough, but on the back of that they do deliver a sound investment and prosperity in their communities.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.07 pm.

ATTENDANCE

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